



West Virginia DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER, KENT A. LEONHARDT



West Virginia Department of Agriculture, Ag-Venture Roundup Request for Applications (RFA)

Application Due:
May 30, 2025 by 4:00PM

Overview:

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) is pleased to announce the 2025 Request for Applications (RFA) for the Ag-Venture Roundup. This initiative is designed to encourage both established and emerging agritourism operators to engage in agriculture and agribusiness ventures. The Ag-Venture Roundup seeks to foster the development of investable ideas and support the growth of entrepreneurial ventures that will contribute to the advancement of the WVDA's agritourism initiatives and drive economic growth within the state. This funding opportunity was made available by a 2024 Congressional Earmark through the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Legislative Authority:

H.R.4366- Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 provides funding to the Small Business Administration for local governments and nonprofits in support of small businesses, including but not limited to entrepreneur training, workforce development, counseling, research and construction or acquisition of facilities.

Available Funding: \$50,000 to be awarded to multiple agritourism businesses.

Contact: West Virginia Department of Agriculture
Agritourism Marketing Specialist
304-558-2210
agritourism@wvda.us

What is Agritourism: (WV Code: 19-36-2)

"Agritourism" activity means any lawful activity carried out on a farm or ranch that allows members of the general public for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes to view or enjoy rural activities.

"Agritourism Business" means any person, fiduciary, firm, association, partnership, limited liability company, corporation, unit of government, or any other group or entity which is engaged in the business of providing one or more agritourism activities, whether or not for compensation.

Limited Liability Code: (19-36-4)

Under West Virginia law, there may be limited liability for an injury to or death of a participant in an agritourism activity conducted at this agritourism business if the injury or death results from the inherent risks of the agritourism activity. Inherent risks of agritourism activities include, among others, risks of injury inherent to landscape, terrain, equipment, and animals, as well as the potential for you to act in a negligent manner that may contribute to your injury or death. You are assuming the risk of participating in this agritourism activity.

Definition of a Project:

A project is a set of interrelated tasks with a cohesive, distinct, specified, and defined goal. It follows a planned, organized approach over a fixed period of time and within specific confines (cost, performance/quality, etc.). Projects are different from other ongoing operations in an organization because they have a definitive beginning, and end-they have a limited duration. One way to think about this is that a project has an overarching goal that the applicant wants to accomplish through a series of individual activities or tasks.

Examples of projects include:

- Expanding on farm activities
- Adding restrooms
- Adding handwashing stations
- Website or marketing development

Activities or tasks that could be a part of such projects might include:

- Purchasing building materials and/or equipment
- Attending educational workshops
- Earning certifications or licensure



Project Description & Judging Criteria:

1. The competition is open to individuals who are currently agritourism operators or emerging agritourism operators.
2. Participants must be a West Virginia resident, with the farm/business located in West Virginia.
3. Participants must submit a business plan that includes all the information listed on the business plan template (see attached). All submitted entries are considered final.
4. The participants will be notified via email if their Ag-Venture Roundup pitch application is selected for the next round, which is located in-person on July 19, 2025.
5. The top competitors will be given 5 minutes each to present their agriculture/agribusiness pitch before a panel of judges who will act as venture capitalists, investors, and business executives for the Ag-Venture Roundup Pitch Competition. Each competitor must answer all questions asked by the judges. Pitch coaches are available if needed. Please contact the WV Department of Agriculture (WVDA) Business Development Division for more information.

Ag-Venture Roundup Pitch Application Review Process:

The Review Committee shall review, evaluate, and determine the entries that will advance to the in-person event on July 19, 2025 at Cedar Lakes Conference Center in Ripley, WV utilizing the following criteria:

Criteria for judging all submitted entries:

- a. Project Description
 - i. Is the vision of the business specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART)?
 - ii. Does the mission coincide with the vision?
 - iii. Is the project description comprehensive, clear, and specific?
- b. Market Aspect
 - i. Does it have an identified agriculture-related product or service?
 - ii. What is the competitive advantage of your product or service?
 - iii. Does it align with market trends?
 - iv. Does it have an identified supplier? (With information of suppliers)
 - v. Does it have an identified audience? (With information of buyer and volume requirements)
- c. Management Aspect
 - i. Does the applicant have relevant experience/training to implement the project?
 - ii. Does it have an identified labor requirement for the operation of the business (or organizational chart)?
- d. Technical Aspect
 - i. Does it have specific processes involved?



