Requests for Applications (RFA)

Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Tier 4 Implementation Funding
St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District
AEM Base Program – Round 19
(January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2028)

1. Introduction

Overview

This Request for Applications (RFA) applies to proposals submitted for funding consideration through the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program. St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District (SLC SWCD) invites farms located in St. Lawrence County to submit applications for funding under the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Tier 4 Implementation Funding. Program funds are available for non-point source implementation projects that will reduce, control, or prevent pollution from agricultural activities.

Eligibility of Applicants

Applications for funding will be accepted from farms that have actively participated in the AEM program, working with the St. Lawrence County SWCD to complete a Tier I and Tier II assessment and have begun working towards a Tier III with the SWCD or a private planner. If you are interested in this funding but have not worked with St. Lawrence County SWCD to complete these assessments, please contact the district to start this process.

2. Funding Criteria

Eligible Projects

Applicants must be proposing to implement projects identified in a conservation plan (Tier 3a), Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP), or CAFO Plan in order to be eligible for funding. All projects **MUST** be able to be completed within the **3-year timeframe (January 1, 2026-December 31,2028)**. St. Lawrence County SWCD holds the right to decline any application due to size, scope and ability for anyone to complete the project in the above stated timeframe.

3. Proposal Format, Contents and Submission

Timeline

Release of Request for Applications	February 6, 2026
Deadline for Application Submission	April 3, 2026
Award Announcement	April 27, 202

Submission Requirements

Applications for the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Tier 4 Implementation Funding must be received by the St. Lawrence County SWCD no later than **4:00 pm on Friday April 3, 2026.**

Applicants are responsible for the timely submission of applications. Applications will **not** be accepted after the deadline. Applicants may submit application via mail, email, or by dropping off at the St. Lawrence County SWCD office.

Complete applications include (*Required components):

- Complete Application Form *
- Project Design (if applicable)
- Any supporting documentation applicant would like to include.

Mailing Address:

St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District
Att: Allycia Foote
1942 Old Dekalb Rd
Canton, NY 13617

Email:

Allycia Foote- District Technician: allycia@slcswcd.org
Alivia Bleau – District Manager: manager@slcswcd.org

Phone:

(315) 386-3582

4. Evaluation Criteria

Preference Points

The ranking is based on the Proposal Rating Sheet. All applications will be ranked by their grant total score from the highest to lowest for awards. The St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Board of Directors (BOD) shall hold the right to give preference points to proposals located within a watershed or sub-watershed of a priority waterbody as identified by the St. Lawrence County SWCD's AEM strategic plan. The BOD reserves the right to make the final decisions on approval or rejection of any or all applications, in whole or in part, regardless of evaluation, if deemed to be in the best interest of the SLC SWCD.

Consideration will be given to the following factors when ranking applications:

- Project clearly addresses identified need or opportunity
- Project is cost-effective
- Adequate scope of work and time frame
- Non-CAFO Farms

The St. Lawrence County SWCD may conduct site reviews of the proposed project areas as a part of the selection process. The St. Lawrence County SWCD will rank each project for funding and through adoption of a written resolution, will authorize funding for projects based on the ranking until the available funds are exhausted. St. Lawrence County SWCD will notify farms selected for funding and present them with a budget prior to beginning project. Farms not selected are encouraged to discuss other funding options with the St. Lawrence County SWCD office or apply again next round.

For reference only, filled out by SWCD Staff

St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District

Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Tier 4 Implementation Funding

