



# THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE GRANGE

NC State Grange is excited to announce a fourth year of grant funding to assist North Carolina landowners in protecting their farm and forest lands. North Carolina continues with the unfortunate title as the second ranked state in the nation in the threat of conversion of farmland to development, as noted in the American Farmland Trust's study, Farms Under Threat: The State of the States. The statistics are:

- Recent Annual Growth (2023-2024): 1.5% (adding ~165,000 residents).
- Overall Growth (2020-2024): around 5.8%.
- National Ranking: Ninth largest state by population; fourth in population gain in the last year (after TX, FL, CA).

NC State Grange is committed to partnering with our State's counties and non-profit organizations by providing conservation grants for Voluntary Agricultural District signage for enrolled landowners and agricultural conservation easement establishment expenditures on privately owned farms and ranches. Local county VAD administrators may apply on behalf of their county VAD members for up to \$4,500 that may be used to purchase signage recognizing a land parcel's VAD designation. Land Trusts and county Soil & Water Districts or county preservation departments may also apply for \$3,000 on each private landowner project they represent that is currently under the process of establishing an agricultural conservation easement.

## Eligibility for VAD Grants:

- Grant applicants must be a County Government agency with an active VAD program.
- The VAD landowner receiving signage using NC State Grange funding must be or become a NC State Grange Member.
- The VAD program must meet the NCGS 106-737 requirements.
- If a grant applicant has an existing open VAD grant, the applicant must provide reasoning for the need for additional grant funding.

## Eligibility for Agricultural Conservation Easement Grants:

- Grant applicants must be a registered North Carolina non-profit conservation organization or a County Government agency with the ability to hold an agricultural conservation easement. Grant applicant may have multiple applications.

- Landowner(s) seeking a conservation easement must be or become a NC State Grange Member.
- A formal agreement between the landowner and entity to hold the conservation easement {NC Soil & Water District and NC Land Trust) must be in place and a copy provided with application request. Applicants are limited to one grant per formal land easement project.
- A North Carolina non-profit conservation organization or a County Government agency must provide proof of application to NCDA&CS ADFPTF or USDA NRCS ALE for conservation easement grant funding or similar grant funding resource.
- A land parcel for which an agricultural conservation easement is sought must have proven documentation of food and/or fiber production (crops, nursery, poultry, livestock, aquaculture, forestry, etc.) as described in NCGS 106-581.1. Agriculture defined.

For more information and to download an application, please visit [www.ncgrange.com/grants](http://www.ncgrange.com/grants). Please send a signed and completed application to [dhardee@ncgrange.com](mailto:dhardee@ncgrange.com). PDF documents preferred. **Application must be received by March 31, 2026.**

David Allen

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David W. Allen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "D".

NC State Grange President



## NC State Grange Grant Program – 2026

### Voluntary Agricultural District Awareness

#### Purpose:

Provide grant funding to NC Soil & Water Districts, County Extension or other county agencies administering local Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD or EVAD) programs in the purchasing and erection of their respective county VAD sign or VAD promotional materials. Grant funding limited to new signage and materials associated with erection of the signage or program promotion.

#### Application Eligibility Requirements:

- Grant applicants must be a County Government agency with an active VAD program.
- Landowners receiving signage using NC State Grange funding must be or become a NC State Grange Member.
- All promotional signage or promotional materials must clearly recognize NC State Grange as financial sponsor (excludes the VAD or EVAD signs).
- The VAD program must meet the NCGS 106-737 requirements.
- Deadline for 2026 applications is March 31, 2026.

#### Grant Funding Information:

- Grant payments may be received in 2 installments.
  - ½ draw upon approval of the grant contract by NC State Grange.
  - ½ final payment upon proof purchase of signs and erection of the signage.
    - Limited to one VAD sign per land parcel in county VAD program. Landowners with multiply VAD parcels may receive additional signs.
      - VAD sign placement must be viewable from a public road.
      - Grantee must provide reasonable documentation for VAD sign erection and placement including materials use. Reimbursement limited to \$150 per sign
    - Program promotional signage (not county VAD sign) and display materials must clearly designate NC State as financial sponsor.
- Grants and request for payments are limited to 2 years from date of award by NC State Grange.
- Maximum NC State Grange Grant Amount per VAD program - \$4,500.
- Grant awards subject to availability of funding.
- Counties without a local Grange Chapter are eligible but must have at least one Grange member to apply which may be an Associate member.

Evaluation & Scoring for Contract Awarding:

Evaluation Item	Awarded Points
The county VAD program has in-kind or matching funding for promoting, outreach or other VAD program related assistance to VAD landowners.	1 point per \$100 of in-kind or match funding provided up to 50 points
Current or applicant VAD Landowner(s) identified as a member or potential member of the Grange. Listing of landowner name and contact information must be provided.	5 points per Grange member landowner that has a VAD parcel or is eligible for VAD and 2 points per potential Grange member with current VAD or applying for VAD. Up to a maximum of 40 points.
Documentation of a Grange Chapter located in the county.	10 points each

NC State Grange Membership

Associate Memberships:

This is a basic membership that allows statewide members to have access and use of our membership benefits as well as receive a copy of our bimonthly newsletter. Associate memberships are available to anyone who is not a member of a local Grange and annual dues are \$20 per person ages 14 and older.

Local Grange Membership:

Local membership will tie you to a local chapter where you can connect with fellow Grangers, have rewarding interactions within your community, have representation at state events, access to all member benefits as well as receive our bimonthly newsletter. Local Granges do set their own dues amount and typically range between \$15-\$30 per member annually.

