

An aerial photograph of a lush green agricultural field. A narrow, light-colored path or road winds through the field, starting from the bottom left and curving towards the top right. In the upper right quadrant, there is a small, light-colored building with a dark roof. The field is filled with dense, textured vegetation, likely crops or grass. The overall scene is bright and vibrant, with various shades of green.

Brief Ten.

Financial Support for Agritourism

10. Financial Support for Agritourism

When asked what type of support would help them be more successful with agritourism, surveyed farmers had one clear favorite: grant programs and other financial resources. Seventy percent of respondents selected this option, putting it sixteen points ahead of the number two spot, as explored in [Brief #6](#). This brief will dig into interviews and open responses to the survey to explore what kinds of financial support farmers need and recommend pilot funding opportunities.

USDA Grant Resources

Many USDA grant programs can be used to support agritourism as well as agricultural production. For a current list of active grant programs, check out the Resources section of the Agritourism StoryMap at this [link](#).

Though the idea of agritourism grants is popular among farmers, few exist in reality. At the time of the survey in March 2025, our team was not aware of any federal, state, or private grants intended specifically for agritourism farms. In December 2025, New Jersey announced the New Jersey Agritourism Grant Program, a joint venture of the state's Department of Agriculture and Division of Travel and Tourism that allocates \$5M of total funding for "farms, ranches, on-farm wineries, on-farm breweries and distilleries, and other agricultural businesses offering agritourism activities" (Walz, 2025). Applicants can apply for up to \$100k of funding "to support the promotion, marketing, and execution of agritourism experiences." This funding opportunity is, to our knowledge, the first of its kind, and New Jersey's experience will set important precedent for future funding opportunities.



Photo Courtesy of ABC Acres Farm

Grants for Visitor-Facing Infrastructure

In interviews and in open responses to the survey, many farmers expressed the need for grants to fund visitor-facing infrastructure. Common needs included building or improving farmstands and farm stores, public restrooms, and visitor parking areas.

- “Providing bathroom services [is a challenge]. Currently only have my personal bathroom but looking into a public option that is not a porta-potty or porta-john.” – Survey Respondent
- “[One challenge is] an increasing expectation for private guest bathrooms and bedrooms. We have shared bathrooms and bedrooms. The cost of renovating for this is prohibitive. We do have... [a] permit to serve the public and already made a huge compliance renovation. Further renovations is a big financial challenge.” – Survey Respondent
- “To increase our agritourism, it would be great to invest in a nicer new farmstand building and parking – would be nice to have some funding and business planning support for this.” – Survey Respondent
- “I need an updated farm stand to better protect my vending machine from the elements and it's hard to find grants that allow you to spend money on a farmstand.” – Survey
- “We love hosting visitors. Our kiosk is tiny and we'd love to expand. Cost of infrastructure is always an issue.” – Survey Respondent

Infrastructure grants have a strong track record in agriculture, and several respondents cited success with programs like USDA Value-Added Producer grants for food processing infrastructure and grant programs that expanded broadband access to rural communities. We recommend that federal, state, and private funders build on this success by piloting grants for agritourism infrastructure needs, like the farmstands, farm stores, restrooms, and parking areas referenced by respondents. Even if funders cannot make the same level of commitment as New Jersey, small grants for infrastructure improvements will make a big difference.

“Anytime you apply for a grant, they're not wanting to help with infrastructure... I'm educating people by getting them out there and giving them the experience, but I only have really one house with one bathroom and an outhouse, and I could really benefit in my planning if I could get some grant funding to help with converting our grain bins into off grid housing, showers, different things like that.”

Interviewee



Photo Courtesy of BayBees Honey Farm

Grant Guidelines

Two farmers had further actionable guidance for grant funders.



1. Farmers need up-front cash, not reimbursement.

A farmer who responded to the survey pleaded: “Please hear me: REIMBURSEMENT GRANTS are NOT HELPFUL. If I already had the money for that amazing project, I’d have already implemented it by now.” The seasonality of farming makes cash flow challenging. Grants that require farmers to spend their own cash and then seek reimbursement are less likely to be useful and used than grants that offer advanced payments.



2. New grant applicants need support.

New grant applicants need support. A farmer we interviewed explained “I have no idea about what writing those grants even looks like... I definitely would need support and wish I did have support in that sector.” Writing a grant and navigating funding paperwork are learned skills. If and when funders launch agritourism grants for the first time, many applicants will not have prior experience. We recommend that funders provide educational sessions and assistance along with any new grant programs.



Photo Courtesy of Mahlstedt Ranch