$1.25 Million in New Grant Funding Available from Michigan Economic Development Corporation to Assist Michigan's Small Farms Implement COVID-19 Safety Measures

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As a result of high demand for the Michigan Agricultural Safety Grant program, and a clear need to help small farms mitigate risks of the COVID-19 virus in their operation, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation today announced it will begin accepting applications for the MEDC Small Farm Safety Grant program at 9 a.m. EST on Tuesday, July 21, at **michiganbusiness.org/agsafety**.

Modeled after the **Michigan Agricultural Safety Grant** program launched on July 15 using federal CARES Act funding, the MEDC Small Farm Safety Grant program will award $1.25 million in grants to farms with less than 10 employees to fund COVID-19 mitigation costs. These include but are not limited to testing costs, personal protection equipment, facility needs, increased sanitation costs, employee training, and upgraded safety procedures for farm-provided housing.

“We saw an opportunity to respond to clear need for support from Michigan’s small farms to build on the tremendous response from farms and food processors across the state applying for Michigan Agricultural Safety Grants,” said Mark A. Burton, CEO of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. “The MEDC Small Farm Safety Grant will allow us additional security in our food industry and provide much-needed relief to farmers across Michigan.”

Grants will be limited to $1,000 per employee, and the program will cover costs incurred from June 1, 2020 through Sept. 15, 2020. Eligible applicants will be able to apply for funding starting Tuesday, July 21, at 9 a.m. EST at **michiganbusiness.org/agsafety**. Grants will be awarded on a first come, first served basis until all funding has been awarded.

To qualify for grant support, applicants must be a farm located in Michigan and meet the following requirements:

- Less than 10 employees in Michigan, with supporting documentation.
- Provide proof of good standing with the state of Michigan, as applicable (Certificate of Good Standing).
- Attest that the business is current on all state, local and real estate taxes, or is otherwise contesting them in good faith.

- Have completed registration in the State of Michigan Integrated Governmental Management Applications (SIGMA) Vendor Self-Service website prior to applying for grant funding.

"Just like other small businesses, small farms and food processors are the backbone of the food and agriculture industry and are fundamental to our entire food supply chain," said Gary McDowell, director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. "Michigan continues to be a leader in supporting the state's farming community throughout COVID-19. MEDC's quick response to help our small farmers meet their health and safety needs is a perfect example of that commitment."

According to MDARD, food and agriculture contributes $104.7 billion annually to Michigan's economy, and represents 805,000 jobs statewide. Additionally, Michigan exports approximately $1.8 billion of food and agriculture products each year.

Applications will be processed by East Lansing-based GreenStone Farm Credit Services, one of America's largest rural lenders, including 31 branches in Michigan. GreenStone has a 100-year track record providing financial services to the agricultural industry – including short, intermediate, and long-term loans; equipment and building leases; life insurance; crop insurance; accounting; and tax services.

GreenStone will host the application portal; complete an initial screening of all applications and supporting documentation; and recommend applications to the MEDC for final approval and disbursements of the grants awarded.

"After just a few weeks to get the Michigan Agricultural Safety Grant program off the ground, it's energizing to see MEDC's adaptability to find additional resources to support farms with less than 10 employees," said Dave Armstrong, GreenStone President and CEO. "Agriculture is a diverse industry – particularly in Michigan – and the next few months are critical times for many of the commodities grown here. The MEDC Small Farm Safety Grant program will inject essential support to this important part of the agricultural industry. Our GreenStone team is committed to working vigorously to get them the support they need."

For farms and agricultural processors with 10 employees or more, applications are still being accepted for the $15 million Michigan Agricultural Safety Grant program using federal CARES Act funding. Other related resources available to support Michigan employers in obtaining needed Personal Protection Equipment include MEDC's **Pure Michigan Business Connect COVID-19 Procurement Platform** – a procurement program to assist businesses in accessing non-medical grade PPE to keep their employees and customers safe as they begin resuming in-person operations.

The $100 million **Michigan Small Business Restart Program** application process is also accepting applications at **michiganbusiness.org/restart**. The program will provide grants to small businesses around the state that are reopening and have experienced a loss of income as

a result of the COVID-19 crisis. Farms and food processors with fewer than 10 employees and that meet all other eligibility requirements would be able to apply for a grant through the Michigan Small Business Restart Program.

To date, MEDC has now launched 18 COVID-19 relief and recovery programs supporting more than 3,400 businesses in the state and helping to retain more than 14,700 jobs across all 83 counties. To learn more about MEDC's COVID-19 response programs and the impact they are having on economic recovery efforts, visit **michiganbusiness.org/covid19response**. Other resources for economic reopening efforts as well as businesses across Michigan struggling with economic losses as a result of the COVID-19 virus can be found online at **michiganbusiness.org/covid19**.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at **Michigan.gov/Coronavirus** and **CDC.gov/Coronavirus**.

About Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation is the state's marketing arm and lead advocate for business development, job awareness and community development with the focus on growing Michigan's economy. For more information on the MEDC and our initiatives, visit **www.MichiganBusiness.org**. For Pure Michigan® tourism information, your trip begins at **www.michigan.org**. Join the conversation on: **Facebook**, **Instagram**, **LinkedIn**, and **Twitter**.

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