



Proposal Preparation Guide FY27

INTRODUCTION

Project GREEN is a cooperative effort by plant-based commodities and businesses with AgBioResearch, Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) and Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). The Michigan Legislature created Project GREEN to advance Michigan's economy through its plant-based agriculture. Its mission is to:

- Develop research and educational programs in response to industry needs;
- Ensure and improve food safety; and
- Protect and preserve the quality of natural resources, including water and agricultural lands.

Funding for competitive grants to meet this mission is available during the upcoming fiscal year. New proposals for 2027 will be considered for funding.

ELIGIBILITY

Principal Investigators (PIs) must be employed by Michigan State University or the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. There are no restrictions on the employment status of other team members. Please visit the Project GREEN website for detailed [PI eligibility information](#).

TIMELINE FOR 2027 PROJECTS

- **October 26, 2026** Call for proposals
- **November 10, 2026** Workshop 1 – for campus-based faculty/academic staff
- **November 19, 2026** Workshop 2 – for MSUE field staff
- **January 11, 2027** Proposals due
- **April 1, 2027** Notification of awards
- **May 1, 2027** Project funds available*
- **June 30, 2028** Termination date for 2027 funding

*Please note that technically the funding cycle runs from July 1st – June 30th. Project GREEN awards are allocated in May to assist with the planting season. Our target for award allocation is early May; however, allocations may occur at a later time.

INDUSTRY PRIORITIES

Project GREEN has been meeting plant agriculture industry challenges since 1998. Current research and extension priorities have been submitted to Project GREEN by commodity groups and other partners. Industry priorities can be accessed at this [link](#).

All proposals **must** clearly state how the proposed activities will enhance Michigan's plant-based agriculture and **must be accompanied by letters of support from commodity groups and /or industry stakeholders** that document the relevance, importance, and timeliness of the proposed research or extension projects (see proposal preparation instructions for more details). Projects must deliver clearly defined results within a realistic time frame. All proposals will be evaluated by peer review panels composed of researchers, educators, and industry/government professionals.

PROGRAM AREAS

Project GREEN funds activities in three key areas: Applied Research, Basic Research, and Extension / Demonstration Projects. Panels will consider resubmitted proposals. Submitting proposals to the appropriate panel is key to funding success. If you have questions about the suitability of your proposal for a specific panel, please reach out to Sara Haller (bolessar@msu.edu).

Applied Research proposals must:

- Address immediate priorities and problems facing the industry
- Lead to the development of solutions to problems or recommendations for improvements to industry practices. As a guide, outcomes of Applied Research Projects should be typically realized within two to five years.
- Contain a Michigan centric extension or outreach plan with specified outreach objectives to disseminate information to specifically reach Michigan stakeholders.
- Provide long-term benefits to Michigan's plant agriculture
- Enhance industry profitability

Basic Research proposals must:

- Be innovative and generate knowledge that can be used to address contemporary problems and/or enable the development of improved techniques
- Position investigators to be competitive for national/international grants
 - Include a specific plan (including timeline, target funding agency, and program) for the submission of a grant proposal
 - The major outcome of the project is the successful submission of a proposal to the target program
- Link to plant agriculture industry priorities
- Include a vision and plans for the improvement of Michigan crops or other industry segments
- Proposals submitted to the Basic Research Panel typically work toward longer term goals rather than the short to mid-term goals of Applied Research Proposals.

Extension/Demonstration proposals must:

- Have regional or statewide impact
- Link to plant agriculture industry priorities
- Utilize a team of main campus and statewide extension / outreach professionals
- Be supported by and use results from Project GREEN or other relevant MSU research projects
- Provide Extension/outreach objectives and defined outcomes including an evaluation plan to assess the success of the indicated objectives and outcomes.

Special Considerations for Resubmission Proposals:

- Resubmission proposals **must** include a 1-page point-by-point response to how previous reviewer comments were addressed.
- Unless specifically instructed in the previous review comments, do not submit a resubmission proposal to a different panel.
- Do not submit a resubmission proposal as a new proposal to a different panel.

