



Farmers Market Promotional & Retail Grant Program Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program Application Guidelines - Fiscal Year 2015-2016

A. General Information:

The purpose of the Farmers Market Promotion and Retail Grant Program is to increase **income to Tennessee farmers by providing assistance for the promotion and/or improvement of farmers markets** in communities throughout Tennessee. Farmers markets provide excellent venues for agricultural producers to sell their locally grown, farm fresh products directly to consumers.

- **Grants are available to qualified Farmers Markets in amounts up to \$1,000**
- **Funding is limited and grant requests are competitive**

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture is providing this opportunity through the Tennessee Agricultural Enhancement Program (TAEP). TAEP is a direct result of the State of Tennessee's continued commitment to supporting farm development and Tennessee's agricultural community.

Program Timeline	
Application Deadline:	December 15, 2015
Approval Announcement:	January 15, 2016
Project Deadline:	November 30, 2016

B. Eligibility Requirements:

1. Grant funds are available to **publicly owned and operated farmers markets** for promotion and certain retail activities. *Grants are not available for private individuals, businesses or organizations.*
2. Grants must be issued through **public entities** such as a city or county government, local Chamber of Commerce, etc. Applications must be postmarked no later than **December 15, 2015.**
3. Projects must be completed and invoices submitted no later than **November 30, 2016.**
4. Activities must meet all state and local building, food safety, and regulatory requirements.

C. Eligible Activities:

Proposed activities must serve to improve or expand the sales at the farmers market through the following activities:

- 1. Promotion & Advertising**, including but not limited to:
 - a. print media
 - b. radio
 - c. television
 - d. advertising requests must merit the size of the community serviced
 - e. approved advertising projects must interface with TDA promotional campaigns (i.e., include Pick Tennessee Products logo)

- 2. Public Use Considerations**, including but not limited to:
 - a. central heat and air
 - b. concession areas
 - c. handicap accessibility
 - d. lighting
 - e. parking areas
 - f. restroom facilities (permanent)

- 3. Marketing**, including but not limited to:
 - a. brochures
 - b. direct promotions
 - c. maps
 - d. signs and posters
 - e. website development (*must provide quote from a professional service provider; annual fees such as domain and hosting costs are **NOT** eligible*)
 - f. **Educational scholarships** (up to \$300) for market managers, staff and/or vendors to attend the Annual Meeting of Tennessee Association of Farmers Markets (TAFM). Eligible costs include mileage, registration fees and lodging per the state's travel regulations. Meetings to be held at:

Pick TN Conference - February 11-13, 2016 - Knoxville Marriott
Visit www.PickTNConference.com for more information!

- 4. Retail Considerations**, including but not limited to:
 - a. counters
 - b. loading dock
 - c. refrigeration equipment (i.e., fruit and vegetable cooling equipment)
 - d. utility sinks for fruit and vegetable sale preparation
 - e. shelters
 - f. permanent display tables and shelving for sales floor
 - g. shopping carts
 - h. tables

- 5. Ineligible costs include**, but are not limited to,
- a. administrative and overhead costs
 - b. general office equipment (computers, copiers, scanners, etc.)
 - c. community festivals and other special events held on-site
 - d. commercial or demonstration kitchens
 - e. give-a-way items or merchandising items
 - f. motorized vehicles (golf carts, lawn mowers, tractors, etc.)
 - g. paying off existing debt
 - h. purchase of property
 - i. travel and other travel expenses related to the day-to-day operation of the organization (with the exception of Tennessee Association of Farmers Markets Annual Meeting Scholarship).
 - j. salaries, wages, and fringe benefits of employees

D. Application Process:

1. Complete and submit **TAEP Farmers Market Promotion and Retail Grant Application** by the postmark deadline of **December 15, 2015**. Applications are available through the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Market Development office at (615) 837-5346 or via e-mail at Jan.Keyser@tn.gov.
2. The application will be evaluated and ranked by a Tennessee Department of Agriculture committee. The applicant will be notified in writing of their approval or disapproval for grant assistance. **Only projects that are approved in advance by TDA will be eligible for grant assistance.** Approved projects must be completed and invoices submitted by the project deadline.

E. Application Evaluation Criteria:

Only applications that are complete and include sufficient information will be considered for evaluation.

Important considerations will be the overall soundness of the proposed activity's goals, objectives, local commitment, project management and work plan. As part of the evaluation process, a meeting with the applicant and/or a visit to the applicant's enterprise may be required.

1. Describe your organization.
 - a. Year established
 - b. Management overview (dedicated manager or management team, farmers advisory committee or board of directors with significant Tennessee farmer participation)
 - c. Organizational goals
 - d. Describe how your market is promoted (advertising, events, outreach, website)

- e. Describe the current facilities of your farmers market (structures, parking, restrooms, flooring, climate control, handicap accessibility, permanent signage)
- 2. Have you applied for funding through the TDA previously?
 - a. Program name: TAEP or TN Ag Development Fund (Ag Tag)
 - b. Fiscal year(s)
 - c. Brief description of project(s)
 - d. Amount approved
 - e. Amount paid
 - f. Results of past project(s)
- 3. Describe your proposed project(s).
 - a. List each proposed project individually.
 - b. Indicate how the project(s) will benefit your market's vendors and help increase their farm income.
- 4. Provide a **detailed, line-item budget** for each proposed activity. Indicate which items will be involved in grant funding. Include written cost estimates from vendor or source of quote. **Maximum amount of request is \$1,000.**

F. Tennessee Department of Agriculture reserves the right to:

- 1. Consider each funding request on a case by case basis
- 2. Reject any or all requests
- 3. Provide partial funding for specific activity components that may be less than the full amount requested
- 4. Provide funding contingent on receiving additional information or testimony from the applicant
- 5. Waive or modify minor irregularities in requests
- 6. Require the applicant to work with the Tennessee Department of Agriculture to complete all aspects of the application and reporting requirements

G. Contract Process:

- 1. A grant contract will be issued by TDA for each approved application. Funding is not considered approved until the applicant receives an approval letter and a fully executed copy of this signed contract. The Grantee will be required to submit various information including Federal W-9 and ACH (Automated Clearing House) forms.
- 2. **Any changes to the executed contract**, including changes to the approved budget, must be approved in advance and in writing by TDA.
- 3. The staff of TDA will monitor and evaluate each funded activity. TDA reserves the right to make site visits relating to the performance of the activity during and following completion.

H. Reporting Requirements:

Following the completion of the approved grant activity, the applicant will complete a **Project Summary** and return it to TDA. The format of this report will be specified by TDA. This report must include:

1. Activity Summary
 - a. Brief description of the completed activity and its objectives
 - b. Financial impact of activity to farm income and the community
 - c. Other benefits of the activity
2. Documentation (if applicable)
 - a. Receipts of actual expenses as outlined in activity budget
 - b. Photographs of activities, equipment or facilities, built, purchased and/or installed
 - c. Copies of marketing materials prepared and/or purchased
3. Forms
 - a. Invoice for actual amount of reimbursement based on amount authorized
 - b. The invoice must clearly relate each expenditure to corresponding approved items in the application

I. Payments:

Following TDA review of the materials submitted, and if no additional information or site visits are required, the Department will process payment to the applicant.

J. Contact Information:

Please direct any questions concerning this program to:

Jan Keyser, Marketing Specialist - TAEP
Tennessee Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 40627, Holeman Building
Nashville, TN 37204
(615) 837-5346
Jan.Keyser@tn.gov
www.tn.gov/taep