



## Agenda Item Summary

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**File #: 25-00493**

**Agenda Date: 8/12/2025**

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**Agenda Item Name:**

**Request Approval of 2025 Small Farmer Grants**

**Presenter:**

Bailey McClellan, Agricultural Economic Development Coordinator, 352-374-5260 ext 2233

**Description:**

Requesting Board approval of the 2025 recommended Small Farmer Grants

**Recommended Action:**

Approve the list of recommended 2025 Small Farmer Grants for a total award amount of \$115,753.68. This approval authorizes the allocation of \$15,753.68 from Revenue Recovery Funds for this program. The awards shall be distributed as follows: full funding for the 24 applicants who scored 29 points or higher, amounting to \$113,535.11; and an equal division of the remaining \$2,218.57 among the 3 applicants who scored 28 points, resulting in \$739.52 per applicant.

**Prior Board Motions:**

On the April 8, 2025 Consent Agenda the Board approved the 2025 Small Farmer Grant Methodology and authorized the County Manager to advertise and solicit grant applications.

**Fiscal Note:**

There is a balance of \$15,753.68 from the original grant allocation of Revenue Recovery Funds which will be expended first. The FY25 budget also includes \$100,000 from general fund sources to support small farmer grants in FY2025. General Fund: 001.45.4501.552.82.53 account description: aid to private organizations private development; Revenue Recovery – ARPA: 052.17.1770.552.82.53: ARP2021x018 Small Producer Ag Capital Support Grants.

Economic Development has offered to fund the cost (up to \$135/applicant) for up to 50 small farmers in Alachua County to take a course offered by UF/IFAS and create a Farm Plan. Funding for this will come from the Economic Development's operating budget. There is \$552 available in training and education: 001.45.4501.552.55.00 and there is available budget that will be reallocated to this line if needed.

**Strategic Guide:**

Social and Economic Opportunity

**Background:**

On Monday, June 30, 2025, the scoring committee comprised of Dr. Cindy Sanders, Sean McLendon,

and Bailey McClellan met in a public meeting to review the scores and determine funding recommendations. A maximum of 40 points are possible on the grant.

The scoring committee requests that the Board approve the 2025 list of recommended Small Farmer Grants to 27 qualifying applicants including 3 who are recommended for partial awards. In addition, staff is seeking authorization for the inclusion of \$15,753.68 from the original grant allocation of Revenue Recovery Funds.

Applications are available in Commission Services for review. For 2025, 64 grant applications were submitted for review totaling \$291,278.86 in funding requests.

The grant review team recommends the Board award applicants who scored 29 points or higher (24 applications) the full amount requested in their applications. The combined total of those full funding recommendations amounts to \$113,535.11.

The grant review team also recommends the Board to evenly divide the remaining balance of \$2,218.57 to the 3 applicants who scored 28 points, resulting in \$739.52 each in grant funding. The total 2025 grant award will be \$115,753.68.

The median score of all applications was 26, the average score was 26, and the overall mode was 22.

Since 2021, the Board's Small Farmer Grant program has been utilized as a fast deploy, targeted capital grant program for small producers. This framework complements the County's strategic commitment to Achieving Social and Economic Opportunity for All and the Board's Comprehensive Plan Food System Goals in the Economic Element.

Grant funding is limited to the capital equipment needs of Alachua County residents who have small agricultural operations producing food for people that are all contained within Alachua County. For the grant, a small producer (farm) is a commercial operation with an established gross cash income of at least \$1,000 but no more than \$250,000 per year from the regular harvest and sale of crop, livestock, or aquaculture products meant for human consumption. Examples are grain, honey, fruit, vegetable, dairy, and livestock operations.

To qualify, the funding request must be for capital improvements or equipment to assist the farm in producing, harvesting, cleaning, value-added processes, food safety, and pre or post-processing an Alachua County-produced farm product meant for human consumption.

Funds are limited to one award of up to \$5,000 per farm.

Grant funds must be used for:  
Alachua County residents on Alachua County farms.  
For human food production only.

Grant funds are NOT:  
Applicable to hemp, medicinal, or pharmacological products  
Applicable to food trucks, landscape nurseries.

#### Scoring Criteria

First-Time Applicant: Applicants who have not applied before or who have not received a grant award in the past two years will be eligible for 5 bonus points.

**Economic Priority:** Applications from small producers with annual gross cash incomes between \$1,000 and \$75,000 will be given priority. The award will be 10 points for annual gross cash incomes between \$1,000 and \$75,000, 5 points for annual gross cash income between \$75,001 and \$150,000, and 2 points for annual gross cash income between \$150,001 and \$250,000.

**Viability Priority:** Priority will be given to applications for capital equipment that demonstrate an enhancement, cost avoidance, or savings of the economic productivity of the small producer's operation. A maximum of 20 points may be awarded for projects that define the specific equipment needed, cost, how it will be utilized, and economic return to the operations. See below for specific questions to be answered.

### **Incentive Points**

To promote small farms' economic viability and financial sustainability, the County will award five (5) points to any application showing proof of completing the Agricultural Extension Office's Agricultural Entrepreneurship Series with a Farm Plan.

As an added incentive to take the course and create a Farm Plan, the County will offer to pay the cost (estimated cost \$135/applicant) for up to 50 small farmers in Alachua County. The course funds will not reduce the award amount if the applicant is approved for funding and takes advantage of the scholarship.

To receive the incentive points, the applicant must have completed the coursework and appended their farm plan to the application.

### **Tie-in to Other Food System Projects**

Applicant information will be shared with the Food Hub project partners and other institutional food purchasing programs for potential food purchases.

**Food System Map.** Data from the application will be put into the County's Food System Map.

### **Award and Reporting**

Grant awards are distributed via purchase orders to expedite the disbursement of funds.

Up to 25% of the award amount may be disbursed without backup documentation. Before the county issues payment, any remaining amounts due must be supported with photos and receipts.

Awardees must claim their funds with all supporting reimbursement documentation within six (6) months of staff notifying them of their award. Full reimbursement of funds will require copies of receipts from purchased/installed materials and pictures of the equipment/capital investment in place and in operation.