Special Considerations for Plant Breeding Focused Proposals:

- Plant breeding related proposals should be focused on a specific definable project and not be generic requests to support the breeding program.
- Due to the longer-term nature of most plant breeding-related projects, they are generally more suited to submission to the Basic Research Panel rather than the Applied Panel. However, PIs are strongly encouraged to ensure that their proposal follows the Basic Panel guidelines and contains a strong plan for submission of an extramural proposal.

FUNDING SCOPE

To maintain the flexibility of Project GREEN funding, there are established guidelines for funding amount and multi-year proposals. All multi-year requests must clearly justify the proposed time span and provide a progressive linkage among the activities in subsequent years. Multi-year funding is not guaranteed but is contingent on satisfactory progress and available Project GREEN funding. If year one activities are considered preliminary, submit as a single-year proposal.

MULTI-YEAR FUNDING GUIDELINES AND LIMITS

Project GREEN has established limits on the number of submissions by lead Principal Investigators. The limits are:

- Applied Research – limit 2 submissions
- Basic Research – limit 1 submission*
- Extension/Outreach – limit 1 submission

* **Please Note** if you received a Project GREEN award as a PI through the **Basic Research Panel** in FY26, you are ineligible to apply again in FY27 as a PI. In addition, if you received Basic Panel funding within the last four years, you must provide documentation of your efforts to leverage those funds to apply for extramural proposals. Researchers who previously received Project GREEN awards through the Basic Panel and have not submitted extramural proposals in the last four years are ineligible to apply for additional funding through this panel.

Project duration and funding limits:

- Applied Research – two year maximum, up to \$60,000 per year
- Basic Research – two year maximum, up to \$60,000 per year
- Extension/Demonstration – two year maximum, up to \$40,000 per year

GENERAL FORMATTING GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSALS

Proposals must include the cover page, must be single-spaced with indented paragraphs, double-spaced between sections, in 12-point type with 1-inch margins. Proposals must be submitted as a single combined PDF file.

NEW PROJECT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

- I. **COVER PAGE.** All fields must be completed.
- II. **PROPOSAL SUMMARY (Limit 300 words).** The proposal summary **must** contain a statement about how the proposed project addresses [Michigan Plant Industry Priorities](#)
Sections III – VIII must not be more than 4 pages total.
- III. **PROBLEM STATEMENT.**
- IV. **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES.**
- V. **SPECIFIC METHODS AND PROCEDURES.**
- VI. **PROPOSAL IMPACTS.** The project must demonstrate potential impacts on Michigan’s plant agriculture. The proposal must outline how impact will be estimated. Outreach and economic rationale must be included.
**Basic grant proposals must present the plan for a federal competitive grant submission in this section.
- VII. **PROJECT SCOPE.** Describe how this project builds on or supports any similar projects submitted to or funded by other sources.
- VIII. **TIMELINE.** Two-year projects must include plans for both years.
- IX. **RESPONSE TO PRIOR REVIEW. (Resubmission Proposals Only)** Provide a point-by-point response to how reviewer comments were addressed in the revised proposal (Limit 1 page).
- X. **LITERATURE CITED.** Literature that supports goals, objectives and methods of proposal.
- XI. **BUDGET WORKSHEET.** Two-year projects must include budgets for both years. List both existing matching support and support from pending proposals that are directly related to this Project GREEN proposal. Please refer to the [Project GREEN PI and Funding Eligibility Document](#) for information on the categories of personnel that can be supported by Project GREEN funds.
- XII. **BUDGET JUSTIFICATION.** (Limit 2 pages). Describe how funds will be allocated using the categories provided on the Budget Template document.
- XIII. **TEAM QUALIFICATIONS.** One-page vita for each team member (PI, Co-PIs, and Collaborators) outlining their qualifications and accomplishments.
- XIV. **CURRENT & PENDING SUPPORT.** For each team member, provide a list of their Current & Pending Support from MSU and Non-MSU sources. Include the funding agency, title of project, effective and expiration dates, total award amount, and whether the proposal is awarded or pending.
- XV. **PROJECT GREEN FUNDING HISTORY.** List each team member’s Project GREEN funding over the past four years, including current allocations. Include project number, project title, PI name and a list of CoPIs and collaborators. Indicate how these Project GREEN funds have been used to leverage external proposals and grant awards.
- XVI. **LETTERS OF SUPPORT.** **At least one letter of support is required from a commodity group or stakeholder.** Letters of support **should not** be sent directly to the AgBioResearch office. They must be uploaded in the competitive database as part of your proposal upload. Please be courteous and contact commodity groups and/or organizations well in advance for letters of support. Letters of support must specifically address the relevance to industry priorities and the importance of your project to MI agriculture. Generic endorsements of the project are not helpful.

