



ORGANIC FARMING RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Fostering the improvement and widespread adoption of organic farming.

2021 Request for Letters of Intent

for 2022 Grant Funding

The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) is a non-profit organization founded in 1990 to advance organic agriculture through scientific research. As a champion of organic farmers across the U.S., we work to foster the improvement and widespread adoption of organic farming systems by cultivating research, education, and federal policies that bring more farmers and acreage into organic production.

Each year OFRF offers grants for research projects on organic farming, ranching, and food systems that advances scientific knowledge and improves the practices, ecological sustainability, and economic prosperity of organic farms. OFRF Research Priority Areas are updated annually based on identified farmer needs and organizational priorities. To date, OFRF has invested over \$3M and awarded 355 grants. Research results from OFRF funded grants are open access and free for the general public at ofrf.org/research/.

OFRF requests Letters of Intent (LOI) with objectives that are realistically achievable with a modest level of funding. We acknowledge the importance of conducting long-term research to verify experimental results; however, OFRF cannot guarantee funding for any project beyond a single year.

OFRF will fund projects for up to \$20,000 for one year.

Eligibility Requirements and Proposal Deadlines

The Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) grant program is open to applicants residing and conducting research in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. OFRF does not fund projects outside of these countries.

In the 2021/22 grant round, OFRF is prioritizing early career and Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) applicants. We believe it is critical to foster the next generation of researchers and support historically underserved and marginalized communities, while also ensuring all farmers have the most up-to-date and science-based information.

Primary applicants or Co-PIs **must** identify as a farmer, rancher, or early career researcher. Early career researchers for this grant are defined as: pre-tenure faculty, postdoctoral associates, graduate students, and/or researchers that have received their MS or PhD within the past seven years (graduation year 2014). OFRF is reserving at least half of our grant funding to support historically underserved groups. We strongly encourage submissions from BIPOC applicants.

Additional Eligibility Requirements:

Farmers and ranchers are OFRF's primary constituency; your Letter of Intent must address a need (or needs) of farmers or ranchers, and present outcomes that are useful and accessible to farmers or ranchers. Funded research projects must include strong educational and outreach components and contain measurable outcomes. Projects should include expected impacts stemming from the results or outcomes of the projects.

- Proposals **must** involve farmers or ranchers in project design and implementation.
- Project **must** take place on certified organic land, ideally on working organic farms or ranches. The only exemption to organic certification are Priority Areas 5a and 5b or Priority Area 6 (economic and social challenges).

The deadline to submit your LOI is 5:00pm PST **August 20, 2021**. Successful applicants will be notified in Fall 2021 and invited to submit a full proposal.

2021-2022 Priority Areas

At OFRF, we recognize that climate change is, and will continue to be, one of the most pressing challenges for farmers and ranchers, and society as a whole. Organic agriculture has great potential to sequester carbon, mitigate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, reduce the environmental impacts of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, and build resilience to a changing climate in our farms, ranches, rural communities, and food systems.

In order to maximize the potential of organic agriculture to be part of the climate solution, this year's research grants will support projects that directly address the climate crisis by reducing net GHG emissions, adapting operations to shifting weather patterns, and building resilience. These projects may be research-based or integrated (research, education, and/or extension). Proposal submissions must meet one or more of the six research priority areas listed below.

Priority Area - Production:

1. Soil Health Focus: Research that advances soil health and fertility, such as cover cropping, increasing soil organic matter, and reducing tillage to sequester carbon, mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, and build resilience to climate change stressors.
2. Weed, Pest, Disease Management Focus: Research on innovative and systems-level approaches to weed, pest, and disease management that conserve and promote biodiversity, minimize the need for external inputs, and enhance carbon sequestration.
3. Resilient Cultivars Focus: Research on breeding and development of new crop cultivars resilient to climate disruption, such as cultivars with increased water and nutrient efficiency, or stress and disease resistance.
4. Livestock and Poultry Focus: Research that enhances climate resilience for poultry and livestock production, advanced practices for grazing management and greenhouse gas reduction, and organic crop-livestock interactions.

