



Saratoga County Farmland Protection and Open Space Grant Program

2021

Background: The Saratoga County Farmland Protection and Open Space Preservation grant program was established in 2003 by the County Board of Supervisors to aid farmers in meeting the required local match to the New York State Farmland Protection Implementation Grant Program (FPIG) which enables to purchase of development rights (PDR) on eligible farmland. The program has been expanded to provide funding for lands containing natural areas, wildlife habitats, parks and other important open spaces.

In 2021, the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors allocated \$100,000 to the Farmland Protection and Open Space Grant Program to provide matching funds for the FPIG program and to acquire open space lands whose preservation is deemed to be of significant public benefit. The County Board of Supervisors and the Trails and Open Space Committee encourage all municipalities within Saratoga County to consider applying for project funding.

Please contact the County Planning Staff with any questions or for assistance with an application at: 518-884-4705.

Eligibility: All Saratoga County municipalities, not-for-profit land trusts, conservation groups and Saratoga County landowners are eligible to apply for this program. All applications must provide a resolution of support by the municipality in which the project is located; or a letter of intent signed by the chief elected official on the municipality's letterhead.

Open space acquisition projects are eligible for up to \$50,000 or 50% of the project's total cost, whichever is less. Inter-municipal applications for open space preservation that include projects that cross municipal boundaries may apply for funding up to \$100,000. Inter-municipal projects must provide a resolution or letter of support from all municipalities involved.

Eligible open space projects may include lands that offer a unique recreation opportunity for a community such as a park, nature trail, bikeway or a project that provides access to a waterway or waterbody. The Saratoga County Green Infrastructure Plan provides a comprehensive overview of unique open space resources eligible for County funding and which may receive a high project ranking during the application review process.

Farmland protection projects are eligible for grants of up to \$100,000 or 50% of total project costs, whichever is less.

Lands identified in local comprehensive plans or in an open space inventory, The New York State Open Space Plan or Municipal Farmland Protection Plan are also eligible.

Grants for farmland protection and open space acquisition are contingent on the applicant's demonstration of the commitment of matching funds from Federal, State, and/or local funding programs and private contributions. Private contributions may be in the form of a "bargain sale" or donation.

Eligible Costs: Grant funds can be used by the applicant towards transaction costs associated with the purchase of development rights or the acquisition of open space including title insurance, appraisal, survey, environmental or ecological assessments, and any recording, closing or legal fees incurred.

If the proposed project consists of the complete donation of an easement, the applicant may request up to \$10,000 or 5% of the total project cost, whichever is less, for transaction costs associated with the donated easement.

Stewardship fees or costs associated with stewardship for the project are not eligible for funding under this program.

County payments shall be made directly to Saratoga County Municipalities which will, in turn, convey the County funds to the applicant entity.

Eligible Local Share: The following expenses may be used as the required local match to grant monies received:

- Local funds expended within 12 months of the submission of the application
- Stewardship fees related to the proposed project
- Local funds utilized for the purchase of development rights or a fee interest in additional parcels of land if the applicant has demonstrated a clear linkage between the parcel and the proposed project

Project Ranking Criteria:

Proposed projects will be evaluated based on the following criteria adopted by the Land Preservation Committee (Ranked from 1 to 5, 1 being the lowest, and 5 being the highest ranking):

1. Agricultural Importance:
 - a. Soil quality
 - b. Economic viability of farming operation
 - c. Protection of natural resources
 - d. Inclusion in a County Agricultural District
 - e. Proximity to a critical mass of productive farmland

2. Resource Protection:
 - a. Proximity to a protected waterbody, waterway or aquifer
 - b. Proximity to a wildlife habitat or corridor
 - c. Proximity to a significant wetlands complex
 - d. Provides protection of a scenic viewshed
 - e. Proximity to other conserved lands
 - f. Provision of public access to a significant resource
 - g. Proximity to National, State, County, Municipal, or private park or forest lands

3. Development Pressure:
 - a. Importance of the project to the rural character of the municipality
 - b. Proximity to expanding residential growth
 - c. Proximity to public infrastructure

4. Local Support:
 - a. Designation of the proposed project area as an important community resource
 - b. Inclusion of the proposed project area in the New York State Open Space Plan
 - c. Inclusion of the proposed project area in the Saratoga County Green Infrastructure Plan
 - d. Inclusion in a municipal or county trail system plan
 - e. Inclusion in any municipal comprehensive plan or land use plan
 - f. Matching funding sources confirmed as evidenced by a letter from those providing the matching funds

5. Other: Applicant may provide an additional narrative regarding the proposed project to assist the Trails and Open Space Committee in understanding the project's importance to the surrounding landscape and community.