CONTINUING PROJECT PROPOSAL & REPORTING GUIDELINES

A progress report for two-year projects is due in January of each year, which is the same deadline as the competitive process (**January 11, 2027**). A comprehensive final report will be requested in late May for submission in late June of the termination year. Multi-year projects are funded one year at a time and are subject to annual evaluation. These reports will be placed on the Project GREEN website and used for reporting to the MI legislature and the public.

Failure to submit timely and quality progress reports, or to make acceptable project progress, will result in termination of a project and recovery of unspent funds. Investigators failing to submit a final report for a completed project will become ineligible for future Project GREEN funding.

CONTINUING PROJECT PROPOSAL PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

- I. **COVER PAGE.** All fields must be completed.
- II. **PROPOSAL SUMMARY. (Limit 300 words).** The Proposal Summary **must** contain a statement about how the proposed project addresses [Michigan Plant Industry Priorities](#)
- III. **PROGRESS REPORT. (Section III. should not be more than 2 pages total).** Submit a concise (**two-page maximum**, including photographs, charts, or figures) progress report highlighting accomplishments, projected activities, **outreach and impacts** on the Michigan agricultural industry. Reported information will be used to demonstrate the relevance and impact of Project GREEN funding in communications. Files should be imbedded in the report document. Images should be saved at 300 dpi or higher.
- IV. **EXTERNAL GRANTS.** List all grant proposals submitted in 2026 related to your Project GREEN award and the status of the submitted proposals (awarded, pending, or rejected).
- V. **TIMELINE.** Outline plans for remainder of project.

- VI. **BUDGET.** Complete a Project GREEN Budget form for the remainder of the project. Please include any matching funds leveraged to this point to support the project. **Please refer to the [Project GREEN Eligibility Guidelines](#) for information on the categories of personnel that can be supported by Project GREEN funds.**
- VII. **BUDGET JUSTIFICATION.** (Limit 2 pages). Describe how funds will be allocated using the categories provided on the Budget Template document.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

We encourage you to submit your proposals prior to the deadline of **Monday, January 11, 2027**. This will give us ample time to manage any issues that may arise.

Please visit the tutorial and user guide listed below, both will give you an excellent overview of the new system.

You can access the Researcher Tutorial Powerpoint and Project GREEN’s App User Guide at https://www.canr.msu.edu/project-green/rfps_and_forms.

Once you have completed the tutorial and user guide, click on the URL below to begin your online submission.

tinyurl.com/ProjectGREEN

PROPOSAL REVIEW

Proposals are subjected to scientific peer review and ranking by panels composed of current and emeritus MSU faculty, academic staff, MSUE educators, MDARD employees, and industry professionals. Each panel is selected by Project GREEN leadership to meet the needs of the specific program area. The identity of panel members is confidential.