- ii. How will this destination/service keep the target audience engaged?
 - iii. Clear source of funds.
 - iv. Clear source of materials.
 - v. What kind of investment/materials/labor & other items is needed to start your agriculture/agribusiness?
 - vi. What is the time frame of your proposed project?
 - vii. Is the project venture suitable for the project location?
 - viii. Is this project in alignment with limited liability coverage?
 - ix. If this project is aligned with limited liability coverage, what are the risks associated with this plan, and what precautions will you take to mitigate injury?
- e. Financial Aspect
- i. Is the project profitable?
 - ii. How will your business earn revenue or income?
 - iii. At what point will you make a profit?
 - iv. What will be the return on investment?
 - v. What are the cash projections of your business over a 3–5-year period?
 - vi. Have other funding sources been sought out (grants, etc.)?

Criteria for Judging in-person event (July 19, 2025):

- i. Was the project delivery engaging?
 - ii. Did the presentation stay on point?
 - iii. Was it easy to understand?
 - iv. Did the presentation exhibit quality, neatness, and professionalism?
- a. Question and Answer Session
- i. Preparedness
- b. Bonus Section
- i. Does the project bring a “wow” factor?



Terms and Conditions:

- There is no entry fee to enter the competition.
- WVDA reserves the right to amend the competition Terms & Conditions and dates without notice in the event of any unforeseen circumstance outside of the organizer's control. Participants will be notified of any changes to the competition.
- The Review Committee reserves the right to disqualify or reject any entry that does not meet the eligibility requirements of the competition.
- Participants accept that the decisions of the Review Committee, Judges, and Commissioner are final and cannot be challenged or appealed.
- Participants agree to release WVDA from any liability related to the competition.
- Participants acknowledge that WVDA is a public agency that must comply with the West Virginia Freedom of Information Act (WVFOIA), and that all information provided by participants is subject to WVFOIA. Participants should not submit any information that is sensitive or confidential.
- Any of these terms and conditions found unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction will be severed and the remaining terms and conditions will remain in full force and effect.
- Entry into the competition will be deemed as acceptance of these terms and conditions.
- Participants agree to allow West Virginia Department of Agriculture to use images, videos, and recordings in media and promotional materials.
- Fully funded projects cannot reapply for funds designated for agritourism through the WVDA until January 2026.



For inquiries, please contact:

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Business Plan Template

(Note: Business Plans should be at least 3-5 pages in length)

Include the following information:

- **Cover page:** Use this page to include your business information, such as your business's legal name, address, website URL, email, phone number and logo.
- **Table of contents:** Get organized by numbering each section of your business plan.
- **Executive summary:** Explain what your mission is for your business. Use this part to introduce your company and outline your goals.
- **Business overview:** Use this section to describe what your business is going to look like. Explain your industry, competition and your unique selling proposition.
- **Market analysis:** Prove that you have spent time analyzing your target market.
- **Sales and marketing plan:** Discuss how you're going to market your products or services to clients. You also want to include your pricing strategy and sales tactics.
- **Management plan:** Explain who is managing the different aspects of your business. Include the legal structure of your business and what staffing requirements you have.
- **Operating plan:** Include what resources you'll need to operate your business.
- **Financial plan:** Use this part to detail how you plan to fund your business. You want to show that you have the business savvy to make your company profitable.

***Make sure to attach a business plan to the application before submission. If you already have a business plan, ensure it includes the above information.**



West Virginia Department of Agriculture

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"West Virginia agritourism is an exciting way for visitors to experience the state's natural beauty, agriculture, and local products."

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