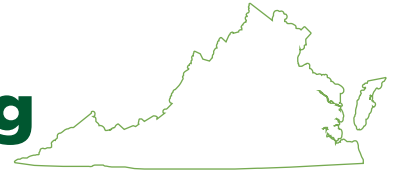


# Funding Support for Planning for Agriculture



REBECCA DROBIS

Many organizations and foundations in the nonprofit, government, and quasi-governmental spheres support conservation, land use, and economic development planning. Through grant programs, some of these entities provide financial resources that make it possible for local governments to plan for agriculture. Planning takes time and expertise, and it requires personnel and other resources. Communities of all sizes and in all geographic areas benefit from grant funding that allows them both to support and to expand the scope and depth of their planning process. Foundations, commissions, and organizations that offer financial support and offer technical assistance can help localities advance robust planning efforts.



REBECCA DROBIS

Virginia has several entities that provide funding related to planning for agriculture. Some programs concentrate on specific geographies, while others are open to applicants from across the state. Different entities have different requirements, priorities, and processes, so it can be helpful to conduct research to see which opportunities are most relevant to a particular community goal.

## Sources of Support

A variety of organizations offer grant programs that can support local governments in a planning for agriculture effort. Most funding entities offer extensive information on their websites about each of their programs, and many welcome inquiries and questions from interested applicants. Some host informational webinars in advance of an application's due date, and some may even conduct individual outreach to inform relevant parties about opportunities. Whatever the case, it's worth researching these opportunities and understanding all the benefits and expectations. It's also worth thinking strategically about how you can align your own community's goals and visions with the mission of the funder, giving your proposal a better chance at success.

Below are a handful of entities that offer financial support to local governments that would like to begin or expand a planning for agriculture initiative. These entities are a strong place to start for communities that want to gain support for their planning for agriculture work.

## The Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission

operates several programs that provide grant or loan funds to accomplish specific economic revitalization objectives. All programs require dollar-for-dollar matching funds. The Commission's service area includes 40 tobacco-dependent localities in Southern and Southwest Virginia. Local governments and nonprofits serving those localities are eligible to apply to the Commission's grant and loan programs for projects that will enhance the economic growth and development of the region. <https://revitalizeva.org/>



## The Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC)

was created by the 2008 U.S. Farm Bill. The concept was first introduced by university researchers working on rural development issues in 1980 at Tuskegee University's Annual Professional Agricultural Worker's Conference for 1862 and 1890 Land-Grant Universities. Working across seven states, SCRC invests in the region's economic future through a grant program, publishing research, and income-producing learning. The SCRC works across 100 counties or county-equivalents in Virginia, mostly in the eastern half of the Commonwealth. <https://scrc.gov/>



## The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)

is an economic development partnership entity of the federal government and 13 state governments focusing on 423 counties across the Appalachian Region. ARC's mission is to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia. The ARC operates mostly in the western half of Virginia. <https://www.arc.gov/>



**Appalachian  
Regional  
Commission**

The **National Fish and Wildlife Federation (NFWF)** offers the Chesapeake Small Watershed



**NFWF**

Grants (SWG) Program, which is delivered in partnership with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Chesapeake Bay Program. This partnership promotes voluntary, community-based efforts to protect and restore the diverse and vital habitats of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributary rivers and streams. The SWG program's Planning and Technical Assistance Grants offer up to \$150,000 for projects that enhance local capacity to implement future on the ground actions that enhance water quality and advance community-based assessment planning, design, and other technical assistance-oriented activities. <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/chesapeake-small-watershed-grants>

## The Chesapeake Bay Program

is a unique regional partnership that has led and directed the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. The Program and its partners offer multiple grant opportunities to help fund restoration projects of all sizes across the Chesapeake watershed, which covers roughly 60 percent of Virginia. <https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/grants>



The **Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)** provides funding to support planning projects through their Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development (AFID) grant. The program awards matching grants of up to \$20,000 for a single locality application or \$35,000 for a multi-locality application. The Planning Grant program requires a 1:1 match, but reduced match requirements are available for economically distressed localities. <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/agriculture-afid-planning-grants.shtml>



**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE AND  
CONSUMER SERVICES**