

Frequently Asked Questions



Q: What is the 2024 Connecting Communities initiative?

A: In 2024, Michigan Farm Bureau is launching resources, templates, and a grant initiative to encourage county Farm Bureaus to conduct adult-focused consumer outreach to build relationships along the farm to fork path.

Q: What are the objectives of the 2024 Connecting Communities initiative?

A:

1. In 2024, one statewide media campaign will be managed by state staff including online media outlets including social, streaming services and web placements.
2. In 2024, County Farm Bureaus will be able to draw-down non-competitive grant dollars for execution of local activities in the categories of "Connect and Celebrate" or "Explore and Learn," as outlined in the grant application.
3. In 2023, the State P&E Committee and P&E staff will launch templates and toolkits to assist county Farm Bureaus in reaching consumer audiences through the 2024 grants.

Q: How did this Connecting Communities initiative come about?

A: The Connecting Communities initiative is in response to the MFB Board's strategic plan efforts to reshape core program events, considering feedback from the member-ed Core Program Review Taskforce and outcomes of the organization's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. Its goal is to encourage county Farm Bureaus to highlight agriculture to **adult consumers** by providing more kits and resources for this type of outreach.

Q: How will county Farm Bureaus access funding?

A: Each county Farm Bureau is eligible for up to \$1,000. These grant dollars may only be used toward activities in the two Connecting Communities categories: Connect and Celebrate or Explore and Learn.

Q: Can counties collaborate or combine funding?

A: Yes! Counties could collaborate in pairs or other small groups; or districts could combine efforts to develop larger, district-wide plans and submit one grant proposal. The application will need to clearly denote this collaboration and explicitly state which county is handling which portions of the financial transactions.

Q: When are applications due?

A: Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. on October 1, 2023.

Q: When will county Farm Bureaus receive payment of funds?

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A: The first half of each application's funding will be distributed in January 2024. The second half will be distributed upon completion of the project and submission of the final report. Projects and reports must be complete by December 31, 2024.

Q: How do I find the application?

A: The application is a Microsoft form available online here. It is also linked on the CAM portal, in promotional articles about the grant, and will be available on the P&E Chair portal (Share point site).

Q: Who should be completing the grant application?

A: While this initiative has been launched by the State Promotion and Education Committee, we realize each county Farm Bureau's structure functions differently. County P&E chairs, county presidents, a subgroup of the county board, or other group of members should develop the programming. CAMs could assist with administrative aspects of the grant.

Q: What sort of resources are being provided by MFB, beyond financial support?

A: By June 2023 packages of resources will be announced to assist in adult consumer outreach. The State P&E Committee has listened to brainstorming and requests through district meetings and local conversation to shape a list of resources to be further developed or updated by staff to assist county Farm Bureaus in this outreach. Grant funds could be used to purchase these resources. Examples could include posters, templates for interactive booths or games, scripts, template invites, social promotion graphics, etc. These items will be announced in June 2023 but will not be available until 2024.

Ideas to amplify current events or partnerships: A Project RED that's hosted as part of a series of chamber of commerce for local community leaders, extend the statewide media campaign by purchasing complimentary advertising locally (MFB will have the templates), ask an FFA advisor to participate in a school-wide career fair reaching students in and outside of FFA, create an incentive or passport for community members to visit all agritourism locations in your county

Q: Can an existing program receive funding?

A: The grant can be used to amplify or add to a current consumer outreach initiative. However, this growth or update in the program will need to be explained in the application.

Q: What will not be funded by the Connecting Communities grant?

A: Things that will not be funded: FARM Science Lab, FARM Crates, Project RED (for kids), K-12 educational resources UNLESS it's a career focus for high school students showing opportunities in agriculture careers locally.

Q: If this grant program is in place of the Voice of Agriculture Conference, will the conference return in future years?

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A: Based on the MFB State Board of Directors' current strategic plan, Connecting Communities will happen in 2024, Growing Together will happen in 2025, and then the board will be revisiting their strategic plan to determine the future trajectory of Core Programming.

Q: If there isn't a Voice of Agriculture Conference, what happened to the Core Program fund dollars county Farm Bureaus pay in 2024?

A: Core Program dollars from county Farm Bureaus go to defer the costs of State Annual Meeting, President's Conference, Voice of Agriculture Conference, Young Farmer Leaders Conference, Lansing Legislative Conference, ProFILE, and Washington Legislative Conference. The Core Program funds paid in by county Farm Bureaus cover about 40% of the budget for these events. The remainder is funded through the state organization's budget and/or the Michigan Foundation for Agriculture. Consequently, Core Program dollars from county Farm Bureaus will be funding the Connecting Communities initiative.

Q: Who should we reach out to if we have questions about Connecting Communities?

A: If you are looking to brainstorm ideas for your county's grant project, reach to your district's State Promotion and Education Committee member. If you have questions about the logistics of the grant, reach to [Amelia Miller](#) or [Tonia Ritter](#) at MFB. If you have questions about the MFB Board of Director's Strategic Plan or ideas about the direction of Core Programs, reach to your MFB Board District Director.

Documents available to help with your Connecting Communities plans:

[Grant Outline and timeline](#)

[Grant Worksheet](#) (NOT the actual application, rather a guide to assist in planning your responses)

[Grant application](#)