



OVERVIEW FOR GRANT APPLICANTS SPRING 2024

Farmers Advocating for Organic (FAFO) began with the 2002 Farm Bill, which included an exemption for organic farmers from contributing to national promotion programs (e.g., “Got Milk?” and “Pork: The Other White Meat”). In response, Organic Valley devised a way for farmers to pool their exemptions into an organic-focused granting fund that would promote and advance organic farming.

OUR NAME SAYS IT ALL: FARMERS ADVOCATING FOR ORGANIC

FAFO is a grant program funded entirely by annual, voluntary contributions from Organic Valley farmers. It's the largest farmer-funded grant program in the U.S. and one of the few focused solely on organic. The fund provides a way for Organic Valley farmers to address the long-term needs of the organic marketplace and the future of organic agriculture by supporting the development of long-term solutions. Through combining resources, Organic Valley farmers are able to invest in projects that affect the livelihoods of organic farmers across the country.

Simply said, FAFO is organic farmers helping organic farmers.



80%

of Organic Valley farmers
contribute to FAFO

FAFO FUNDS PROJECTS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Grants are awarded to research, education and advocacy projects that advance FAFO's mission:
to protect and promote the organic industry and the livelihood of organic farmers.

RESEARCH	EDUCATION	ADVOCACY
Projects that conduct credible scientific research related to organic farmers, organic farming practices, and organic food	Projects that provide organic agricultural education for farmers, or educate consumers and other key stakeholders on the benefits of organic food and farming	Policy or consumer advocacy projects meant to protect organic integrity, organic standards, the organic marketplace, or the livelihood of organic farmers

Within the context of these categories, FAFO puts on emphasis on:

Projects that benefit family farmers who produce organic dairy, eggs, meat, produce, and grain/forage

Projects that focus on organic soil health and biology

Projects that strengthen CROPP Cooperative (internal)

**Since 2007,
over 300
grants have
been
awarded**

local?

Here at Organic Valley, we strongly believe in the importance of local, community-based projects in growing the organic movement. However, supporting these types of projects is not the purpose of the FAFO program. If you are looking for financial support for an organization with local reach, we invite you to submit a donation or sponsorship request [here](#).

INTERESTED IN APPLYING?

Non-profit organizations and academic/research institutions are eligible to submit a letter of interest (LOI) via our [online grant portal](#).

Application Deadlines

SPRING 2024 | LOI deadline: **March 1**, Application deadline: **March 15**

If your LOI is approved, you will be invited to submit a full application due March 15.

The sooner you submit your LOI, the more time you will have to work on the full application.

Decisions are announced 6 - 8 weeks following the application deadline.

Grant Amounts

One-time grants are awarded in the amounts of **\$5,000-\$50,000**, with an average grant award of **\$20,000** and the size of the award corresponding to the scope and impact of the project. Grants exceeding \$50,000 and multi-year grants are considered under extraordinary circumstances by invitation only.



applicant checklist

Check if your project meets the following criteria before applying:

- ✓ Advances FAFO's mission of protecting and promoting the organic industry or the livelihood of organic farmers (with an explicit focus on organic)
- ✓ Falls within the category of research, education, or advocacy
- ✓ Aligns with FAFO's strategic priorities (not required, but projects meeting these criteria are prioritized)
- ✓ Impact reaches beyond local community
- ✓ One-time grant requested in the amount of \$5,000-\$50,000, corresponding to project scope/impact
- ✓ Administrative overhead (indirect costs) does not exceed 5% of amount requested
- ✓ Conduct phone call with FAFO administration to review any progress and final reports after submission

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

In addition to the criteria outlined above, the FAFO Committee is currently prioritizing projects that demonstrate:

- **Solutions**

We're most interested in projects that implement solutions (or at the very least identify them).

- **Collaboration**

Have you explored what other organizations or individuals are working on the same goals? Have you sought to collaborate with them or build on what they have accomplished? The more collaboration we see, the more convinced we will be that awarding a grant to your project will have the greatest impact possible.

- **Uniqueness**

Many organizations have already developed successful programs, created useful resources, or conducted insightful research focused on organic. There's no need to reinvent the wheel – show us what's unique about your project or how it's building on what's already been done.

- **Additional sources of funding**

We want to see broad support for your project – it shouldn't rely entirely on FAFO funds. We're especially interested in matching grant opportunities. Projects with secured funding and multiple partners will receive a higher priority.

The FAFO Committee is not currently funding:

- Local/regional beginner farmer training programs that do not have a broad national impact
- Videos that are not entirely educational / fact-based (i.e. videos that include emotional appeals) and cannot be viewed in their entirety by the FAFO Committee in advance of being released





apply at
ov.coop/fafo

Questions?

Contact Cooperative Stewardship Coordinator, Shannon Suddeth
shannon.suddeth@organicvalley.coop

Farmers Advocating For Organic (FAFO) | 2024 LOI & Application Content

All applications must be submitted online via the grant portal. The letter of interest and application content is provided here for preview purposes only.

LETTER OF INTEREST (LOI)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION*

Provide a description of your project in a few words that explains what it is in practical terms.

For example: "Organic crop breeding research"

Character Limit: 75

PROJECT SUMMARY*

Summarize what you are doing and why in 50 words or less.

For example: "Conducting side-by-side field trials to determine if roller crimping a small grain cover crop before planting corn is an effective control for weeds."

Character Limit: 400

FAFO MISSION*

Explain how your project advances FAFO's mission: to protect and promote the organic industry or the livelihood of organic farmers.