Proposal Rating Sheet – Maximum Total Points = 14 Points

Applicant Name:				
Proposed Practices:				
Date of ranking:				
	2 Points	**1 Point**	**0 Points**	**Points Awarded**
Priority HUC12- Current AEM Strategic Plan	Project located within Priority 1 or 2 HUC12	Project located within Priority 3 or 4 HUC12	Project located within Priority 5 or 6 HUC12	
Proximity to PWL stream	Project site is adjacent to PWL stream (0-100ft)	Project site is close to PWL stream (100-200ft)	Project site is not near PWL stream (200+ ft)	
Farm Planning Level	Farm has 3A or equivalent plan completed with 5yrs	Farm has Tier II completed within 5yrs	Farm has not completed Tier II or higher planning	
Tier II Score	Farm's Tier II worksheet related to proposed practices are rated 4	Farm's Tier II worksheet related to proposed practices are rated 3	Farm's Tier II worksheet related to proposed practices are rated 2	
Project readiness and completion time		Project is ready / can be completed by Dec 31, 2027	Project is ready / can be completed by Dec 31, 2028	
Current Grant	Farm has never received funding through NYS Ag & Markets programs	Farm **does not** have *current* funding under contract through NYS Ag & Markets	Farm **has** *current* funding under contract through NYS Ag & Markets	
			Total Points	

St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District

Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Tier 4 Implementation Funding

Project Application Form

If you have any questions when completing this form, please consult with SWCD staff.

Applications DUE by April 3, 2026

Applicant Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Specific Project Information (applicant **must** be able to complete project by December 31, 2028)

Proposed Start Date: _____ Anticipated Completion Date: _____

Funding Amount being requested: _____

1. Has your farm been inventoried and assessed using AEM Tier I and Tier II process? **(If no, please contact the office to start the process).**
   ○ Yes ○ No
2. Does your farm have or is your farm working with the SWCD (or a private planner) to complete a conservation plan (Tier 3a) that addresses the project you are applying to implement?
   ○ Yes ○ No
3. Has your farm received funding through the district before? (Ag NPS, CRF, AEM, CAFO) (If so, please list the practices installed).
   ○ Yes ○ No

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4. What Best Management Practice System(s) are you applying for? (Please see attached list of Best Management Practice Systems).

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5. Will the proposed project address more than one water quality resource concern on the farm? (If yes, please describe).

○ Yes ○ No

_____

6. Does this project require a Professional Engineer? (Please indicate whether test pits or a preliminary design have been completed.)

○ Yes ○ No ○ I don't know

7. Which is the lowest cost-share percentage you would be willing to apply for?

○ 75% State/25% Landowner ○ 60% State/40% Landowner

○ 70% State/30% Landowner ○ Other (please describe)

8. Is your farm willing to allow the district to utilize the project as a success story (if funded)?

○ Yes ○ No

Budget & Funding Request:		
Equipment/ Materials:		$
		$
		$
		$
		$
		$
		$
Construction/Services:		$
		$
		$
Other:		$
		$
		$
Total project expenses		**$**

Project Narrative: Please briefly describe the proposed project, what materials you will need, and the proposed timeline. Please include economic and environmental impacts expected upon completion, how the project will benefit the day-to-day operations, long-term impacts expected, etc.) *Feel free to add more pages as needed*.

Please return Application Form, along with any additional documents to the St. Lawrence County SWCD office

No later than 4:00pm April 3, 2026

Best Management Practices Systems:

Access Control System

- An Access Control System provides for the permanent exclusion of livestock from a waterbody or hydrologically sensitive area to protect water quality.

Agrichemical Handling and Storage System

- A permanent structure, with associated operation and maintenance procedures, that includes an impervious surface to provide an environmentally safe on-farm area for agrichemical storage, handling, mixing, loading, recovery, and rinsing.

Composting System – Animal

- An on-farm System to safely facilitate the treatment or disposal through controlled aerobic decomposition of livestock and poultry carcasses, by micro-organisms into a biologically stable, soilenriching material useful for soil amendment. This System is especially useful when rendering services are not available or too costly.

Erosion Control System – Structural

- The construction of an Erosion Control System to control the loss of soil from sheet, ephemeral, rill, or gully erosion on agricultural lands, farmsteads, and production areas. This includes Systems utilizing terraces, diversions, water and sediment control basins (WASCoBs), waterways (both grassed and lined), roof runoff practices, access roads, and associated earthmoving practices.

Feed Management System

- The continual process of providing adequate, not excess, nutrients to dairy animals through the integration of feeding and crop management to reduce nutrient excretion in manure and nutrient accumulation in soil, lower potential pollution risks to water and air resources, and improve farm profitability.