The chair of each review panel reports funding recommendations to the Directors’ Action Team (DAT), which is comprised of the Directors of AgBioResearch, MSUE, and MDARD. The DAT reviews recommendations and makes final decisions on funded proposals and appropriate allocations. The following criteria are used by all panel members. ***PIs are strongly encouraged to take into consideration these criteria when preparing proposals.***

Evaluation Criteria	Applied	Basic	Extension
Alignment with specific programmatic priorities of the industries and/or commodities served by Project GREEN.	10	10	10
The extent of partnering with and potential impact on Michigan plant agriculture industries.	10	5	15
Mechanism to deliver information to Michigan plant agriculture industries.	10	0	25
Is the proposed project innovative and scientifically sound? appropriateness of methodology; feasibility of completion.	25	25	15
Investigator expertise aligned with project objectives. Is the role of each team member clearly defined? Are vita current?	10	10	10
Does the proposed research position investigators for future competitive funding? Is a compelling plan for securing extramural funding included in the proposal? Where applicable (not for new PIs) do the PI and collaborators have an adequate record of leveraging past Project GREEN awards to secure extramural funding?	10	30	0
Is the budget appropriate for the scope of work and is it adequately justified?	10	10	10
Letters of support from industry and / or stakeholders that specifically address the importance of the proposed research.	10	10	10
Commitment of matching funds or in-kind support from industry or stakeholders	5	0	5
Total	100	100	100

PROJECT GREEN RETURN WITHOUT REVIEW POLICY

Reviewers have identified an increasing number of Project GREEN proposal submissions that do not follow the Proposal Preparation Guidelines. To increase overall proposal quality and reduce the workload for reviewers who spend time reviewing non-compliant proposals, Project GREEN has implemented a policy of “Return Without Review” for proposals that do not meet the following criteria:

- Prospective PIs must consult the [PI eligibility guide](#) on the Project GREEN website, prior to proposal submission to confirm they are eligible to submit a proposal.
- Proposals must contain a Project Summary (300-word limit).
- The Project Summary must contain a statement about how the proposed project addresses [Michigan Plant Industry Priorities](#)
- Sections III through VIII of the proposal (see NEW PROJECT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES section) must be limited to four pages in length.
- A one-page vita must be included for each PI, Co-PI, and all Collaborators listed on a proposal. This document must be updated annually and not recycled from earlier Project GREEN proposal submissions.
- A current and pending support document must be included for each team member.
- A document listing Project GREEN funding to team members in the last five years must be included. This document must explicitly indicate how each Project GREEN award has been used to support additional proposal submissions and grant awards.
- A Budget Justification document must be included that summarizes the budget requested (maximum 2 pages in length).
- All proposals must be accompanied by at least one letter of support from either a commodity group or an industry stakeholder.
- Letters of support must be specific to the proposal being submitted and not be reused from a previous proposal submission.
- Resubmission proposals must contain a point-by-point response to prior review comments (maximum 1 page limit).
- Proposals submitted to the Applied Research Panel must include an extension and outreach plan.
- Proposals submitted to the Basic Research Panel must include a detailed plan for how a Project GREEN Award will be utilized to leverage additional extramural proposals.
- Proposals submitted to the Extension Panel must include a collaboration between on-campus faculty and MSUE personnel.
- Proposals must be prepared using 12-point font.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Review panels are aware that not all commodity groups provide funding for research projects. In cases where matching funding is not provided by the commodity group/s aligned with your proposal, a statement to this effect should be included in the Budget Justification.
- In cases where commodity groups do provide research funding, PIs are strongly encouraged to seek matching funds to support their Project GREEN proposal. This is particularly relevant for proposals submitted to the Applied and Extension Panels.
- PIs must not double-count matching funding and leveraged funding. For example, matching funding applied for or received to support a Project GREEN Proposal in one year should not be considered as leveraged funds for the same award in subsequent years.
- Project GREEN funding should be viewed as seed funding, as such proposals that include plans for leveraging project GREEN awards to secure extramural funding typically score higher than proposals that do not include a well-developed plan. Note that a plan for leveraging extramural funding is a **requirement** for Basic proposals and **strongly encouraged** for Applied proposals. Pursuing additional extramural funding is not a requirement for proposals submitted to the Extension panel.
- Project GREEN proposals submitted to either the Applied or Basic panels that state they are being utilized to support existing funding, and do not include a plan to leverage additional extramural funding, generally score lower on the rubric than proposals that include a plan to secure additional funding.

