



I. GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date 11/17/25

Contact Information

Organization Name:

Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture
d/b/a Pasa Sustainable Agriculture "Pasa"

Address: 1631 N Front St, Harrisburg, PA 17102-2435

Phone: 814.349.9856

Website: <https://pasafarming.org/>

Year Incorporated: 1992

FEIN: 251685497

ED/CEO Name: Hannah Smith-Brubaker

ED/CEO E-mail: grantsteam@pasafarming.org

Board Chair Name: David Rice

Board Chair Approval (check here):

Primary Contact Name: Tabitha Barbarito

Primary Contact E-mail:

grantsteam@pasafarming.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

Environment, Animals

Mission: Cultivating environmentally sound, economically viable, community-focused farms and food systems.

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served):

All of Chester County is served

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served. (Include Chester County # &/or % served.)

Farmers are at the core of Pasa’s work. Our programs have been created in response to needs expressed by our community of farmer stakeholders, including farmers in Chester County. In total, through this proposal, **at least 8 farmers will be directly supported through 3 program areas in Chester County over the next year.** Each year, through our core services and special projects, we typically reach at least 3,300 farmers. 200+ farmers participate in our Soil Health Benchmark Study (SHBS). In 2024 there were 24 graduates from our Apprenticeship Programs.

Annual Budget \$4,224,000

		33	# of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
95	% of budget for program expenses	7	# of Board Volunteers
3.5	% of budget for administrative expenses	50+	# of Active Non-Board Volunteers
1.5	% of budget for fundraising expenses	100+ annually	# of Volunteer Hours

100% = total

Top 3-5 funding sources:

92% of our funding comes from grants and awards

Currently, 3 of our largest grants are as follows:

- 1.) Cooperative agreement with USDA FSA for the Urban Agriculture Program through May 2028
- 2.) Richard K. Mellon Foundation for the Agroforestry Program through February 2026
- 3.) PA DLI for the Registered Farmer Apprenticeship Programs through December 2026

This grant proposal is for:

Direct Service Programs & General Operating

Grant Amount Requested

from the Community Foundation:

\$7,800

Proposal Summary:

\$7,800 will address current funding gaps allowing ongoing support for our Diversified Vegetable and Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program as well as the Soil Health Benchmark Study participants in Chester County.

II. GRANT PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

1. Nonprofit's overall aims, key initiatives, key achievements & distinctiveness

Our vision: A world where agriculture nourishes, heals, and empowers.

Our mission: Cultivating environmentally sound, economically viable, community-focused farms and food systems.

Our history: In February 1992, a group of Pennsylvania farmers decided to host a conference devoted to advancing the art and science of sustainable agriculture. At the time, it was difficult to find reliable education and resources for farmers who wanted to steward their land in harmony with natural ecosystems and who wanted to sell their products locally to support the health and vibrancy of their local communities.

The Conference has become a treasured annual event, taking place in Lancaster PA each year, where farmers find a peer community they can rely on as they navigate the challenges of operating a farm business in a changing climate. It's also become a place where food system changemakers can deepen their understanding of sustainable farming practices and strengthen their connections with local farmers.

Over the years, Pasa has been called on to address the needs of our community beyond gathering once a year. We started taking the peer-to-peer learning model out in the field at year-round farmer-led educational events. We developed farmer training programs to open up new paths to farm management and ownership while supporting labor needs on working farms.

Farmers in our community have questions about how their practices impact the health of their land and their businesses. Our farm-based research studies work to dig up answers, and often unearth new questions.

Today, Pasa is a community of tens of thousands of farmers and food system changemakers working together to advance regenerative and equitable agriculture and grow a healthier planet.

Core programs:

-Apprenticeships: Our community-based apprenticeships for aspiring, beginning, or experienced farmers offer structured guidance from peer farmers and other food system professionals committed to regenerative land stewardship, protecting natural resources, and building healthy, vibrant local communities.

-Farm-based Research: Our collaborative, farm-based research projects engage hundreds of farmers across the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast as community scientists. We analyze farmers' data to identify insights and offer practical solutions to improve and protect ecosystems, natural resources, and public health. Among our multitude of studies, we facilitate the largest and most diverse community soil science project in the nation. We also conducted the most comprehensive review of direct-market vegetable farm finances to date.

2. Funding request:

What specific needs & issues are being addressed, via what programs and services?

In total, at least **8 farmers** will be directly supported through 3 program areas in Chester County over the next year.

