

Berkshire Farmland Initiative/John P. Farkas Fund

Administered by American Farmland Trust in Collaboration with:

Land For Good
The Carrot Project
Sheffield Land Trust
Berkshire Grown

Grant Guidelines

The goal of the John P. Farkas Fund is to help keep farmland in farming in Berkshire County. The Fund helps farm families and farmland owners with expenses associated with:

- protecting farmland,
- transferring farmland and/or a farm business to the next generation,
- farm succession planning,
- arranging the sale or lease of farmland to a farmer, and
- farm business planning associated with any of the above.

By defraying the costs of professional services, the Fund aims to enable and encourage farm and landowner families to take actions that will help them leave a legacy and provide opportunities for the next generation of Berkshire farmers.

Through the generosity of Bill Farkas, American Farmland Trust, in collaboration with Land For Good, The Carrot Project, Sheffield Land Trust, and Berkshire Grown, has established the *Berkshire Farmland Initiative/John P. Farkas Fund*.

Fund Criteria:

For families or individuals who meet the Fund's criteria, the Fund provides financial support for needed technical expertise such as an attorney, facilitator, farm financial advisor or estate planner to help with the transfer of the farm to a child or non-family transferee, negotiate a sale or lease of farmland to a farmer, or plan the sale of an agricultural conservation easement, for example.

Eligible applicants are individuals or families who own a farm or farmland in Berkshire County, or who are seeking to purchase or lease farmland in Berkshire County for farming purposes. .

Eligible uses of the fund are intended to help the grantee to keep the farm or farmland in farming through generational planning, a transition of ownership of land and/or business, a sale of an Agricultural Preservation Restriction or other permanent conservation easement, or a lease or sale of farmland to a farmer. Grant funds may be used to purchase the following professional services:

- Technical assistance around succession and transfer planning, including general facilitation/coordination services and specialized services (e.g., financial planner; attorney)
- Technical assistance around farmland protection (e.g., financial planner, accountant, attorney), as well as costs associated with protection efforts
- Business planning assistance, so long as that assistance is related to farmland protection and/or farm transfer or succession planning
- Technical assistance around farmland leasing and alternative tenure arrangements.

Grant size for the January 2015 application round is up to \$2,500. Applicants may request any amount up to \$2,500.

Application Form and Deadlines:

Application form: A formal application form is required. The application form can be found [here](#). It can also be downloaded from the Berkshire Farmland Initiative webpage, at www.berkshirefarmland.org. If you would like an application form mailed to you, please call or email Peg McCabe in American Farmland Trust's New England Office, at 413-586-9330 x.17 or pmccabe@farmland.org.

Application process and deadlines: In 2015, applications will be considered during two grant rounds. Future grant rounds will depend on funding availability.

Applications received (or postmarked, if mailed) by **February 28th** will be considered in our first grant round. Decisions on grant applications will be made by mid-March.

Applications received (or postmarked) **between February 28th and July 31st** will be considered in our second grant round. Applications for the second grant round must be received by July 31, 2015.

The application form can be either emailed or mailed to American Farmland Trust. If emailed, applications should be sent to American Farmland Trust's New England Director, Cris Coffin, at ccoffin@farmland.org. If mailed, applications should be addressed to: Cris Coffin, New England Director, American Farmland Trust. One Short Street, Northampton, MA 01060. Applicants will be notified that their application has been received.

Grant Decisions and Payments:

American Farmland Trust has established a grant review committee composed of a representative from each of American Farmland Trust, Land For Good, The Carrot Project, Sheffield Land Trust, Berkshire Grown, plus Bill Farkas. The committee will evaluate and rank each application, using the information received in the application.

Grant decisions for the first grant round will be made by mid-March, and applicants will be notified of the decision by the end of March. Grant decisions for the second round will be made by mid-July, and applicants notified of the decision by the end of July. The grant review committee will review all grant requests and make a recommendation to American Farmland Trust as to which requests shall be funded.

Grant fund disbursement: If the application is approved, American Farmland Trust will ask the approved grant recipient to sign a formal grant agreement. Once the agreement is signed, American Farmland Trust will distribute the grant funds. No grant funds will be delivered without a signed grant agreement. The grant agreement will clearly state the purposes of the grant and must include an agreement by the grant recipient to:

- a) Use grant funds within one year of receipt of grant funds;
- b) Return any portion of the amount granted which grant recipient does not use for the purposes of the grant;
- c) Submit a report on the manner in which the funds are spent (including copies of any and all invoices for services paid), and the progress made in accomplishing the purpose of the grant;
- d) Not use any of the funds in a manner not permitted by Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code; and
- e) Grant recipients shall acknowledge that all information and reports provided to American Farmland Trust in relation to any grant application or agreement may be made available to the Internal Revenue Service.

Questions:

If you have any questions about the Fund and the application process, please contact Cris Coffin, American Farmland Trust's New England Director, at ccoffin@farmland.org, or (413) 695-4653.