



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Office of the Commissioner

Affirmative Action/ Equal Employment Opportunity Employer

Conservation and Development Subcommittee Working Group

March 2, 2026

Operating Expense Grants and Reductions

FY26 Legislatively Directed Funds

\$40,000 – Franklin 4-H Camp (FY20-21)

\$15,000 – Ellington Farmers’ Market (FY20-21)

\$1,000,000 – CT Grown for CT Kids Grant Program (FY24-25)

\$150,000 – Grant Program for Certain Farmers’ Markets (Top 10 by SNAP Utilization) (FY24-25)

\$150,000 – Haven’s Harvest (FY26-27)

\$100,000 – Filling in the Blanks (FY26-27)

\$50,000 – East End Pop-Up Market (FY26-27)

\$25,000 – West Haven Food Insecurity Nonprofit (FY26-27)

\$150,000 – Other Expenses (Unclear) (FY26-27)

Total \$1,680,000

FY27 Adjustments (20% cut to all programs, except CT Grown for CT Kids)

\$32,000 – Franklin 4-H Camp (FY20-21)

\$12,000 – Ellington Farmers’ Market (FY20-21)

\$1,000,000 – CT Grown for CT Kids Grant Program (FY24-25)

\$120,000 – Grant Program for Certain Farmers’ Markets (Top 10 by SNAP Utilization) (FY24-25)

\$120,000 – Haven’s Harvest (FY26-27)

\$80,000 – Filling in the Blanks (FY26-27)

\$40,000 – East End Pop-Up Market (FY26-27)

\$20,000 – West Haven Food Insecurity Nonprofit (FY26-27)

Total: \$1,424,000

Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program

The Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) serves participants of Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) and seniors, over the age of 60, who meet income eligibility guidelines by providing a mobile application or preloaded benefit cards, similar to a gift card, to purchase Connecticut Grown fresh fruit, vegetables, cut herbs, honey, and chicken eggs at authorized locations throughout Connecticut.

In 2025, \$902,848 was redeemed in benefits with \$370,671.41 in state and federal WIC benefits and \$532,176.90 in state and federal senior benefits. All of those funds were directed to Connecticut producers, contributing significantly to the viability of local farms, and feeding CT families local products.

WIC Participation Trends: The transition to eFMNP has greatly increased DoAg's access to data regarding the program. We are now able to view redemption by program, town, farmer, participant, and distribution site in real-time. In 2022, fund usage for WIC FMNP was 63% for state and federal fund usage was 44%. In 2024, for WIC FMNP, fund usage was 65% for state and 44% for federal fund usage. In 2025, WIC FMNP fund usage was 66% for state funding and 100% federal fund usage. In addition, all federal administrative funds, \$29,108.00 were reallocated to food funds, further increasing the federal redemption.

Dairy Sustainability

The Connecticut Dairy Sustainability Grant provides critical financial support to the states cows' milk producers by bridging the gap between the federal milk price per hundred weight and the minimum sustainable cost of production. These payments are calculated based on production of dairy farmers on a monthly basis as reported by dairy cooperatives or independent dairy producers. Payments are made to farmers on a quarterly basis. This program, managed by the DoAg, helps maintain farm viability and prevents the loss of local dairy farms.

In FY25 the Dairy Sustainability Grant paid out \$4,995,222.01 to 66 dairy farms on a quarterly basis. The average annual payment to farms was \$75,685.18.

CT Grown for CT Kids

In FY26, DoAg considered 82 applications that requested more than \$1.823 million across all grant categories. After the review panels, 40 organizations were awarded a total of \$924,428.24 across all grant categories.

The Connecticut Grown for Connecticut Kids Grant Program is a competitive, no-match grant to support the development and expansion of Farm to School programs statewide. Eligible applicants include local or regional boards of education, regional educational service centers, cooperative arrangements pursuant to section 10-158a of the general statutes, child care centers, group child care homes and family child care homes, as such terms are described in section 19a-77 of the general statutes, or any organization or entity administering or assisting in the development of a farm to school program.

