

**§318. Business plan development**

**1. Eligibility.** An applicant must own a farm that has been producing agricultural products commercially in the State for at least 2 years at the time of application. The applicant must submit an application to the department to be eligible for participation in the program pursuant to procedures developed by the department.

[PL 2007, c. 660, §2 (AMD).]

**2. Criteria for selection.** The panel shall evaluate and approve applications that are based upon criteria developed by the department, including:

A. The degree of opportunity for increasing the vitality of the farm due to factors such as the capability of the applicant to effect positive changes in farm operations and the suitability of the land in agricultural use to sustain those changes; and [PL 1999, c. 763, §1 (NEW).]

B. The degree of threat to the continuation of agricultural use of the land due to factors such as the financial capacity and current farm management practices of the applicant. [PL 2003, c. 167, §1 (AMD).]

[PL 2003, c. 167, §1 (AMD).]

**3. Services package; reimbursement.** Once an applicant is selected to participate in the program, the department shall assist the selected farm in assembling a services package to develop the business plan within 18 months of the selection. These services must include:

A. Outside experts to provide services such as analyzing production practices and markets or developing financial data; and [PL 2007, c. 660, §3 (AMD).]

B. Department-approved instruction or classroom training in economics and business planning for the owner or operator of the farm. [PL 2007, c. 660, §3 (AMD).]

A services package must be approved by the department before it is implemented. The department shall pay for outside services contracted as part of an approved services package. The department may not pay more than \$10,000 for outside services contracted as part of the services package to a selected farm. The department shall keep an accounting of the services provided to a selected farm as part of the services package.

[PL 2007, c. 660, §3 (AMD).]

**4. First farmland protection agreement.**

[PL 2003, c. 167, §2 (RP).]

**5. Business plan requirements.** A selected farm must use a services package to develop a business plan that identifies changes in farm management practices and investments in equipment and property that would increase the vitality of the farm.

[PL 1999, c. 763, §1 (NEW).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 1999, c. 763, §1 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 167, §§1,2 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 660, §§2, 3 (AMD).

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