Program Area #1

5 farms in Chester county in Soil Health Benchmark Study in 2024 & two in 2025. We anticipate we'll grow this number each year moving forward. <https://pasafarming.org/soil-health-benchmark-study/>

Program Area #2

5 Diversified Vegetable Apprenticeship mentor/apprentice farm pairs in Chester County <https://dva.pasafarming.org/program/geo/farms#>

Program Area #3

1 Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship mentor/apprentice farm partnership in Chester County <https://www.dga-national.org/programs/mentor-farm-map>

Cost breakdown:

5% of support staff time	\$2,500 / program area (x3 program areas)	7,500
Soil testing supplies	\$110 / participant (x2 participants)	220
Postage and Delivery of soil sampling materials	\$40 / participant (x2 participants)	80

Why is it important to fund this now?

January - March 2026

- new host farm-apprentice pairs are registered with PA-DLI
- apprentices work on program requirements at winter conferences and workshops
- collection and organization begins for farm management records for those participating in the Soil Health Benchmark Study

April - June 2026

- new apprentices begin on the job training
- Pasa staff conducts monthly check-in visits to apprenticeship host farm sites
- on farm visits are made to new candidate apprenticeship host farms
- farmers in the Soil Health Benchmark Study are invited to an event/workshop for farmer collaborators focused on farming systems, specific practices, or specific soil health challenges

July - September 2026

- Pasa staff conducts monthly check-in visits to apprentice host farm sites
- annual “all-program” meeting is conducted for apprentices and host farmers
- Pasa staff will complete all protocols, training, and sampling preparation for the Soil Health Benchmark Study
- On farm soil sampling for those participating in the Soil Health Benchmark Study begins takes place sometime between September and December (ideally before December 1st)

October - December 2026

- current registered 2nd year apprentices graduate to journeyworker status
- annual “train-the-trainer” workshops are conducted for journeyworkers and host farmers
- Pasa communicates Soil Health Benchmark Study results through individualized farmer reports and presentations to be shared with farmer research collaborators, the broader agricultural community, and beyond

As we are planning for the calendar year ahead, as outlined above, funding gaps are threatening our ability to continue to offer program services in Chester County (and beyond). In a typical year, like most nonprofits, garnering support for program support expenses is challenging. This has not been a typical year. Between the federal funding freeze, the government shutdown, and our own state’s budget impasse, our organization has been challenged like never before. What were once some of our most reliable revenue sources—federal and state grants—have become increasingly unstable due to shifting priorities and persistent unpredictability in policy and grant programs.

Pasa's research and apprenticeship work is holistic, managed by a collaborative team. While research and apprenticeship program staff need to be focused on in-the-field data collection and site visits, admin staff are vital to keeping programs running and supported. This level of funding will be a start in helping to offset gaps and ensuring that our programs have the necessary resources to continue to thrive and grow in Chester County.

The security and stability of our food system depends on addressing the impending shortage of owner-operators and professional farm managers who are leaving agriculture as they age.

How will results & impact be demonstrated?

- Chester County farmers will participate and be represented in the largest community-science soil research project in the nation <https://pasafarming.org/soil-health-benchmark-study/>
- Chester County farmers will participate in apprenticeship programs & will be represented in various ways such as: case studies, social media posts, newsletter article mentions
<https://pasafarming.org/soil-institute/farmer-training-development/dva-home/>
<https://pasafarming.org/soil-institute/farmer-training-development/dairy-grazing-apprenticeship/>
- Pasa will work to build upon existing relationships as well as generate new collaborations with farmers and peer organizations in Chester County

III. ATTACHMENTS

- Copy of **501 (c) (3)** federal tax-exempt letter - attached
- List of **Board** of Directors, with their affiliations **URL:** <https://pasafarming.org/board-members/>
- Most recent **annual report** **URL:** <https://pasafarming.org/2024-impact-report/>
- Audited or reviewed recent **financial statement** - audit attached
990 URL:
<https://app.candid.org/profile/7282134/pennsylvania-association-for-sustainable-agriculture-25-1685497>
- Itemized **organizational operating budget** with actual results for prior fiscal year & current fiscal year to date - attached
- If capacity building initiative, **itemized budget** (including external consultant's proposal, if applicable) -- n/a
- Current **strategic plan**. If your nonprofit does **not** have a current strategic plan, **explain why**.
We are a mission driven organization serving the most timely and urgent needs of farmers through our core programs. Our projects and work plans are updated annually to reflect farmer and program priorities. <https://pasafarming.org/programs/>