Priority Area - Social Science:

5. a) Research on barriers and best practices to transition to organic farming systems.
- b) Research that supports underserved organic farmers and ranchers address the climate challenge.

Priority Area - Resilience:

6. Research on innovative practices or systems-approaches to address critical emerging issues related to climate, environmental, economic, or social challenges with the goal of improving resilience on organic farms and ranches.

Letter of Intent Submission Requirements

All Letters of Intent must be submitted electronically. The online application can be found at ofrf.org. Please use 12-point font for all text in the LOI. The word limit in each section is rigorously enforced to ensure fairness. LOIs that surpass the word limit will not be considered for funding. **Upload your LOI as a single PDF and include the following items:**

1. **Project title.** Include the name, phone number, address, and electronic contact information for the principal investigator (PI) and Co-PI's of the project (if applicable).
2. **Organic certification.** Is the research area on certified organic land? Yes or no. If this project is not on certified organic land, explain why (100 words). *Note: the only exemption to organic certification are Priority Areas 5a, 5b, and 6 (economic and social challenges).*
3. **Rationale.** What is the issue that you are addressing and why is it important to organic producers? What priority area(s) does your project address? Farmers and ranchers are OFRF's primary constituency; does your proposal address an identified farmer or rancher need or needs? (250 words)
4. **Research Objectives.** What are the specific objectives and goals of the project? For each objective or goal, present a measurable outcome that will indicate successful achievement of the objective. (200 words)
5. **Research description/methods.** What is the proposed methodology? Describe the hypothesis for the proposed research; the main treatments or study population; location and scope of the trials; and measurements to be taken. (200 words)
6. **Farmer involvement.** How have farmers or ranchers been involved in the development of the proposal idea? What role will farmers or ranchers play in the proposed project? (125 words)
7. **Research outreach and results dissemination.** What is your outreach plan for delivering project outcomes to farmers, ranchers, or other end users? (125 words)
8. **Qualifications.** Briefly describe primary team members, including the project leader and

other key cooperators. Descriptions should demonstrate the ability to manage the project, conduct research activities, and provide full financial oversight. Name the individuals, their organizational affiliation, and their primary responsibilities in the project. (125 words)

9. **Submission requirement.** Please combine the following application components into one PDF document in the order specified above. The file name needs to be in the following format: "PI Last Name_2021".

Review Criteria

Project LOIs are reviewed and approved by the OFRF Board of Directors, most of whom are certified organic producers. Outside reviewers are included in this process if additional expertise is required on a particular topic or subject area. A successful LOI will provide a clear rationale for the project and demonstrate that there is a significant need for the proposed research. It is important that the objectives for your project be clear, well-structured, and succinct. Demonstrate why your project is necessary, present measurable outcomes, and explain what, specifically, you hope to accomplish and the actual and proposed impacts.

The following criteria will be used for evaluation:

1. Proposal is well-written and clear; presents clear goals and objectives; specifies measurable outcomes that will indicate successful achievement of the objectives.
2. Uses a sound methodology appropriate to meeting project objectives; integrates an interdisciplinary or systems-based approach or addresses multiple priority areas.
3. Demonstrates the project will meet the needs of organic farmers and ranchers and/or fosters the improvement and widespread adoption of organic farming and ranching practices.
4. Demonstrates meaningful farmer or rancher involvement in identifying the problem(s) addressed by the project, planning, and implementation of the project. For social science projects, farmer involvement may relate to farmers or ranchers as research participants.
5. Presents a strong education and outreach plan describing how the results will be disseminated to the farming or ranching community.
6. Describes the qualifications and skills of the applicants and all collaborators demonstrating that they are qualified to ensure the success of the project.

If your Letter of Intent is Selected

Successful applicants will be notified in Fall 2021 and asked to submit a full proposal. Selected projects will be notified no later than April 2022.

If you have additional questions, you may contact the OFRF Research Grants Division by phone at 831.426.6606 or email grants@ofrf.org.