

# Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program Report

Fiscal Year 2024  
July 1-June 30, 2024

June 2024

The Durham County Board of County Commissioners approved an allocation for the Agricultural Economic Development Grant Program of \$250,000 for the fiscal year 2024. This program's purpose is to offer cost share grants to assist farmers and nonprofits in their agricultural endeavors and to promote Agriculture Development and Outdoor Environmental Learning Centers in schools.

Therefore, two types of grants are available:

- Small grants for Agriculture Development in schools: Up to \$1,500.00
- Grants for farmers: Up to \$10,000.00

The Agricultural Economic Development Grant Subcommittee administers this grant program. This committee is made up of nine (9) members that manage the program and evaluate each application. These nine members represent multiple agencies that assist the farming community as well as members of local non profit advisory boards.

The grant application was released on July 1, 2023. The Application Deadline was August 25, 2023 at 11:59 pm. Upon receipt, staff redacted all personal information of the 33 farm and 1 school applications received. These 34 applicants requested \$282,920 with an estimated total project cost of \$357,174. The committee reviewed all applications and were able to fund 1 school and 29 farm projects to utilize this year's allocation.

### FY2024 AED Grant Committee

<b>David Harris, Chair</b> Durham SWCD Board Supervisor	<b>Eddie Culberson</b> Director of Durham SWCD
<b>Anjali Boyd</b> Durham SWCD Board Supervisor	<b>Mark Waller</b> Farmland Protection Advisory Board member
<b>Donna Rewalt</b> NC Cooperative Extension Director	<b>Tina Miller</b> Farm Service Agency Director
<b>Justin Page</b> NC Farm Bureau member	<b>Matthew Eagle</b> Farmland Protection Advisory Board member
<b>Kelly Crane</b> Farmer FoodShare, Inc.	<b>Lisa Marochak &amp; Sherry Scully</b> Durham SWCD staff support

### Inside this Report:

Program Data	Pg. 2
Jordan High School	Pg. 3
Kindred Micro Farms/ Toad Hill Farm	Pg. 4
Good Soil Gardens/ Vine and Branch Flowers	Pg. 5
Many Rivers Farm/ Redwood	Pg. 6
Laurel Farm	Pg. 7
Clear Black Flowers / UCAN	Pg. 8
Piedmont Micro-greens / Fourth Man Farm	Pg. 9
Rooted Tree	Pg. 10
Blue Sun International / Bull City Farm	Pg. 11



**Soil & Water**

201 E Main St, Fl 5

Durham, NC 27701

919-560-0558

[WWW.dconc.gov/swcd](http://WWW.dconc.gov/swcd)

## Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program Farm Applications and Service Productivity Data

Program Impact & Data	FY 24
Funding level	\$ 250,000
Request for funding from applicants	\$ 282,920
Number of applications	34
Number of farm applications	33
Number of M/WBE applications (farms)	21
Number of non profits that applied	2
Number of Schools that applied	1
Number of farm projects funded	29
Percentage of M/WBE contracts awarded	79%
Number of Farms funded for Food Safety Compliance	4
Number of schools funded	1

Break down of Project types	FY24 Applicants	Funded
Number of farm operations that raise livestock only	10	10
Number of farm operations that raise livestock & produce	7	5
Number of farms that grow produce only	9	7
Projects that improved access/equity/non profits with direct sales	5	4
Schools supporting Agriculture Education	1	1
Other Agriculture Commodities produced (Hay, flowers, compost, etc.)	6	5

## Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program



Before and After



Agriculture teachers at Jordan High School teach life skills through their hands-on curriculum and ag programs.

Extra growing space with added raised beds in the

greenhouse and yard allows for more opportunities for the students to learn how to grow vegetables and flowers.

Being involved with this production gives students experiences they may not have otherwise. There is nothing like watching a seed grow into a plant. To

then sell the plant adds more depth to the learning experience and another aspect of ag business.





## Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program



Adding a large fenced in area and raised beds have allowed this grower to grow more plant starts and vegetables with fewer pest



*“Thanks so much for getting us through the grant last year. Due to that [Ag Economic Development] grant I was able to set up the growing stations and garden and this season I am reaping the rewards of it through my sales at the market.”*

*~Kindred Micro Farms*

Propagation houses like this one allow for extended growing seasons and a controlled environment. Both are beneficial and increase yields.

*“The Propagation House (purchased with AED funds) has allowed us to up our seedling game immensely. We were able to grow all seedlings this year rather than making purchases of seedlings which has saved us a lot. In addition, having automated irrigation has allowed us efficiency and less plant mortality.”*

*~Toad Hill Farm*



Toad Hill  
Farm

## Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program

The ag grant allowed this grower of Good Soil Gardens to create a suitable area to prepare floral arrangements in a workspace and cold storage to preserve the arrangement. Therefore, this project allows for increase in sales and time savings on farm.



