

Genesee Valley Regional Market Authority
Agriculture Development Program

**FY 2025-2026
APPLICATION
GUIDELINES**

APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 14, 2025

INTRODUCTION

The Genesee Valley Regional Market Authority (GVRMA), in cooperation with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYS DAM), invites applications that will assist in the development of agriculture and agriculturally related businesses in the 9 county GVRMA region.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

1. Applications must conform to the format and content specified in this solicitation.
2. **Applicants must submit two (2) copies of the application AND an electronic version of the proposal to btydings@gvrma.com**

Envelopes must be clearly marked: “Application GVRMA Agriculture Development Program”. Applications must be submitted to:

Brendan Tydings
Genesee Valley Regional Market Authority
900 Jefferson Road
Rochester, New York 14623

Applications must be received by the GVRMA by 3:00 p.m. EST on Friday, February 14, 2025.

Applicants, not delivery services or other intermediaries, are responsible for the timely submission of proposals. Faxed proposals will not be accepted. Applications delivered after the scheduled date and time will be returned to applicants and not considered for funding.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE APPLICATION GUIDELINES

All questions about this solicitation must be submitted in writing (fax or e-mail will be accepted) to:

Brendan Tydings
Genesee Valley Regional Market Authority
900 Jefferson Road
Rochester, New York 14623
Fax: (585) 427-2690
E-mail: btydings@gvrma.com

All questions must be submitted to Mr. Tydings by 3:30 p.m. on Friday, February 7, 2025. Applicants must note that all clarifications are to be resolved prior to the submission of an application. A list of questions about the program which are received from potential applicants, and answers to those questions, as well as any changes, additions or deletions to this solicitation, will be posted on the GVRMA website, www.geneseevalleyregionalmarketauthority.com, along with the electronic version of this Application Guideline. Questions and responses may be posted as questions are received. All questions and answers will be posted by Wednesday, February 12, 2025. Applicants are urged to check the GVRMA website frequently for notices of any changes, additions or deletions to the Application Guidelines. All questions and answers shall become a formal addendum to the Application Guidelines.

AWARDS

It is anticipated that awards will be made by the GVRMA Board by March 31, 2025.

1. GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

1.1 Program Description

Title 4 of the NYS Public Authorities Law (NYS PAL) states that in fulfilling the Authority’s mission, the GVRMA Board of Directors shall work cooperatively and in consultation with the NYS DAM to assure the proper development of agriculture and regional market facilities, in the Genesee Valley Regional Market District. In accordance with Title 4 of the NYS PAL, the GVRMA Board and the NYS DAM developed a plan for the future development and viability of agriculture and regional market facilities in the district.

This RFA is seeking applications for projects that will promote and market agricultural products.

1.2 Funding Available

There is approximately \$250,000 available in FY 2025-2026 broken into two separate eligibility tracks.

The maximum amount of funding an applicant may apply for is \$25,000.

1.3 Match Requirements

There are no requirements for applicants to match program funds with cash or in-kind services.

2. ELIGIBILITY & SCOPE

2.1 Applicant Eligibility for Track 1 - \$175,000 available

Eligible applicants include:

- Not-for-profit organizations;
- Municipalities; and
- Educational institutions

Eligible applicants must be located in the nine county GVRMA region and/or the project must primarily benefit agricultural producers located in the nine county GVRMA region. The GVRMA region consists of the following counties: Monroe, Livingston, Ontario, Wayne, Genesee, Orleans, Steuben, Wyoming, and Yates.

Please note if you are applying for Track 1

2.2 Applicant Eligibility for Track 2 - \$75,000

The following entities are eligible to apply for funding under Track 2:

- Not-for-profit organizations who are committed to utilizing MWBE partners and whose mission is focused on engaging communities of color across agriculture;
- Municipalities who are committed to utilizing MWBE partners and engaged in serving groups of color within agriculture;
- Educational institutions who are committed to utilizing MWBE partners and serving communities of color;

Eligible applicants must be located in the nine county GVRMA region and/or the project must primarily benefit agricultural producers located in the nine county GVRMA region. The GVRMA region consists of the following counties: Monroe, Livingston, Ontario, Wayne, Genesee, Orleans, Steuben, Wyoming, and Yates.