Application submission requirements:

Project Cover Sheet:

- Title of proposed project
- Project type: farmland or open space
- Land Acquisition Type: Fee Title OR Conservation Easement
- Location of proposed project
- Tax map number, acreage, and landowner name
- Project contact and sponsoring organization address, telephone number and email address

Project Summary-Brief proposal description:

- Description of the property and its current use
- Property's local and regional importance as an agricultural or opens space resource
- Description of development pressure
- Proposed project's compliance with local plans such as comprehensive plan, green infrastructure plan, or farmland protection plan

Required Project Maps:

- Location map showing street names and important landmarks
- Aerial photo with tax map overlay
- Soils map showing prime farmland soils and statewide significant soils and acreages
- For Open Space applications, locations of connecting trails and associated amenities

Note: For assistance with the preparation of project maps, please call the Saratoga County Planning Department at 518-844-4705.

Project Budget:

- Total estimated cost of Proposed Project
- Amount and sources of other outside funding sources
- Amount of County Grant funds being requested
- Estimated Cost per acre(if application is successful an appraisal will be required)
- Survey Cost
- Appraisal Cost

- Baseline mapping and documentation
- Title search and insurance
- Administrative Costs, including legal
- Stewardship/Monitoring Costs

Letters of Support: In addition to the resolution of support or letter of intent from the municipality, additional letters of support from local elected officials or other stakeholders may be submitted for consideration.

Submission: Applications must be received by **August 6, 2021**. No submissions will be considered after the closing date.

Following the close of the application period, applications shall be reviewed and prioritized by the County's Trails and Open Space Committee. Upon completion of its review, the Trails and Open Space Committee will vote on the applications and forward its recommendations to the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors Law and Finance Committee. Grant awards shall be awarded by resolution of the Board of Supervisors.

Post Award: Prior to the release of grant funds the project applicant shall submit an appraisal of the property certifying the value of the development rights to be purchased with grant funds or the value of the land to be purchased in fee. Successful applicants will also be required to submit copies of all conservation easements and/or deeds prepared in conjunction with the awarded project. An environmental audit may be required if the proposed property's environmental integrity has the possibility of being compromised through a previous use or uses in the vicinity.

Once an award has been made the County will provide the awardee with a list of submission requirements needed to receive grant funds.



**Saratoga County Farmland and Open Space Grant Program
Application Coversheet
2021**

Applicant Information:

Municipality: _____

Name of Primary Project Contact: _____

Address: _____

Phone/Email: _____

Landowner Information (If different from Applicant):

Name: Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Project Description:

Project Name: _____

Street Address/Location of Project: _____

Tax Map Numbers: _____

Current Use of the Property: _____

Projects proximity to other conserved lands: _____

Budget Summary:

Total Project Cost: _____

Total County Funding Requested: Total: _____

Outside Funding Expected: _____

Project Summary-Brief proposal description:

Description of the property and its current use.

Property's local and regional importance as an agricultural or opens space resource.

Description of development pressure.

Proposed project's compliance with local plans such as comprehensive plan, green infrastructure plan, or farmland protection plan.

Project Budget:

Total estimated cost of Proposed Project: _____

Amount and sources of other outside funding sources: _____

Amount of County Grant funds being requested: _____

Estimated value of land if Fee Acquisition _____

Estimated value of Conservation Easement _____

Survey Cost: _____

Appraisal Cost: _____

Baseline mapping and documentation: _____

Title search and Title Insurance: _____

Administrative Costs, (including legal): _____

Stewardship/Monitoring Costs: _____

Required Project Maps:

Location map showing street names and important landmarks

Aerial photo with tax map overlay

Soils Map showing prime farmland soils and statewide significant soils and acreages

For Open Space applications, locations of connecting trails and associated amenities

Submit one (1) electronic copy of the grant application and three (3) hard copies of the application and materials to:

Jeffrey Williams, Planner
Saratoga County Planning Department
50 West High Street
Ballston Spa, NY 12020
518-884-4705
JWilliams@saratogacountyny.gov