For more information on becoming a NC State Grange member, go to [www.ncgrange.com/become-a-member](http://www.ncgrange.com/become-a-member).

### NC State Grange VAD Grants Application – 2026

Please send a signed and completed application to [dhardee@ncgrange.com](mailto:dhardee@ncgrange.com). PDF documents preferred. Application must be received by March 31, 2026. Please keep a copy of your application for your files and reference.

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Grant Amount Requested: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Max-\$4,500)

Please provide a brief description of your plan of work to use the requested grant including projected timetable to complete. Include your objectives/ goals in your plan of work.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(In-kind or matching funding for promoting, outreach or other VAD program related assistance to VAD landowners)

Will matching funding be provided? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, amount of grant matching funding? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please give a brief description and plan of use of all funding including match.

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List any Grange Chapters in the applicant county. (See <https://www.ncgrange.com/find-your-local-grange>)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

The number of current VAD members that are either a member of NC State Grange or potential Grange member \_\_\_\_\_. Please submit the name and address of VAD members that are identified for verification purposes.

My signature is my witness that the information provided as being accurate and correct as of the time of application.

Signature of Application Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## NC State Grange Grant Program – 2026

### Agricultural Conservation Easement Grants

#### Purpose:

Provide grant funding to NC Soil & Water Districts and NC Land Trusts for legal costs and required documentation in resolving land ownership issues, surveying requirements or other documents for compliance requirements to record an agricultural conservation easement. Priority consideration given to active NC State Grange member / landowner agricultural conservation easement projects.

#### Application Eligibility Requirements:

- Grant applicants must be a registered North Carolina non-profit conservation organization or a County Government agency with the ability to hold an agricultural conservation easement.
- Grant applicant may have multiple applications.
- Landowner(s) seeking a conservation easement must be or become a NC State Grange Member.
- A formal agreement between the landowner and entity to hold the conservation easement (NC Soil & Water District and NC Land Trust) must be in place and a copy provided with application request.
- North Carolina non-profit conservation organization or a County Government agency must provide proof of grant award from NCDA&CS ADFPTF or USDA NRCS ALE for conservation easement grant funding or compatible resource commitment for the perpetual protection of the land for food and fiber production by private landownership.
- Land parcel seeking an agricultural conservation easement must have proven documentation of food and / or fiber production (crops, nursery, poultry, livestock, aquaculture, forestry, etc.) as described in NCGS 106-581.1. Agriculture defined.

#### Grant Funding Information:

- Grant payments may be obtained in 2 installments
  - ½ draw upon approval of the grant contract by NC State Grange
  - ½ final payment upon documentation of a successful recorded agricultural conservation easement as identified in the application.
- Maximum NC State Grange Grant Amount per conservation easement project - \$3,000
- Deadline for 2026 applications is March 31, 2026.
- Grant awards subject to availability of funding

NC State Grange Application Review for Evaluation & Scoring:

Evaluation Item	Awarded Points
Number of active NC State Grange members property owners associated with conservation easement parcel.	5 points per owner up to a maximum of 25 points
Land parcel is in active farming or forestry (i.e., of proof - documents such as PUV, forestry plan, conservation plan or written letter from local agricultural county service official providing witness)	25 points
Entity (NC Soil & Water District and NC Land Trust) and Landowner have an agreement to seek agricultural conservation easement in place with approved grant funding from NCDA&CS ADFPTF or USDA NRCS	25 points
Bonus Points: Landowner(s) recognition as a new member of NC State Grange (within the previous year) at the time of grant application. Documentation of ownership interest of the subject land parcel must be provided.	5 points per member owner up to a maximum of 25 points

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## NC State Grange Agricultural Conservation Easement Grants Application – 2026

Please send a signed and completed application to [dhardee@ncgrange.com](mailto:dhardee@ncgrange.com). PDF documents preferred. Application must be received by March 31, 2026. Please keep a copy of your application for your files and reference.

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Grant Amount Requested: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Max-\$3,000)

### Description of the Conservation Easement Project:

What type of Agricultural Conservation Easement is to be recorded (Check appropriate classification)? (Please include proof of grant funding with application from NCDA&CS or USDA NRCS such as grant award letter for eligibility status approval)

- \_\_\_\_\_ NCD&CS ADFPTF conservation easement only
- \_\_\_\_\_ USDA NRCS ALE only
- \_\_\_\_\_ NCD&CS ADFPTF with additional federal partners (military - USDA NRCS)
- \_\_\_\_\_ A perpetual agricultural conservation easement using private funding equal and compatible to the ADFPTF and ALE easement template

How many farm/forestry acres to be placed under a conservation easement? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the land currently in active farming or forestry? (Please include proof documents of active farming with application for eligibility status)

- \_\_\_\_\_ yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ no (not eligible)

Do you have a formal agreement with the landowner(s) to seek and place a conservation easement on the land parcel?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes (Must provide proof of the formal agreement with application)
- \_\_\_\_\_ No (Not eligible for grant until formal agreement is submitted)

Are the property owner(s) currently a member of NC State Grange?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ No (Are applying for membership)

Please provide a brief description of your plan of work using the requested grant in the recording of an agricultural conservation easement including projected timetable, objectives and goals to be complete.


My signature is my witness that the information provided as being accurate and correct as of the time of application.

Signature of Application Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_