**STATE OF MARYLAND**

**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE: **Healthy Soils Competitive Fund FY 2026**

**Narrative Questions:**

Applications to the Healthy Soils Competitive Fund will be assessed based on the following project narrative questions and separate project budget. Possible points awarded are detailed on page 7 of the application document in the section titled “Application Ranking.”

**Please download and complete the project narrative and submit via email as a Word or PDF attachment or print and mail to the address provided on page 4 of the application document.**

Respond to the following questions in as much detail as possible, please attach any images to support your narrative following your written responses.

**Note: Applications which do not answer all narrative questions will not be accepted for consideration**.

**\*Limit 10 pages (not including images)**

1. Please describe your farming operation and current production system, or the type of farming operations you will be working with as an organization. What are the goals for your operation related to improvements in soil health?
2. What practices or systems are you proposing to adopt to meet your soil health goals. How do these practices constitute a change from your current production system?
3. How do you plan to manage the proposed conservation practices/soil health system? Provide a detailed annual breakdown illustrating how your project will be implemented over the three-year grant period.
4. How will managing the proposed conservation practices/soil health system in this way help to meet your soil health goals?
5. What soil health outcomes do you expect to gain from project implementation? How will you measure, track, and observe these outcomes?
6. What technical assistance or existing expertise will be leveraged to ensure the project is successful?
7. How will the proposed project sequester carbon and/or reduce greenhouse gas emissions as compared to your current management practices? How are you estimating the benefits (e.g., increases in organic matter or soil organic carbon, reduction in number of equipment or tillage passes, reduction in carbon intensive inputs, etc.)?
8. How will the practices be maintained, expanded, or potentially improved after the three-year grant period?
9. How will project success be measured, recorded, and shared with MDA and the wider agricultural community over the course of the project?
10. Please describe your experience working with your local Soil Conservation District (SCD) or Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) office for technical and financial assistance. What SCD or NRCS programs have you participated in on your farm? Have you applied for any financial assistance (e.g. EQIP, MACS, CSP) that will support your soil health project? Describe how this grant opportunity fills gaps in available funding or how the project goals may not align with other funding opportunities.