

South Carolina New and Beginning Farmer Program

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2023 MINI-GRANT PROGRAM OUTLINE

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What is the SC New & Beginning Farmer Program?

The South Carolina New and Beginning Farmer Program (SCNBFP) is a public education program focused on enabling new, beginning, and aspiring farmers to be successful, productive, and innovative members of their local agricultural community by providing them with the tools, knowledge, and skills necessary to be successful entrepreneurs, sound business managers, exemplary stewards of the natural environment, and successful marketers of the unique products they create. Most importantly, the SCNBFP seeks to develop individuals who have a sense of pride and enjoy a quality of life as a result of their investment and participation in the industry of South Carolina agriculture. The SCNBFP is offered through Clemson University Cooperative Extension - Agribusiness, under the direction of Ben Boyles and in collaboration with dozens of entities throughout the state. Currently funded through a USDA-NIFA Beginning Farmer Rancher Development grant, the SCNBFP is entering its thirteenth year and has guided more than 450 emerging farmers through the program.

The SCNBFP is an 8-month long, comprehensive farm-business program. Fifty to sixty qualified applicants are chosen to go through the basic “Core” program as a cohort, attending ten (10) full-day training workshop, online and together in Lexington, SC.

Core programming is complemented by “Advanced” workshops developed by Clemson Cooperative Extension Agribusiness staff and collaborators throughout the state. These workshops offer important opportunities for local peer and resource networking, as well as provide additional instruction on advanced agribusiness and production topics. All Advanced workshops are offered to 2023 cohort participants at a discount but are also open to the public.

What is the Mini-Grant program?

The SCNBFP is looking to expand educational opportunities to new farmers seeking advanced agribusiness and production training by broadening partnerships with other educators and resource providers. Survey efforts have identified 10 topics of need and interest. We are issuing a *Request for Proposals* for those interested in partnering with us in the planning and delivery of our 2023 advanced programming workshops through a mini-grant program. ***Ten mini-grants will be issued in 2023.***

What is included in a mini-grant award?

- \$1,000 in approved workshop expenses such as venue rental; speaker fees/travel; staff support; workshop materials
- Reimbursement of catering/food & beverage costs for in-person workshops (up to \$35.00 per participant)
- Turn-key marketing support, including co-branded promotional materials; workshop registration services; and advertising through social media as well as SCNBFP and Clemson University platforms, including 450+ SCNBFP alumni and class of 2023 participants
- Workshop evaluation services (with shared results)

Who may apply? Any individual, team, educational institution, government agency, NGO, or organization with an interest in farmer education. Demonstrated experience in workshop planning within the agricultural sector preferred. You may apply for more than one mini-grant! Please submit a separate application for each workshop of interest.

How do I apply? Please complete our online form here: <https://forms.gle/yKdGi36WdwgCyck88>

What is the deadline to apply? Please be certain to submit your application before **10:00 am, Monday, March 20th, 2023.**

Awards will be announced in early April and we will work with all recipients to set the program schedule by May 1, 2023.

When do workshops under the mini-grant program need to be delivered? So that they fit within our established SCNBFP programming, new workshops under the mini-grant program will need to be delivered between **December 11, 2023 – March 31, 2024.** We will work with all mini-grant recipients on developing a conflict-free schedule. Workshops may be scheduled for any day of the week.

What are the expectations for workshops under the mini-grant program?

- Your proposed agenda should fit within the general topics listed as priority areas. (See below.)
- While these workshops are primarily targeted to farmers with less than ten years of farming experience, content should be at an **advanced level.** (Many if not most attendees will have some prerequisite knowledge.)
- Workshops should be a full-day event, with 4-5 hours of active learning + meal/break time. For in-person workshops, lunch should be included. Plan for 30-50 attendees.
- Geographically, workshops under the mini-grant program may be delivered anywhere within the state of South Carolina. (We will be seeking geographic diversity.)

- Although online delivery will be considered under appropriate circumstances, in-person is preferred, with special consideration for on-farm venues for production-related topics.
- Mini-grant recipients will be responsible for the planning and delivery of their workshop(s). While the SCNBFP will be providing co-branded marketing materials, we expect recipients to actively engage in promotional activities. Recipients will be expected to share final workshop agendas with SCNBFP staff in advance, as well as provide accurate attendance records.

What are the identified priority topics for workshops under this program? These are the general workshop topics for which we are offering mini-grants:

- Labor Issues & Management
- Scaling Up to Wholesale Markets
- GAPs Certification
- FSMA/Post-Harvest Handling
- Website Development & Analytics
- Pasture Management & Cover-cropping
- Water Resource Management
- Conservation Issues & Techniques
- Advanced Soil Health Management
- Advanced Integrated Pest Management

Note that we do not have preconceived ideas of what should be included under the above general topics. This is where we welcome your creativity and expertise!

Who is the target audience for these workshops? While these workshops will be open to the general public, we expect a great deal of participation from participants of our 2023 class, as well as our 450+ alumni. These are mostly small-to-medium-scale family farms with a focus on local food markets and environmental sustainability. Attendees will be engaged in all types of crop/livestock production; most will be diverse; many farms will also include non-production enterprises such as agritourism, value-added production; on-farm retail; etc.

For reference, what additional topics are currently covered in the SCNBFP?

Beginning Level:

- Legal Issues & Risk Management
- Start-Up Logistics & Basic Farm Financial Management
- Developing a Business Concept & Basic Business Plan
- Introduction to Marketing, Branding, & Communication
- Basics of Direct-to-Consumer Markets
- Opportunities in Mediated (Wholesale) Markets
- Regulatory Issues & Resources
- Fundamentals of Soil Health Management
- Introduction to Integrated Pest & Weed Management

Advanced Level:

- Enterprise Budgets & Profitability
- Financial Assistance through Farm-Focused Grants
- Organic Production & Certification
- Land Acquisition, Conservation, Transfer, & Preservation
- Opportunities in Agritourism
- Advanced Business Planning & Comprehensive Business Plan Development
- Advanced Farm Financial Management & Analysis
- Tax Management for Farming Enterprises
- Developing a Year-Round Operation Plan
- Social Media & Analytics for Small Farm Businesses

What if I have additional questions? Please contact us!

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Thank you for your interest in Clemson University's South Carolina New & Beginning Farmer Program!

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