

# Agri-Business Innovation Grant Program Guidelines

## 1.0 Grant Details

The purpose of the Agri-Business Innovation Grant is to assist agricultural operators with expanding their markets and increasing their revenues. The Agri-Business Innovation Grant provides funding for agricultural operators to improve or implement new value-added and innovative technologies. The Municipality will fund 50% of the total project cost (excluding taxes) up to \$5,000.

## 2.0 Usage of Funds

The applicant must be the tenant or owner of a property zoned for agricultural purposes. The project must comply with all necessary Municipal, Provincial, Federal, and local food and safety regulations, and have received appropriate permits and permissions.

## 3.0 Eligible Items for Agri-Business Innovation Application

New infrastructure related to the following:

- Agri-tourism experiences (e.g., corn maze, on-farm workshop, event)
- Direct consumer sales (e.g., pick-your-own, roadside stands)
- Organic or small-scale farming (e.g., free-range chickens)
- Small-scale Food & Beverage Processing (e.g., making cheese from milk produced on-site)
- Bioproduct farming (as defined by Ontario's Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA))

- Specialty crops farming (as defined by OMAFRA)
- Other projects approved by the Municipality of Huron East that include value-added or innovative purchases or implementation

#### **4.0 Items that are ineligible for Agri-Business Innovation Funding**

- Temporary, 'removable', or consumable project materials or elements
- New building construction
- General maintenance repairs
- Permits required for improvements (e.g. Building, Sign)

#### **5.0 Eligibility Criteria**

1. Applicants must be a tenant or property owner of a property zoned for agricultural purposes within the Community Improvement Project Area.
2. Applicants must complete a pre-consultation with the Community Improvement Program Administrator before submitting an application.
3. Only grant applications that comply with municipal by-laws will be considered.
4. Projects may require a Building and/or Sign Permit. Permits must be issued before the project commences. Applicants that have commenced work prior to obtaining a Building Permit, acknowledge that their project may be deemed ineligible for funding. Approval of a grant will not guarantee that a Building or Sign Permit will be issued.
5. The subject property shall not be in a position of tax arrears and not have any outstanding orders or non-conformity with zoning.

6. Projects should not have commenced prior to the awarding of the requested grant. Applicants that have commenced work prior to obtaining approval for the requested grant, acknowledge that their project may be deemed ineligible for funding.
7. Projects must be completed by the end of the year in which the funding was received. Extensions are not granted unless prior approval has been received. If money is not spent it will be deemed an incomplete project and you will need to reapply next year.
8. Applicants must provide a minimum 50% cash contribution towards the total cost of the project for which they are applying for a grant.
9. Taxes are the full responsibility of the applicants.
10. Eligible project costs must be actual cash outlay to third parties acting at arms' length and which can be documented through original invoices or proofs of payment. An exception may be granted for a property owner that wishes to do the work themselves; however, eligible project costs may only include material costs and not labour.

## 6.0 Review Criteria

The Municipality of Huron East Improvement Program Committee will review applications against the following criteria:

- date/timing of the application
- balance of funding available and any previous applications made at the time of application
- project's potential to provide long term economic benefit to the Municipality
- evidence of the applicant's ability to fulfill responsibilities related to the project installation and maintenance
- project's "fit" with the objectives of the Community Improvement Plan

## 7.0 Application Process

Applicants must complete an application in order to be given grant consideration. Incomplete applications cannot be accepted. If approved, funds will be allocated following completion of project and proof of eligible expenditures.

Applications require the following:

- Property owner name
- Contact information
- Detailed project description including, if applicable, the colours/materials that will be used
- Sketches, renderings and/or pictures of proposed project (must include “before” photo)
- Signage text, if applicable
- The proposed timeline for the work (start date, completion date)
- Quote(s) of the project cost
- Proposed project costs (taxes not included)
- Grant request

Applications to this Program are available at the Huron East Municipal Office or online on the Municipality’s website: <https://www.huroneast.com>.