The program is designed to increase the availability of Connecticut Grown food in child nutrition programs, expand experiential agricultural education, strengthen relationships with local producers, and build long term capacity for sustainable Farm to School systems.

In FY25, the Department refined the program to clarify eligibility and strengthen evaluation priorities. The definition of eligible entities was expanded to ensure private schools and institutions were explicitly aware of their eligibility. A funding priority emphasizing fiscal responsibility and cost effectiveness was incorporated into scoring criteria. In FY26, the Department restructured and renumbered the grant tracks to better align with program goals and to improve clarity for applicants. A definitions section was added to reduce ambiguity in program terminology. Eligibility was clarified

to explicitly include colleges and universities and their student groups. Award priorities and scoring rubrics were updated to emphasize sustainability, purchasing CT Grown products, participation in the 2024 to 2025 Connecticut Local Food for Schools Incentive Program, and CACFP sponsors. Separate deadlines were established for Microgrant and Full Grant applications.

Fiscal Year 26 Grant categories:

- Track 1: Producer Capacity Building Grant (Microgrant only, maximum award \$5,000)
- Track 2: Farm & Family Learning (ECE & Beyond) Grant (Microgrant maximum \$5,000; Full Grant maximum \$50,000)
- Track 3: Local Procurement Assistance Grant (Microgrant maximum \$5,000; Full Grant maximum \$50,000)
- Track 4: Experiential Learning, AgTech, and Innovation Grant (Microgrant maximum \$5,000; Full Grant maximum \$50,000)

PA 490 Update

On January 19, 2026, Governor Lamont directed OPM, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, to:

- Revoke the 2025 Recommended Land Use Values and Best Practices for farmland, forestland, open space, and maritime heritage land, and reinstate the 2020 recommended land use values for these categories;
- Immediately notify all municipal tax assessors of this revocation and reinstatement; and
- Convene a working group in collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, including representation from agricultural organizations, farmers, municipal leaders, and assessors, to recommend alternative measures to improve data collection, review, and valuation processes consistent with state law.

At this time, the PA-490 Working Group has completed its introductory meeting, with the second meeting scheduled for March 10, 2026.

Working group materials including membership, agendas, meeting notes, and recordings can be found on the [PA 490 Work Group](#) website.

In addition to public comment at meetings an email address has been established for public comment submission: OPM.PA490@ct.gov.

We continue to see industry engagement on this issue and look forward to continued conversations in the working group.

Animal Population Control Program

Established in 1995, the State of Connecticut Animal Population Control Program (APCP) was created to reduce pet overpopulation, reduce the spread of rabies and other diseases through immunizations, and subsequently increase the effectiveness of local Animal Control Departments through education and law enforcement. The APCP has provided benefits to more than 250,000 animals since 1995.

The program provides sterilization and vaccination benefits for dogs and cats via three voucher programs: (1) Connecticut residents for dogs and cats adopted from municipal pounds; (2) to low-income residents for dogs and cats that they own; and (3) Feral Cat 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations engaged in activities aimed at reducing the population of feral cats.

In November 2024, the APCP program launched a new online portal for the application and processing of Low-Income vouchers.

The total budget for the APCP program for FY25 was \$244,419.

For FY25, the budget allocation for the Low-Income Program was \$48,884. From November 4, 2024, through November 6, 2024, there were a total of 504 applicants with 640 voucher requests. Of those requests, funding allowed for 43 approved applicants or 289 vouchers. 28 applicants did not meet criteria. The remaining 256 applicants could not be accommodated within current program capacity. The program is anticipated to reopen to new applicants in the beginning of November 2025.

For FY25, 37 Feral Cat Non-Profit Organizations requested 1,686 vouchers or \$219,190. The budget allocation for the Feral Cat Grant Program was \$48,884 or 381 vouchers. Organizations received an average of 23% of request. The program is anticipated to begin accepting applications for FY26 on July 1, 2025, with a deadline of August 1, 2025.