

State announces \$50 million for Farmland Protection projects, eligibility criteria expanded

On June 2, Governor Kathy Hochul announced that nearly \$50 million in funding is available through the Farmland Protection Implementation Grants Program.

For Round 19 of the State's Farmland Protection program, \$47.5 million will be awarded to projects that support the state's top priorities, including food security, climate resiliency, and source water protection. In addition, the eligibility criteria for the program has been expanded again, now including three new categories: field crops, livestock or livestock products, and access to farmland. Access to farmland is specifically intended to help address ongoing challenges facing new and beginning farmers as well as retiring farmers in this area. Round 18 was the first time the eligibility criteria for the Farmland Protection program had been expanded, including the agroforestry, equine, and wine sectors to reflect New York's diverse agricultural industry.

As part of the funding awarded, \$4.5 million will be allocated to each of the State's 10 economic development regions. Round 19 also continues the one-time incentive payment of 10% of the value of the agricultural conservation easement being required for projects that meet climate resilience or source water protection goals.

Eligible applicants can apply for the Farmland Protection program through the Grants Gateway at www.grantsmanagement.ny.gov/. Applications are being accepted on a rolling basis until funds are exhausted.