

## **02 NCAC 58 .0105 EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS**

- (a) Applicants for funding from the ADFPTF shall submit a completed application.
- (b) Applications and instructions shall be available online at <http://www.ncadfp.org>.
- (c) To be eligible for consideration for funding for agricultural conservation easements or agricultural agreements, applicants shall complete the Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Application Form for Conservation Easements and Agricultural Agreements, which contain the following information:
- (1) identifying information such as location, business name, and contact information;
  - (2) a description of the type of organization of the applicant;
  - (3) project affiliations, matching funds, and partnerships;
  - (4) whether funds are for an agricultural conservation easement or an agricultural agreement and the term years;
  - (5) current land value assessment, requested amount of funds, estimated easement value, project completion date;
  - (6) operation management plans;
  - (7) values relevant to the easement;
  - (8) agricultural, horticultural, or forestry property inventory;
  - (9) what transition plans are in place to continue operations for the future;
  - (10) threats of conversion;
  - (11) conservation and environmental concerns; and
  - (12) listed attachments.
- (d) To be eligible for consideration for funding for agricultural development programs, applicants shall complete the Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Application Form for Public and Private Enterprise Programs, which contain the following information:
- (1) identifying information;
  - (2) a description of the type of organization of the applicant;
  - (3) project affiliations, matching funds, and partnerships;
  - (4) a description of goals, target audience, and success measurements; and
  - (5) listed attachments.
- (e) Each completed application shall be evaluated by the Division staff based on the information provided in the application and in accordance with the ADFPTF criteria described in this Rule.
- (f) The staff shall review all applications for completeness. If an application is incomplete after the application deadline, the applicant shall be asked to reapply for the next grant cycle, which will be publicly announced by the Commissioner on an annual basis at the quarterly Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund Advisory Committee prior to the grant cycle RFP and by press release from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
- (g) During the review and evaluation of proposals, the staff shall report to the Commissioner on any site visits that may be required for full consideration of the grant proposal.
- (h) The Advisory Committee shall review the project evaluations and other data prepared by the applicant and by ADFPTF staff. The Advisory Committee shall make recommendations to the Commissioner on projects for funding.
- (i) The Commissioner and Advisory Committee shall consider the relative needs of the farmland preservation project and determine the proportion of available funds to be allocated for each eligible project.
- (j) Grants shall be awarded contingent on the availability of sufficient funds to do so. Funds shall be conveyed to grantees through contracts with the Trust Fund. If the Commissioner determines that grant funds are not being used for the purpose for which they were awarded, the Trust Fund shall cease making payments under the grant schedule until the problem has been resolved or shall demand return of any unspent money and interest from the grant. Grantees must reimburse the Trust Fund any funds that the Division staff determines to have not been spent for the purpose for which they were granted. Grantees must return any grant money that remains unspent at the conclusion of the grant project, with any interest earned on grant money.
- (k) The following general criteria shall be used to evaluate conservation easement or agricultural agreement projects only:
- (1) parcel information;
  - (2) planning for the future; and
  - (3) site visits.
- (l) The following general criteria shall be used to evaluate agricultural development programs only:
- (1) project description;
  - (2) project implementation; and

- (3) applicant interview.
- (m) The Commissioner and Advisory Committee shall also consider the following factors when evaluating projects:
  - (1) the geographic distribution of projects;
  - (2) the presence or absence of other funding sources;
  - (3) the level of compliance with prior grant agreements;
  - (4) the amount of funds available;
  - (5) the amount of funds requested;
  - (6) priority funding map found at <http://ncadfp.org/FarmlandPreservation>; and
  - (7) other relevant information requested in the application.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 106-744;  
Eff. January 1, 2008;  
Readopted Eff. February 1, 2019.*