2.3 Ineligible Applicants

The following entities are not eligible to apply for funding:

- for-profit entities; and
- individuals.

2.4 Additional Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must choose between Track 1 or 2 and may submit only one application. Please note in the project summary of the narrative which Track the application is pursuing.

2.5 Project Eligibility

Eligible projects shall promote and market agricultural products. Specific projects may include the establishment, promotion or marketing of farmers' markets; the increased access to New York farm products in communities of need; and the development of food processing and on-farm work skills. Eligible projects must be located in the nine county GVRMA region. The GVRMA region consists of the following counties: Monroe, Livingston, Ontario, Wayne, Genesee, Orleans, Steuben, Wyoming, and Yates.

2.6 Project Duration

Proposed projects should be completed within one year of the contract start date.

2.7 Eligible Costs

Grant funds may be used for any of the following purposes directly related to completion of an eligible project, including but not limited to:

- Construction and renovation
- Machinery and equipment
- Advertising and promotion
- Salaries and wages
- Travel
- Supplies and materials
- Administration costs directly related to the GVRMA grant

Eligible costs must be directly related to the eligible project.

2.8 Ineligible Costs

Grant funds may not be used for the following, including but not limited to:

- Purchase of a vehicle
- Purchase of Land
- Furniture and fixtures
- Salaries and wages unrelated to the proposal
- Indirect and overhead costs
- Fringe benefits
- Costs associated with preparing an application
- Costs incurred prior to the award of a grant

3. DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS

The following documentation must be provided with the Application Form at the time of submittal.

3.1 Workers' Compensation & Disability Insurance

New York State Workers' Compensation Law sections 57 and 220 require that the Department not enter into a contract unless proof of Workers' Compensation and Disability Insurance in a form satisfactory to the New York State Workers' Compensation Board has been secured.

Please refer to the Workers' Compensation and Disability Insurance Requirements posted on the Department's website, www.agriculture.ny.gov, under the heading of this RFP or visit the New York State Workers' Compensation Board website, www.wcb.ny.gov, for more information. You may contact the Board's Bureau of Compliance with any questions related to workers' compensation or disability insurance at (866) 298-7830.

3.2 New York State Charities Bureau Registration

All not-for-profits organizations contracting with the GVRMA must be registered with the New York State Charities Bureau, unless a proper exemption is obtained. All applicants must, therefore provide either:

- The organization's charitable registration number and written documentation from the Office of the Attorney General that the charitable organization is currently up-to-date with its Charities Registration; or
- A statement from the applicant that the organization is exempt pursuant to one of the categories indicated on the Office of Attorney General's Request for Registration Exemption (Schedule E). The statement must identify the specific category under which the charitable organization is exempt.

To obtain written documentation of an organization's charities registration status, or if you have questions regarding the statutory requirements for registration, contact the New York State Office of the Attorney General, Bureau of Charities Registration, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271-0332, or call (212) 416-8402, email charities.bureau@ag.ny.gov or visit their website at <http://www.charitiesnys.com>.

Eligible 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporations acting as the applicant must have a New York State Attorney General Charities Bureau Registration number or an Exemption Certificate issued by the New York State Attorney General Charities Bureau explaining why the organization is exempt from registering with the Charities Bureau.

4. APPLICATION FORMAT

Submit applications using the format below. Provide all information requested. Failure to complete all parts and answer all questions may result in disqualification of the proposal.

3. Submit two (2) copies of the application as well as an electronic version of the proposal to btfindings@gvrma.com
4. Staple each copy of the application in the upper left hand corner. Do not use binders, folders, report covers, etc.
5. Attach all attachments, drawings, photos, support letters, etc. at the end of the Application. The GVRMA reserves the right to audit the applicant's books and records relating to the performance of the project during and up to six years after the completion of the project.

