



Organic Training for Agricultural Professionals Prize Request for Application

Key Dates

Pre-Application Open: April 17, 2023

Pre-Applications Due: June 1, 2023 5:00pm ET

NOTE: An approved pre-application with an invitation to submit a full application is required for submission.

Full Application Invitation: July 6, 2023

Full Applications Due: August 15, 2023 5:00 PM ET

Award Notification: Fall 2023

The Organic Center and the Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research (FFAR) is announcing the Organic Training for Agricultural Professionals Prize and is inviting applications from organizations that have proven extraordinary contributions to training farming community groups, farmer-leaders, and agricultural professionals in organic agronomic, certification and record-keeping, and profitability guidance.

Program Priorities and Requirements:

The Organic Center and FFAR seek applicants that have used an innovative approach to delivering content and have demonstrated impacts in improving education and extension to organic farmers. Applications that address the following will receive preference:

1. Has a record of accomplishment in contributing to training farming community groups, farmer-leaders, and agricultural professionals in organic agronomic, certification and record-keeping, and profitability guidance.
2. Contributes to the goal of increasing organic agriculture, and aiding organic farmers and farmers interested in transitioning to organic.
3. Is dedicated to farmer accessibility to agronomic professionals that are trained in organic

production.

- 4 Demonstrates partnerships with different sectors (private, non-government organizations (NGO), governments, academia and other stakeholders) such that programs may be scalable and applicable across agricultural regions.
- 5 Engages organic farmers in the development, governance, oversight, and/or evaluation of educational and training programs.
- 6 Is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in their internal policies and farmer/trainer audiences.
- 7 Has a strong history of serving under-represented farmers, and demonstrate a critical lens in exploring systemic barriers.
- 8 Increases tools for and success of organic dairy farmers, particularly in the Northeastern Region of the U.S.

Eligibility

The Organic Center and the Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research welcomes applications from all domestic higher education institutions, cooperative extension programs, non-profit organizations, consortiums, US government-affiliated research agencies, tribal government entities or any combination of the above.

Funding Availability and Award Information

A Prize between \$25,000 to \$100,000 will be awarded to up to six (6) applicants each year showing the greatest success in past and future ability to train agronomic groups and professionals in organic practices. Successful applicants will receive one payment disbursement for activities to be completed within one year.

Key budget considerations are noted below. Applicants are encouraged to contact The Organic Center to discuss any concerns related to the matching requirements (see [Matching Guidelines](#)).

- **All grants require matching contributions equal to or greater than the funding request.** Matching funds must come from a non-US Federal entity. Excess match will not influence the potential success of an application.
- At least 50 percent of matching funds must be a cash match per FFAR's definition of cash. The remainder may be an in-kind match per FFAR's definition of in-kind.
- If awarded, then [this template](#), this [Match details form](#) and this [Match Certification form](#) must be used to certify the match contribution.

Evaluation Criteria

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, and completeness. Priority will be given to applicants that have a strong history of serving under-represented farmers, and demonstrate a critical lens in exploring systemic barriers. Priority will also be given to applicants who serve organic dairy farmers, and particularly in the Northeastern Region of the U.S.

Pre-proposal applications must demonstrate the potential to meet the evaluation criteria. Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Record of Accomplishment (35%)

- Does the applicant have a record in extraordinary contributions to training farming community groups, farmer-leaders, and agricultural professionals in organic agronomic, certification and record-keeping, and profitability guidance?
- Does the applicant have demonstrated impacts in improving education and extension to organic farmers?
- Does the applicant use an innovative approach to delivering content?
- Does the applicant have a demonstrated ability to provide content both in-person and virtually?
- Has the applicant established a commitment to educating and mentoring community groups, farmer-leaders, and agricultural professionals about organic practices and existing barriers to accessibility?

Future Impacts and Outcomes (30%)

- Does the applicant clearly describe the advancements to their programming associated with prize funding?
- Does the applicant include program evaluation associated with activities funded through this prize?
- Does the program have a component that addresses/explores accessibility and equitability?

Commitment and Values (20%)

- Does the applicant have an established commitment to educating and mentoring community groups, farmer-leaders, and agricultural professionals about organic practices?
- Does the applicant have a record of action in supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion?
- Does the applicant include farmer accessibility to trained agronomic professionals?
- Are organic farmers actively involved in governance and/or oversight of educational programs?

Partnerships (15%)

- Does the applicant include a description of their partnerships?
- Do the partnerships described by the applicant further the goal of organic training for farmers and agricultural professionals?
- Does the proposal include adequate confirmation of partner commitment(s)?

How to Apply

Pre-proposals and proposals must be submitted as a single pdf via email to Dr. Amber Sciligo at ExtensionPrize@organic-center.org

Only applications submitted by the deadline will be accepted and considered eligible for evaluation. To be fair to all our applicants, we will not grant extensions to applicants who missed the deadlines posted in the Key Dates section.

Additional Information

Review Process

Pre-Application Review: Submitted pre-applications undergo a review to assess if the project is relevant to the Organic Training for Agricultural Professionals Prize and that the application demonstrates the potential to meet the evaluation criteria. The pre-proposals that show the most potential for extraordinary contributions to training farming community groups, farmer-leaders, and agricultural professionals in organic agronomic, certification and record-keeping, and profitability guidance will be invited to submit a full application.

Applicants must submit a pre-application to be eligible to submit a full application.