Drainage piping and pump placed amid raised garden beds allows for better drainage in and around beds at this urban farm that has experienced flooding in recent years.

*“Oh my goodness, I’m so excited! Thank you SO much for all your help, answering my many questions and for reaching out and informing me about this grant opportunity. This is going to make such a difference in my 2024 growing season and beyond. Thank you, thank you, thank you!”*  
~ Vine and Branch Flowers





## Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program

### Many Rivers Farm

#### A Sustainable Orchard



The addition of the solar panels to the “farm stand gave us the ability to sell beverages. Because of a late spring freeze in 2023, we had few peaches and a down apple crop. Nonetheless, we were able to increase sales as a result of the addition of serving beverages; specifically peach tea and blackberry lemonade which accounted for approximately 25% of our total sales. Additionally, customers really liked them so we hope that will have the added benefit of getting customers to come more often.”

~ Many Rivers Farm

Solar Panels provide heat for greenhouse and pump for well. This allows for growth in product and therefore, growth in sales. “My market has opened to serve another large scale store with tree seedlings in the spring.”

~ Redwood Farm



## Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program



Here at Laurel Farm, “we are so thankful for the grant that we received to help us erect a barn on our family farm. It has been such a help to us to provide much needed shelter for the animals that we are raising. Just recently we were able to use it when we had three new baby goats born. The barn has allowed us to expand our operation and be more productive. Thank you again for considering us.”

~ Laurel Farm





## Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program



*The deer fence/wildlife exclusion fence has been a complete game changer for our farm, saving us a ton of stress and money. Just a year and a half later, plants have been able to reach maturity and be productive in a way that would absolutely have not been possible before. Honestly, I probably would have given up by now if it wasn't for the grant funds that help build the fence.*



Clear Black Flowers



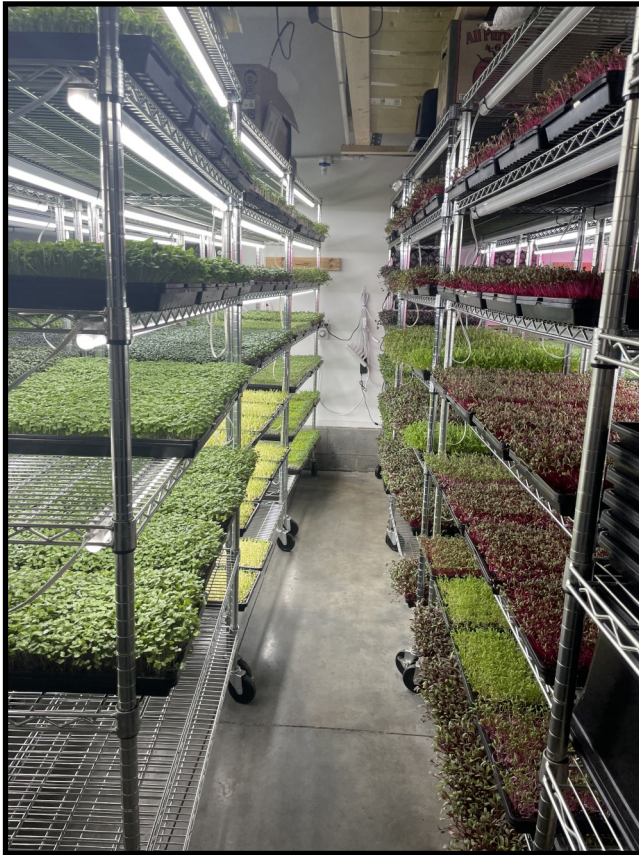
*Our high tunnel “will allow us to plant and harvest year-round. In doing so, it gives us the opportunity to provide more educational and recreational activities and programs and more free or affordable fruits and vegetables to the community.”*

*~ Urban Community Agronomics*





## Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program



Grant funds allow for purchases to support business efficiencies which improve the net margins of this agribusiness. *“We also used the funds to improve our company branding and marketing. We worked with a professional designer to create awesome new retail labels for our efforts to expand into grocery stores.”*

~PMG



Value-added products can boost sales. This vacuum sealer allows for a more efficient, food-safe method of providing value added products to the consumer.





## Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program



*“I used the funds to buy a specialized piece of equipment and materials for basic infrastructure needs. The grant helped me increase efficiency and scale production in the early stages of my farm's development -- a huge boon at a critical stage.”*

~ Rooted Tree





# Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program



*“The grant supporting our sheep barn construction was critical to our future development as a sheep farm- it’s enabled us to move the sheep away from a lake that drains directly into Jordan Lake, and has enabled us to construct modern sheep handling pens alongside it. We were able to monitor and control feed to the flock through the winter in our new barn, resulting in much better health for the entire flock. The pens have enabled us to monitor for hoof disease and treat it, and monitor for parasites.”*

An Egg Washer can be a real “game changer” for a business handling crates of eggs!

~ Bull City Farm