Character Limit: 1200

FAFO GRANT CATEGORY*

Which of FAFO's grant categories does your project fall under?

- Research: projects that conduct credible scientific research related to organic farmers, organic farming practices, and organic food
- Education: projects that provide organic agricultural education for farmers, or educate consumers and other key stakeholders on the benefits of organic food and farming
- Advocacy: policy or consumer advocacy projects meant to protect organic integrity, organic standards, the organic marketplace, or the livelihood of organic farmers.

FAFO FUNDING PRIORITIES*

Which of FAFO's funding priorities does your project align with?

- Projects that benefit family farmers who produce organic dairy, eggs, meat, produce, and grain/forage
- Projects that focus on organic soil health and biology
- Projects that strengthen CROPP Cooperative (internal)
- My project does not address one of these priorities, but still aligns with the FAFO mission.

WHERE DID YOU HEAR ABOUT FAFO?*

Share how you heard about this grant opportunity.

Character Limit: 150

PROBLEM/NEEDS STATEMENT

State the problem or need within the organic food and farming industry or within Organic Valley specifically that your project/program will address.

Character Limit: 1200

PROJECT REACH

Organic Valley is strongly committed to supporting local, community-based non-profits dedicated to growing the organic food and farming movement. However, supporting local projects is not the purpose of the FAFO program. If you are looking for financial support for a project with local reach, please return to the Apply page of this portal and submit the form for a Donation & Sponsorship Request.

Explain how far-reaching the impact of your project will be, demonstrating how it will reach beyond your local community.

Character Limit: 1200

IMPACT ON ORGANIC VALLEY (if applicable)

Though not required, some projects directly benefit Organic Valley farmers or the business in general. If your project will have a direct impact on Organic Valley, describe how.

Character Limit: 1200

APPLICATION***Project Overview***

The responses provided in your LOI will be reviewed in conjunction with the responses provided here. Please avoid duplicating information that has already been provided. Narrative or bullet point form is acceptable.

GOALS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES*

Describe your major goals and the quantifiable results expected.

Character Limit: 1500

METHODOLOGY*

Describe the activities to be completed to achieve the desired outcomes.

Character Limit: 1500

EVALUATION OF SUCCESS*

Describe how you will evaluate the outcomes of your project to measure its success.

Character Limit: 1500

OUTREACH PLAN*

Explain how the results of this project/program will be used or shared to reach a wider audience or increase the project's impact.

Character Limit: 1500

COLLABORATION*

What other organizations or individuals are working on the same goals, and how will you collaborate with them? List any notable organizations or individuals with relevant expertise that will be involved with your project. The FAFO Committee will prioritize projects that demonstrate strong collaboration.

Character Limit: 2000

UNIQUENESS*

How is your project unique from other organizations' or individuals' projects that have shared goals?

Character Limit: 1500

TIMELINE*

Provide a timeline of the activities to be completed for your project.

Character Limit: 1500

COMPLETION DATE*

A final report will be due 30 days after the completion date listed here. **Grant recipients will not be eligible to apply for another grant until final reporting has been completed.**

PROJECT DURATION (# of months)***PROGRESS REPORT DATE (if applicable)**

If the project is longer than 9 months, a progress report is due before the completion date. You may choose the due date for your progress report based on expected milestones, but it should be at least 3 months before the completion date.

REPORT CONTENT*

Outline what will be included in any progress reports and/or a final report.

Character Limit: 1500

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (optional)

Share any additional information about the project that you would like us to consider.

Character Limit: 1500

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS (optional)

The amount of information provided on this electronic form is more than likely a sufficient amount of detail about your project. If you feel strongly there are additional materials that should be considered with this application you may attach them below. For context, please provide a list of the attached files here.

Character Limit: 1000

Attachments File Size Limit: 10 MB, 5 MB, 5 MB

Financial Information

REQUESTED GRANT AMOUNT*

FAFO currently awards one-time grants in the amounts of \$5,000 - \$50,000, with an average grant award of \$20,000 and the size of the award corresponding to the expected impact of the project. Grants exceeding \$50,000 are considered under extraordinary circumstances and by invitation only. FAFO is not currently awarding grants in multi-year installments.

TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET*

BUDGET*

Provide a line-item budget for the proposed project, including how the requested amount will be used. If useful, you may include a narrative explanation. If you are struggling to provide a clear budget overview in the space allowed, you can submit your budget as an attachment.

Character Limit: 3000

ORGANIZATION'S TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET LAST YEAR*

**If you are a university, you may also include your department's operating budget

ORGANIZATION'S TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET THIS YEAR*

**If you are a university, you may also include your department's operating budget

AMOUNT OF PROJECT FUNDS ALREADY SECURED*

OTHER COMMITTED FUNDING (if applicable)

If other funding has already been committed, list the organizations and dollar amounts that have been committed. The FAFO Committee is highly interested in matching grant opportunities and will prioritize projects that have other sources of funding.

Character Limit: 1000

SEEKING OTHER FUNDING (if applicable)

List other organizations that will be asked for funding, if any.

Character Limit: 1000

CONTINGENCY FUNDING*

Is this project contingent on receiving the full amount requested? (If the answer is "Yes," please explain)

Character Limit: 500

PREVIOUS SUPPORT FROM ORGANIC VALLEY

If your organization has previously received a FAFO grant or other financial support from Organic Valley, list the dollar amount(s) and year(s) here.

Character Limit: 1000