4.1 Cover Page

The Cover Page consists of a Proposal Title of no more than 10 words, and the names and contact information of the project leader and other principal partners.

4.2 Narrative

The required format is a 12-point font with 1-inch margins. Number the pages in the right hand bottom corner. The Narrative may be in Word (.doc, .docx) or Adobe Acrobat (.pdf), but whichever format is used, the cut/paste function must be operational. The Narrative must include the following sections in order. All sections of the Narrative must be in a sentence format. Do not combine sections into a spreadsheet or table. The Narrative Section is limited to 10 pages.

A. Project Summary

A concise, stand-alone description of and justification for the project. The maximum length is 250 words.

B. Background and Justification

Clearly identify how the project will promote and market eligible agricultural products. Explain why the proposal is important and timely. Provide a brief literature review. Include data or estimates that demonstrate the extent of the problem, the number of agricultural producers or operations affected, and the potential economic impact. Indicate who will benefit and explain how they will benefit from the project.

C. Goal(s), Objectives and Work plan

Describe the overall goal(s) in one or two sentences. List and describe the proposal objectives. Explain how each objective will be accomplished and by whom. Also include the expected completion date for each objective or list the major milestones of the project. If the proposal involves a survey, briefly discuss the nature of the questions that will be asked, the methodology to be used for data collection and analysis, and the population to be surveyed. It is not required, but if it is available, include a draft survey as an appendix. A draft survey does not count toward the 10-page Narrative maximum.

D. Project Evaluation, Outputs and Expected Outcomes

Describe what the project is expected to accomplish and how it will be evaluated while in progress and upon conclusion. Describe outputs that explain who the target audience is and what activities are to be completed. Describe expected measurable outcomes that explain what knowledge may be gained or what actions may be implemented as a result of the project. Include at least one quantitative metric that will be reported at the beginning and the end of the project to demonstrate impact.

E. Project Deliverables

List any expected deliverables that will result from the project in addition to the required final report. Examples of project deliverables include professional journal or farm press articles, Extension bulletins, and manuals. Describe how you will disseminate the project results to the target audience, stakeholders and other interested parties beyond those directly served by the project. Examples of such activities include presentations at professional conferences or producer meetings, and publication of articles in professional journals or the agricultural press, educational brochures, .ppt presentations, survey instruments, and websites.

F. Budget Spreadsheet and Budget Narrative

The Budget Spreadsheet should show the relevant expenditure categories in the far left column and, proceeding across the page, there should be a column showing the dollar amount of GVRMA funds requested and separate columns showing the dollar amount for each of the entities that will provide matching resources. The Budget Narrative should explain how the dollar amounts for each category shown on the Budget Spreadsheet were derived and what they cover. All costs must be directly related to the eligible project. Following is guidance on some of the more common expenditures associated with GVRMA projects.

Salary and Wages- Show hourly rates and estimated number of hours, FTEs or percent of time to be spent on the project, and describe the role and responsibilities of each party. If a third party will be hired after the grant is awarded but has not yet been identified, provide a brief description of the qualifications to be sought and the type of wages to be paid hourly, salaried, or graduate assistantship.

Travel- Indicate what the travel includes (mode of travel, how many people, how many days, destination, lodging, meals, etc. as applicable) and how it relates to the project goals.

Contracts- Indicate if the expense represents a flat fee for services, or an hourly rate. Indicate the actual or estimated hourly rate to be applied. List general categories of items the contract covers such as professional services, travel, lodging, administrative expenses, etc.

Administrative Costs- Administrative costs directly attributable to the project may be charged.

G. Organizational Capacity & Personnel Qualifications

Provide a short description of the applicant organization's experience working with the agricultural community and experience delivering marketing and promotional programs. Provide a one- to two-page resume of relevant experience and/or qualifications of the principal investigators and for each of the other major project participants. Longer resumes will be disregarded.