Forestry / Agroforestry System

- A System of conservation practices that enhances the growth of trees for carbon sequestration and other benefits, conservation of natural resources, and farm viability on current or proposed forest lands.

Integrated Pest Management System

- An ecologically based, site-specific integrated pest control strategy utilizing a combination of pest prevention, pest avoidance, pest monitoring, and pest suppression strategies coupled with precision application techniques and Best Management Practices when pesticide application is warranted.

Irrigation Water Management System

- A planned System that determines and controls the rate, amount, placement, and timing of irrigation water.

Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management System

- A System for the interception, collection, and safe treatment of runoff water from a barnyard or concentrated livestock area.

Manure and Agricultural Waste Treatment System

- A System for the mechanical, chemical or biological treatment of agricultural wastes.

Nutrient Management System – Cultural

- Managing the amount (rate), source, placement (method of application), and timing of plant nutrient and soil amendment applications for efficient use by crops and reduced losses to the environment. If applicable, this can include addressing the issues from farmstead areas as it relates to non-point sources of pollutants.

Pathogen Management System

- Use of preventative measures, livestock management and conservation practices to provide multiple barriers to the introduction, replication, and survival of pathogens in domestic livestock and reducing the risk of pathogen contamination of surface and groundwater resources by treatment or controlling the movement of pathogens to water.

Petroleum and Oil Products Storage System

- An oil and petroleum product storage tank is a stationary facility which may include one or more above ground tanks, underground tanks, or a combination of both, for the storage, transfer, and usage of liquid oil or oil products such as diesel fuel, gasoline, kerosene, fuel oil, lubrication oil, hydraulic oil, crop oil, vegetable oil, waste oils, or animal fat. A Petroleum and Oil Products Storage System involves planning, implementation of standard operating procedures, proper tank siting, design and installation, spill and overfill prevention, leak monitoring and inspection, secondary containment, operation and maintenance, and emergency action planning.

Prescribed Rotational Grazing System

- A Prescribed Rotational Grazing System using 5 or more paddocks for a grazing season, alternating paddocks to allow for forage vigor and re-growth. Livestock graze for no more than 7 days before they are rotated to another paddock.

Process Wash Water Management System

- A System designed for the collection, storage, treatment and disposal of effluents from processes on farms that include milking centers, horse washing, egg washing, vegetable washing and fruit washing. They may contain milk solids, nutrients, liniments, organic matter and soil along with detergents, acid rinses and sanitizer, all mixed with a quantity of water. This System is not applicable for wash water containing manure and other animal waste or for wash water from commercial processing like cheese production or vegetable or fruit processing (like vineyard waste).

Riparian Buffer System

- An area of grasses, sedges, rushes, ferns, legumes, forbs, shrubs, or trees tolerant of intermittent flooding or saturated soils located adjacent to and up-gradient from waterbodies.

Short-Term Waste Collection and Transfer System

- A System designed for the collection, transfer, and short-term storage for up to 60 days of generated or imported agricultural materials, including manure, by-products, process wastewater, or organic material being utilized as a land applied nutrient source or amendment rather than animal feed or bedding.

Silage Leachate Control and Treatment System

- A System designed to reduce the generation of silage leachate and for the collection, storage, treatment and disposal of effluents and runoff from the storage of silage crops from upright and bunk silos, as well as silage storage bags.

Soil Health System

- Soil Health Systems employ cultural (i.e., non-structural, cultural or management-based) measures such as crop rotation, tillage, mulching, cover cropping, or other practices according to a soil conservation plan to control soil erosion, reduce run-off, and enhance soil health.

Stream Corridor and Shoreline Management System

- A planned System of vegetation, structures, bio-technology, or management techniques to stabilize or protect stream channels, streambanks and shorelines while also enhancing natural hydrologic processes and improving fish and wildlife habitat.

Waste Storage and Transfer System

- A System designed for the collection, transfer, or storage of agricultural livestock and recognizable process waste.