

## MDAR's Natural Disaster Recovery program – CISA summary

Link to RFP: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/fy24-natural-disaster-recovery-ndr-program-for-agriculture-request-for-response-rfr/download>

Applications DUE by 9/29 at 4pm (aka 3:59) via online application:

<https://www.mass.gov/forms/application-natural-disaster-recovery-ndr-program>

We highly recommend submitting a day early! MDAR adheres to their deadlines.

CISA can help with applications if we get some lead time. Please reach out to [sonia@buylocalfood.org](mailto:sonia@buylocalfood.org) for help.

### **To be eligible for funding you must:**

- Be an agricultural operation that produces agricultural products for sale
- Have had CROP losses (infrastructure and livestock losses do not count) related to the following natural disasters:
  - February 3-5, 2023 deep freeze
  - May 17-18, 2023 frost
  - July 9-16, 2023 rainfall and flooding
- Your losses must total 15% of the total planted acreage of your farm. You must meet the 15% loss requirement based on acreage, not dollar value of the loss. For example:
  - If sweet corn makes up 10% of your total acreage, and you lost 100% of your sweet corn but had no other losses, you had a 10% loss and you do **not** qualify for this program
  - If sweet corn makes up 50% of your total planted acreage, and you lost 50% of your corn and had no other losses, you had a 25% loss and you do qualify for this program
- The losses must be on land that is in Massachusetts.

### **Funding amount:**

MAX funding is for 50% of losses capped at \$350,000. Payments may be lower, if total requests are higher than available funds, and could be further offset by other relief funding a farm has received (especially if eligible requests exceed funding).

### **Application elements:**

To apply you will need to upload:

-Map(s) to show exact location of crop losses. This can be hand drawn or downloaded with parcels drawn in. All maps must be in one document for upload. You must make a combined PDF if you have multiple plots and CISA can help!

-Written confirmation that you had landowner permission to farm any land on which you are claiming losses—this can be a lease or a letter. They prefer long-term leases greater than three years.

- A budget document using MDAR's form that details the number of acres planted and revenue in 2021 and 2022 for any crops for which you are claiming as a loss this year, and acreage planted in 2023, lost acreage in 2023, and lost revenue in 2023. MDAR's document includes a dropdown menu for specific

crops which you must use. (NOTE: farms of ANY size can apply, so you can convert row feet or sq feet into acres, if you farm on smaller parcels).

If you do not have any historic information because this is the first year you are planting the crop, use the budget justification question to provide information about how you arrived at your loss dollar amount—in other words, how did you estimate yield and price.

-Your application needs to justify the level of losses you are claiming—so provide additional detail to explain your numbers and make sure to: talk about reasons your crop was valued as it was (organic, direct marketed, PYO, early or late season etc.) AND also explain any changes in acreage or past value—did you plant more of a crop this year than other reported years and why? Was there a weather or market event in previous years that impacted the price or yield that year? If the reviewers do not feel like your loss estimate for this year is reasonable, they will recalculate your losses using the average revenue/yield data (Average Market Price) from other applications for that crop. They encourage you to provide them with enough information to justify your request.

-Photos documenting crop losses, if you have any.

**NOTES:**

Funded operations agree to provide MDAR with “information and financial reporting” for up to five years after June 30, 2024, upon request.

Farms must register with the Produce Safety team in order to get an award: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/register-your-produce-farm>. This involves answering questions about WHAT you grow, total acreage owned, leased, and in production; questions about irrigation and post-harvest water sources; soil-amendments used, etc. so not that onerous, but not nothing.

Applicants may need to have an MDAR site visit before being awarded.

This relief money does not need to be repaid, but it is taxable. Talk to your accountant if you have questions about this.