5. FUNDING CRITERIA

5.1 Evaluation Factors

Proposals are evaluated by a team of reviewers from the GVRMA and the NYS DAM. Proposals will be evaluated on the criteria listed below.

- Reasonableness of cost relative to nature of work to be performed.
- Quality of Proposal -the proposal is well-justified; the goals, objectives, and work plan are clear and appropriate; the resources in terms of personnel and time are appropriate for the project scope; and all budget items are allowable, reasonable and clearly described.
- Program Scope -the proposal addresses the promotion and marketing of agricultural products;
- Impact - the proposal describes the potential impact it will have on target producers and agribusinesses, and the potential for the proposal to provide new knowledge and lessons learned. For small-scale or pilot proposals, the proposal includes recommendations as to how the project could be scaled up or expanded. The proposal includes at least one quantitative metric to demonstrate impact; describes appropriate deliverables in addition to the final report; and outlines a plan to disseminate project results electronically and in person to the target audience, stakeholders, and interested parties beyond those directly served by the project.
- Capacity of the organization and personnel to deliver successful projects.

6. AWARDS

All proposals deemed eligible by the GVRMA and the NYS DAM will be evaluated according to the criteria stated in the Application Guidelines.

The GVRMA will send written notice to each applicant of its funding decisions. A contract defining all terms and conditions and responsibilities of the successful applicant shall be developed by the GVRMA subsequent to the awarding of funds. The contract will incorporate project details and a budget approved by the GVRMA, among its provisions. A copy of the contract template that sets forth the general terms and conditions required in all contracts awarded by the GVRMA under this program is posted on the GVRMA website at www.geneseevalleyregionalmarketauthority.com.

7. REIMBURSEMENT FOR FUNDING

Once the contract is fully executed, grant funds will be disbursed on a lump sum basis at a time determined by Genesee Valley Regional Market Authority.

8. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

8.1 Reimbursement Request Reports

The GVRMA will monitor contract performance. Grantee will update Grantor on progress of the project and request in writing any changes that may come up. The GVRMA reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the course of the project.

8.2 Final Report

A final report will be required within thirty (30) days following completion of the project. The final report shall include a reasonably detailed description of the work completed; an assessment of the potential for future viability of the project; and a description of problems encountered, if any, which affected completion of the project. In addition to the final report, the GVRMA reserves the right to require contractors to present the final report to the GVRMA Board of Directors.

9. LIABILITY

The GVRMA shall not be held liable for any costs incurred by any party for work performed in the preparation of and production of a proposal or for any work performed prior to the formal execution of a contract.

10. NYS OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION & HISTORIC PRESERVATION REQUIREMENTS

Projects which include ground disturbing activities, construction of new buildings, or modification of buildings over 50 years old will be subject to further review by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). The Department reserves the right to request such additional information as is necessary to allow OPRHP to make a determination regarding the potential impacts of the project on historical sites or artifacts and possible alternatives which avoid or mitigate adverse impacts.

11. NYS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW ACT REQUIREMENTS

Some projects may be subject to review under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The Department reserves the right to request additional information as needed to comply with SEQRA requirements.

12. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The GVRMA reserves the right to:

- reject any or all applications received with respect to this solicitation;
- waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification and concurrence of the applicant;
- utilize any or all ideas submitted in the applications received unless those ideas are covered by legal patent or proprietary rights;
- request from an applicant additional information as deemed necessary to more fully evaluate its proposal;
- amend the program’s specifications after their release, with appropriate written notice posted on the GVRMA website;
- select only certain portions of proposals for funding;
- make all final decisions with respect to the amount of funding and the timing of payments to be provided to an applicant; and
- negotiate the scope of work and terms of the budget.

All proposals submitted in response to this RFP will become the property of the GVRMA.

13. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

All proposals submitted and all related contracts and reports may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Law.