

Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program Report

Fiscal Year 2023
July 1-June 30, 2023

September 2023

The Durham County Board of County Commissioners approved an allocation for the Agricultural Economic Development Grant Program of \$150,000 for the fiscal year 2023. 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 \$7,500.00

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, 2022. The Application Deadline was August 31, 2022 at 5:00 pm. Upon receipt, staff redacted all personal information of the 33 farm and 3 school applications received. These 36 applicants requested \$200,710 with an estimated total project cost of \$245,428. The committee reviewed all applications and were able to fund 24 farm and 3 school projects to utilize this year's allocation.

FY2023 AED Grant Committee

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

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Soil & Water

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Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program Farm Applications and Service Productivity Data

Program Impact & Data	FY 23
Funding level	\$ 150,000
Request for funding from applicants	\$ 200,710
Number of applications	36
Number of farm applications	33
Number of M/WBE applications (farms)	18
Number of non profits that applied	6
Number of Schools that applied	3
Number of farm projects funded	24
Percentage of M/WBE contracts awarded	75%
Number of Farms funded for Food Safety Compliance	6
Number of schools funded	3

Break down of Project types	FY23 Applicants	Funded
Number of farm operations that raise livestock only	5	3
Number of farm operations that raise livestock & produce	7	6
Number of farms that grow produce only	12	10
Projects that improved access/equity/non profits with direct sales	7	4
Schools supporting Agriculture Education	3	3
Other Agriculture Commodities produced (Hay, flowers, compost, etc.)	8	6

Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program



Southern High School of Energy and Sustainability students through their Occupational Course of Study classes, transformed 24 raised garden beds by weeding and refilling beds with compost after fire ant removal. They covered the surrounding area with mulch.

BEFORE

This space will be planted with native plants and trees that will be utilized in rain garden designs throughout Durham.

This project taught students landscaping skills, irrigation engineering, critical thinking skills, and agricultural awareness.



AFTER



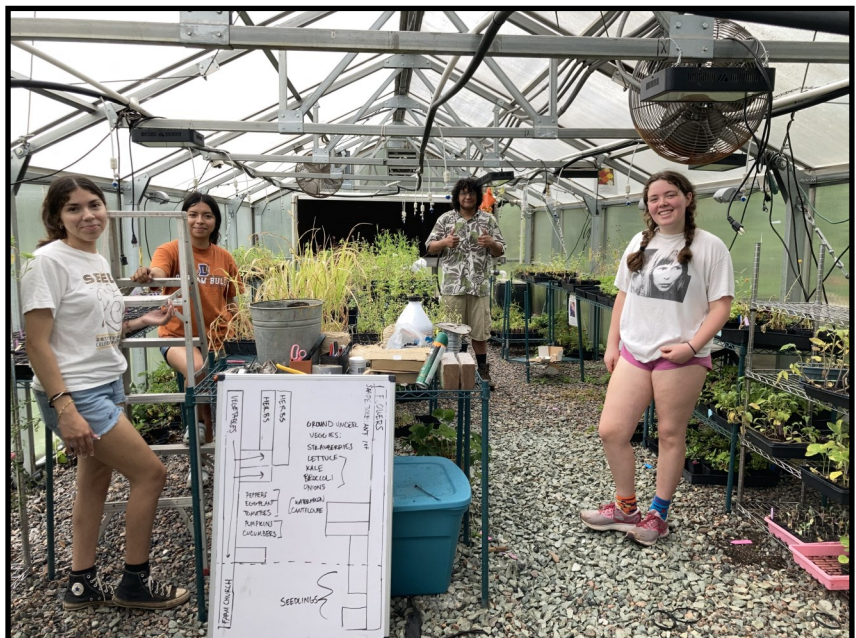
SOUTHERN
SCHOOL OF ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program



SEEDS used grant funds to install irrigation throughout their urban growing space. An overhead irrigation system was also added to the SEEDS greenhouse. Funds were also used to purchase irrigation timers. This system will create a large time

savings and more accurately watered plants. Shade cloth was also purchased for the greenhouse. The installation of this project allowed students a wonderful, new, hands-on learning experience and understanding of what goes into growing a production garden.



Students complete irrigation in greenhouse.

Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program



The grant funds aided this producer with the installation of a cooled farm kitchen processing area. “I am amazed at how well it has cooled the space. A cooler space means we can close the doors, keeping the flies out and start cooling the birds down before they go to the walk-in cooler. A big Thank You to our County Commissioners for supporting the Durham Ag Economic Development Grants each year and to Durham Soil and Water for administering it.”

~ Bull City Farm





This u-pick operation applied for funds to enhance their ability to grow more during season and to provide a safer, cleaner experience with a portable hand washing station.

“We had the best turnout we have ever had this past Saturday!”

These amendments are really appreciated by customers and show the extra effort made by the producer to create a better experience.



Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program



Durham Greens Farm

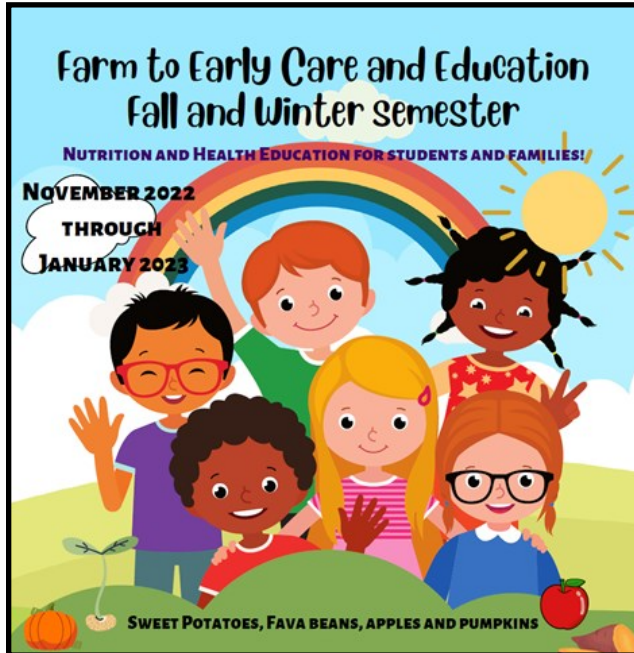


The construction of two high tunnels were supported with grant funds this year. These structures allow growers to start plants earlier and therefore have a longer growing season. The temperature and moisture are controlled in these spaces.

The first season growing in a new space always has its challenges. But one grower was able to harvest peppers and tomatoes much earlier thanks to the installation of this project.

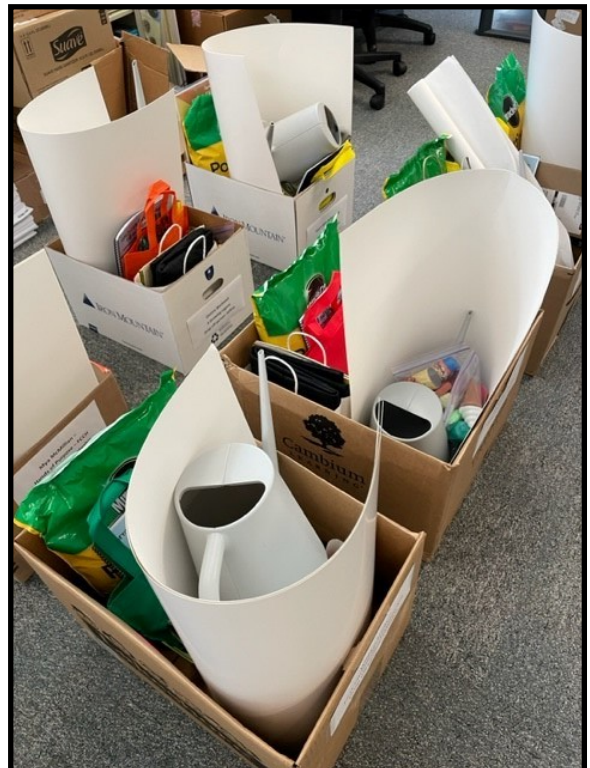


Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program



Durham's Partnership for Children applied for grant funds to enhance their 2020 Initiative of Farm to Early Care and Education Collaborative. Project goals included the support kids, families, farmers, educators and the community. Funds were used to provide gardening kits for classrooms. Students learned how to grow vegetables like Sweet Potatoes and beans.

Discussion of nutrition was a relatable and educational topic with students while growing the vegetables. The Durham Department of Public Health's DINE team was involved to carry out this education to students.



Garden kits provided to 15 Pre-K sites

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On the Ricks Farm, an alley catch system and cattle scales allow for cattle to be moved into a chute and worked safely by the managers. Systems like these allow animals to stay calm which is not only the best for their health but also allows for higher weight gains due to a more stress free environment. Use of the scale provides accurate weight of cows to be taken allowing producer to provide proper care and management of the animal. This project has really benefited this farm.



Sifting and loading of compost and worm castings is essential to this vermiculture business operation. New side shelter with concrete pad on existing building allows for efficiency of business and dry storage of compost and castings that must be stored off bare ground and out of the elements per state recommendations. Construction of wall at north side of bay allows for loading of material for customers.



Agriculture Economic Development Grant Program



Walk-In Cooler provides much needed storage for vegetables and microgreens



Cooler at Agritourism business allows for pre-picked produce and flowers to be stored properly until sold



Page Farms

Producers enjoy the ability to store produce, meat, eggs, and flowers in cooler systems. This provides a fresher product to be offered at u-pick operation, ability to harvest product in advance of market days, and safer, longer storage of products. This project therefore allows opportunity for increased sales and time savings on farm. These are two farms among many that have applied for and received funding for cooler units.

Nonprofit that uses horses for their customers' therapy, find the garden an opportunity for healing as well. Additions to the garden will allow youth and their mentors to spend more time picking and planting rather than maintaining the space. A handicapped accessible bed allows a space for all.

“Thanks again for your excellent support of our garden program at Hope Reins. Kids have been participating daily for seven weeks.”





Jubilee Home which works with men in the Durham community to create a place that bridges the gap between incarceration and full independence used grant money to fund a storage shed.

Storage racks and totes and a refrigerator for vegetable storage all aid in the production and sale of fresh produce from the garden. Their first season of growing, the garden produced a quarter ton of produce for Jubilee Home and the surrounding community.



Jubilee Home



The additions to an existing barn on Woods Farm have allowed for hay storage. Hay stored is a more valuable product when kept out of weather and therefore more profitable at time of sale.



“The Ag Economic Development Grant allowed us to expand our growing area, bring irrigation up to date, and double our shed space to accommodate additional tools and supplies for updated food safety practices. Thanks to this grant, Farm Church is able to provide more quantity and quality local produce to food insecure individuals around Durham across an expanded growing season.

“We couldn't have done it without you!”



FARM CHURCH

