



**ESSEX COUNTY IN THE PARK
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

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Press Release - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Essex County Agricultural Producers Revitalization Microenterprise Grant

Elizabethtown, NY – September 12, 2024 – The Essex County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA) in partnership with Essex County was awarded \$125,000 for the implementation of the Essex County Agricultural Producers Revitalization Microenterprise Grant Program funded by the New York State Department of Conservation Adirondack Park Community Smart Growth Grant Program. A public meeting will be held on Thursday, October 10th at the Westport Town Hall at 6:00 PM. The Town Hall is located at 22 Champlain Avenue in Westport, NY.

A detailed Agricultural Producers Revitalization Microenterprise Grant program guidebook for Essex County agricultural producers is now available. The guide outlines general grant program information, eligibility, eligible uses of funds, ineligible uses of funds, program process, and additional details. Also included is information on the required entrepreneurial training component as well as business support and resources that will be available during the application process.

This new agriculture microenterprise grant program will assist agricultural producers to help them become more environmentally resilient and economically viable through sustainable growth. The grant can be used to assist with environmental management resources that can reduce environmental threats through implementation of adaptive environmental changes which will not only protect the environment but also improve their economic viability to become more sustainable. The program will encourage economic growth by providing an additional source of capital for the purchase of furniture, fixtures and equipment, marketing, working capital, inventory, operating expenses, seed purchase for crop rotation, climate change adaptation and losses from the 2023 storms. An entrepreneurial training component will also be part of the program and application process which will be held on October 24th, 2024. Details will be announced.

The Department of Environmental Conservation Interim Commissioner Sean Mahar said, "Local government partners are central to the success of DEC's Adirondack and Catskill Park preservation efforts, and by investing directly in park communities, Governor Hochul is showing how natural resource protection and economic development can be balanced. Empowering municipalities to innovate, collaborate, and focus on long-term resilience is an essential complement to the state's aggressive protection efforts and helps to create lasting partnerships and the park communities of the future."

"Essex County's agricultural entrepreneurial community is probably the most vibrant sector of our economy. They provide an expansive draw for tourism and recreation and offer a fantastic

cornucopia of locally grown foods for our residents, markets, and restaurants, maintaining a vital defense against the proliferation of food deserts in our communities. This exciting grant opportunity will offer vitally needed access to capital specifically targeted for small agriculturally based enterprises to ensure the continued vitality and growth for agriculture in Essex County." said Essex County Board of Supervisor's Chairman Shaun Gilliland.

"The IDA is grateful to receive this funding to implement a Microenterprise Grant Program (MPG) to work with the agricultural producers located in Essex County. The IDA will work in partnership with the Ticonderoga Area Chamber of Commerce, Essex County Soil and Water Conservation District, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and the Small Business Development Center to implement this new initiative. We are thankful for the support and coordination of these strong partners," stated Carol Calabrese, Co-Executive Director of the ECIDA.

"We are honored to continue our strong partnership with the ECIDA to further support the business community, and particularly the agricultural business community. Throughout the summer and fall of 2023, TACC proactively connected with partner agencies in hopes to establish a possible funding opportunity for agricultural businesses who were severely impacted by last year's weather. The team at the ECIDA once again agreed to step-up to support a great need within the business community. In coordination with Essex County, TACC and other partner agencies, the ECIDA agreed to coordinate and submit this Smart Growth Grant application. We are so thankful for the constant collaboration of the ECIDA, and their unwavering commitment to our economic vitality. TACC and the SBDC will be available during the application process to provide business support and assistance," shared Matthew Courtright - TACC President & CEO.

"We congratulate the Essex County IDA on their Smart Growth Grant award and appreciate their recognition of the importance of agriculture in the region. The District looks forward to working with the IDA to help Essex County farms maintain economic viability as they balance production and land stewardship." Alice Halloran, District Manager Essex County SWCD.

"Cornell Cooperative Extension is excited for Essex County farmers to have a new source of funding for critical farm improvements and operational expenses. This Smart Growth funding supports both economic viability for farms and environmental management that is compatible with farmland protection and open space principles. We are especially excited to leverage our partnerships with the participating agencies - together we can strengthen all farms and grow healthy local food for all." Stated Elizabeth Lee, Executive Director Cornell Cooperative Extension Essex County.

For more information on the Essex County Agriculture Producers Revitalization Microenterprise Grant Program, contact the Essex County Industrial Development Agency at 518-873-9114 or visit www.essexcountvida.com.

Essex County Industrial Development Agency - The mission of the Essex County Industrial Development Agency is to create a viable business atmosphere that will attract compatible and diverse sustainable economic development opportunities while focusing on major assets, retention and expansion projects, quality of life and job creation. The ECIDA offers several financing options to businesses such as loan and bond financing, other economic development incentives and also owns and manages several business/commerce parks throughout the County.

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