Full Application Review: Full proposals undergo a three-stage peer-review process. First, each submission is reviewed for relevance and requirements by Organic Center staff. In the second stage, proposals will be reviewed by a panel of subject experts, industry members, Organic Center Scientific Counselor members, and FFAR staff based on the Evaluation Criteria included in this RFA. Finally, positive funding recommendations will be reviewed with consideration to program priorities and available funding.

All external reviewers must agree and adhere to the terms outlined in FFAR's [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) and [Non-Disclosure Agreement](#). Reviewers with a conflict of interest are recused from evaluating or participating in the related discussions. Each stage of the review is conducted confidentially.

Award Administration

Selection Notice: Following the full application review process, the authorized organization representative listed on the proposal will be officially notified by email of the status of the application. If an application is selected for funding, The Organic Center reserves the right to request additional or clarifying information for any reason deemed necessary. Potential grantees are free to accept or reject the Grant Agreement as offered.

Intent to Fund Notification: The Organic Center notifies applicant of their awards through email. The notice does not constitute an award or obligate funding until there is a fully executed Grant Agreement.

Post-award Management

Grant Period: Upon receipt of the Grant Agreement, the grantee should confirm the project's start and end dates. Once signed, the start date cannot be changed. Grantees may use prize funds only on expenditures on or after the Grant Agreement is fully executed. Charging expenditures to the grant before the fully executed date is strictly prohibited. Likewise, grantees may not use funds after the enddate except to pay allowable project costs committed on or before that date.

A grantee may request a no-cost extension of up to six months to complete the work's planned scope. The request must be communicated at least thirty (30) days before the end date of the grant. The request must justify the need for the extension, include a summary of the unobligated, remaining funds, and provide a plan for fulfilling the project's terms. If a no-cost extension request is approved, The Organic Center will issue an amendment to the Grant Agreement.

Final Report Requirements: Within 90 days of completing the project, the grantee shall provide a final project report. This report should address the project objectives outlined in the original grant application, describe any modifications to the project objectives and scope, describe the final project accomplishments, and include a final project accounting of all grant funds.

Application Components

Please include each section listed below in a single pdf, and submit to ExtensionPrize@organic-center.org

Pre-Application Components

- Organization name (*up to 250 characters*)
- Proposed project period dates (projects cannot exceed one year and should not start before October 1, 2023)
- Organization mission/vision/goals (up to 200 words)
- Key organization personnel – name(s), affiliation, expertise, role
- Organization website and social media pages
- Program summary (*up to 500 words*)
 - How does your program contribute to training farming community groups, farmer-leaders, and agricultural professionals in organic agronomic, certification and record-keeping, and profitability guidance?
 - How is your program innovative?
 - How will this funding advance your program?
- Budget
 - Total prize funding request – must be no less than \$25,000 and no greater than \$100,000
 - Total matching funds (*at least 50% of match must be cash per [FFAR matching guidelines](#)*)
 - Total proposed budget (*prize funds + matching funds*)
 - A full budget breakdown is not required for the pre-application.
- Funding partners: List any committed or potential funding partners, describe

why they are an appropriate source of matching funds, and any prior contact you have had or relationship you have developed with them about this project.

Applications that demonstrate strong partnerships by way of matching from external sources outside the applicant institutions are encouraged. These partners may include but are not limited to the private sector, non-profits, commodity and trade groups, state governments and others that do not traditionally work in agriculture.

Full Application Components

Required components

*Brevity is encouraged and word limits are set to reduce burden on applicants and reviewers. If word limits are prohibitive for any section, please reach out to Dr. Amber Sciligo at

ExtensionPrize@organic-center.org

- Organization name (up to 250 characters)
- Organization mission/vision/goals (up to 200 words)
- Locations of performance / Regions served
- Program Summary (*up to 300 words*)
- Record of Accomplishment (*up to 500 words*)
 - *What contributions has your program had toward training farming community groups, farmer-leaders, and agricultural professionals in organic agronomic, certification and record-keeping, and profitability guidance?*
 - *What impacts have you had in improving education and extension to organic farmers?*
 - *What innovative approaches are used in developing your program and delivering content?*
 - *How is your content delivered?*
- Future Impacts and Outcomes (*up to 400 words*)
 - *How will this prize advance your programming?*
 - *How is program evaluation included in your programming?*
 - *How will your programming address/explore accessibility and equitability?*
- Commitment and Values (*up to 600 words*)
 - *In what ways has your organization committed to educating and mentoring community groups, farmer-leaders, and agricultural professionals about organic practices?*
 - *How is justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI), integrated into your program and activities?*
 - *Has your organization focuses any education on existing barriers to the accessibility of organic , particularly from the JEDI perspective?*
 - *How is farmer accessibility to trained agronomic professionals included in your program?*
 - *How are organic farmers actively involved in governance and/or oversight of educational programs?*

- Partnerships (*up to 250 words*)
 - *What partnerships are included in your program?*
 - *How will these partnerships further the goal of organic training for farmers and agricultural professionals?*
 - *What confirmation of partner commitments are you including?*
- Letters of support
- Proposed budget
 - Use this budget [template](#) to show breakdown of proposed expenses and match provided for each line item.
 - Budget narrative (*up to 1000 words*) must include:
 - A brief overview of the budget by task or objective, in parallel to the approach outlined in the project's description. Address costs related to personnel, equipment, facilities and analytics.
 - Total prize funding request
 - Total matching funds (at least 50% of match must be cash per FFAR matching guidelines)
 - Total proposed budget (prize funds + matching funds)