

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Appropriations

BILL: SB 922

INTRODUCER: Senators Perry and Ausley

SUBJECT: Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Matching Grant Program

DATE: February 23, 2022

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Becker</u>	<u>Becker</u>	<u>AG</u>	Favorable
2.	<u>Blizzard</u>	<u>Betta</u>	<u>AEG</u>	Recommend: Favorable
3.	<u>Blizzard</u>	<u>Sadberry</u>	<u>AP</u>	Pre-meeting

I. Summary:

SB 922 establishes the Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Matching Grant Program within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (department) to support startup functions for new farming and ranching operations. To receive a grant, an individual must:

- Be an agricultural producer, be an employee of a farm or ranch, or be an agricultural producer who is a veteran as defined in section 1.01(14), Florida Statutes;
- Be between the ages of 18 and 35;
- Have operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years;
- Demonstrate, at a minimum, a dollar-for dollar matching investment for the grant amount requested; and
- Submit a grant application.

Annual grant funding for the Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Matching Grant Program is contingent upon specific appropriation by the Legislature. The bill requires each grant award to be between \$5,000 and \$20,000, and a recipient may receive only one award each grant period.

For the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the sum of \$500,000 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the department for the purpose of implementing the program.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2022.

II. Present Situation:

Opportunities exist within farming and ranching, but beginning farmers and ranchers have unique educational, training, technical assistance, and outreach needs. Capital access, land

access, and access to knowledge and information to assist in ensuring profitability and sustainability are vital to those just entering agriculture and in their first ten years of operation.¹

Currently, there are no grant programs within the department specifically to assist young farmers and ranchers. The department does provide resources through its Grant Opportunity² public webpage.

To address the lack of resources and assistance, the 2018 Legislature created a 12 member Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Advisory Council³ to provide an opportunity for young people to offer advice, and to give recommendations to the Commissioner of Agriculture about the challenges facing aspiring farmers and ranchers in the early stages of their careers. The council is authorized to examine issues such as access to land, availability of credit and capital, and access to business skills training. The Legislature also directed the department to create the Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Resource Clearinghouse on its website⁴ in order to provide career information and resources to young farmers who will be entering a wide range of jobs involving food production, natural resources, plant systems, animal management, and much more.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 creates s. 288.06572, F.S., to establish the Florida Young Farmer and Rancher Matching Grant Program. The bill requires the department to administer grants to foster the creation and expansion of agricultural businesses by young farmers and ranchers in Florida. The department is directed to adopt rules regarding the program. To be eligible, grant recipients must at a minimum:

- Be an agricultural producer, employee of a farm or ranch, or an agricultural producer who is a veteran as defined in s. 1.01(14), F.S.;
- Be at least 18 years of age, but not older than 35 years of age;
- Have operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years;
- Demonstrate, at minimum, a dollar-for-dollar matching investment for grant money requested; and
- Submit a grant application during the time period designated by the department.

Each grant award must be between \$5,000 and \$20,000, and a recipient may receive only one award per grant period. Annual grant funding is contingent upon appropriation from the Legislature. For the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the sum of \$500,000 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the department for the purpose of implementing the program.

Section 2 provides that this act shall take effect July 1, 2022.

¹ See <https://nifa.usda.gov/program/beginning-farmer-and-rancher-development-program-bfrdp> (Last visited January 12, 2022).

² See <https://www.fdacs.gov/Business-Services/Grant-Opportunities> (Last visited January 12, 2022).

³ Section 570.843, F.S.

⁴ See <https://www.fdacs.gov/Education/Preparing-for-Careers-in-Agriculture> (Last visited January 12, 2022).

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The department will incur an indeterminate increase in costs relating to workload to implement the grant program.⁵ The costs associated with this workload will need to be funded through the overall appropriation for the grant program. For the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the sum of \$500,000 in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the department to implement the program.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

⁵ Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, *Senate Bill 922, 2022 Agency Legislative Analysis* (December 8, 2021) (on file with the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government).

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill creates section 288.06572 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
