



## Program Overview

At Innovative Ag Services (IAS), we are committed to strengthening the communities we serve. Our *Seeding Hope & Innovation Initiative* reflects this commitment through strategic financial giving that aligns with our cooperative's core values: customer service, employee excellence, continuous improvement, stewardship, and partnership.

The initiative supports 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and city/county government entities within a 60-mile radius of IAS locations. Through three levels of financial contributions—Seed Donations (under \$1,000), Harvest Donations (\$1,000+), and Matched Harvest Donations—we fund impactful, community-driven projects.

Funding priorities focus on:

- Agricultural Education – 4H, FFA, school/business Ag Ed programs, Ag/Grain safety & equipment.
- Community Vitality – Non-profit providing support to address the needs of their local communities.
- Food Security – Food banks/pantries, community dinners.

A structured application process and quarterly review cycle ensure that IAS resources are directed toward initiatives that align with our mission and create lasting value.

## Donation Request Categories

### Seed Donations (*Under \$1,000*)

Small-scale contributions supporting local events, county fairs, and youth ag programs.

- **Eligibility:** IAS employees or members
- **Submission:** Through an IAS Location Manager or Regional Business Operations Manager
- **Annual Budget:** Each location has a predetermined budget (generally \$1,000 per location) each fiscal year to use by August 31<sup>st</sup>. The budget is determined by the percentage of members/staff at each location.
- **Examples:** Local FFA events, County Fairs, County Pork Producers
- Requests directly impacting IAS members and staff at your location will receive priority. Funding requests for projects, programs and events where our team can unite and serve the community are highly encouraged.

### Harvest Donations (*\$1,000 and more*)

Larger donations support programs with measurable community impact.

- **Eligibility:** Open to the public
- **Focus Areas:** Agricultural education/youth programs, community vitality, food security
- **Examples:** emergency equipment, food pantry projects, ag education programs



## Matched Harvest Donation

IAS can double its impact by leveraging matching funds from **Land O'Lakes, CHS, and CoBank.**

- **Eligibility:** Must meet the criteria of IAS and the matching partner
- **Examples:** Donating to a qualifying food bank, providing grain safety equipment, STEM ag programs
- **Note:** Matching funds are first-come, first-served and not guaranteed

## How to Apply

**Apply Online:** [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/IAS\\_Giving](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/IAS_Giving)

Questions can be sent to [giving@innovativeag.com](mailto:giving@innovativeag.com).

### Seed Donations

- Can only be requested by IAS employees and members
- Must be approved and submitted by the respective Location or Regional Business Manager
- Allow 30 days for a response after the monthly review
- Required Information for application:
  - Organization's legal name and address
  - Cost Allocation (department/location breakdown)
  - Copy of Flyer or letter from the requester
  - Project Impact Statement

### Sample Impact Statement

"IAS requests \$500 in matching funds for a rescue auger for Elma Fire & Rescue. This life-saving equipment helps rescue individuals trapped in grain bins by moving grain more efficiently. Elma Fire & Rescue, staffed by volunteers, supports over XXX residents in rural communities including XXX farms."

### Harvest Donations & Matched Harvest Donations

- Refer to the Evaluation Rubric to see how requests are scored.
- Allow **4–6 weeks** for review
- Quarterly application deadlines:
  - **Feb 15** → Reviewed in March
  - **May 15** → Reviewed in June
  - **Aug 15** → Reviewed in September
  - **Nov 15** → Reviewed in December (for following year)
- Required Information on Application:
  - Legal name, address and website
  - Organization's contact information (President or Executive Director)
  - Cost Allocation by department and location
  - Federal Tax ID / EIN
  - Describe the organization, program, and project, including the mission statement and timeline
  - Project Impact Statement
  - List IAS members or employees involved with the organization or opportunities for involvement.



## INNOVATIVE AG SERVICES

### *Seeding Hope & Innovation Initiative*

- List or upload any opportunities for recognition if available.
- Documents Needed:
  - 501(c)(3) status verification or government entity documentation
  - Flyer or letter from the requester
  - Project Budget
- Follow-up report required six months after funding

## Matching Funds

IAS may secure matching funds for qualifying projects through external partners, including Land O'Lakes, CHS, and CoBank.

### Land O'Lakes Foundation Member Co-op Match Program

- Focus areas: Hunger Relief Program and Community Vitality Program.
- The 2025 Member Cooperative Match Program is subject to a budget cap. Once funds are used, matching grants will no longer be available, even if our limit has not been reached.
- Funds are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.
- January 1 opens and goes until funds run out or December 31.
- IAS asks that the minimum donation match is \$1,000, and the maximum is \$40,000.

### CHS Matching Funds | Seeds for Stewardship Program

- Priority is given to requests to improve agricultural safety or support agricultural education.
- Other community-strengthening requests (e.g., grain bin safety equipment, local FFA and 4-H support, and food shelf donations) will also be considered.
- IAS can only make two requests per year.
- Applications for matching funds are open from January 1 until funds run out or December 31.
- Minimum donation match is \$1,000, and the maximum is \$10,000.

### CoBank Sharing Success Program

- Contributions support volunteer fire departments, local schools, and hunger relief programs, fostering rural community growth and sustainability.
- Funds are awarded only to nonprofit organizations.
- IAS can only make four requests per year.
- Applications for matching funds for the cooperative are from April 1 to September 1.
- Minimum donation match is \$1,000, and the maximum is \$15,000.



## Harvest Donation Request Evaluation Rubric

The IAS Giving Committee will utilize the following rubric to evaluate each Harvest Donation Request, ensuring a consistent and equitable assessment of all submissions.

| Criteria                 | Excellent (5 points)                                 | Good (3 points)                                   | Needs Improvement (1 point)                  |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|
| Mission Alignment        | Strongly aligns with IAS's values and focus areas    | Somewhat aligns with IAS's values and focus areas | Weak or no alignment with IAS's mission      |
| Target Audience          | Benefits farmers and local communities in full       | Partially benefits IAS's target audience          | Does not primarily serve IAS's communities   |
| IAS Team Involvement     | Clear connection and active IAS employee involvement | Some connection to IAS                            | Little to no connection to IAS initiatives   |
| Feasibility & Impact     | Well-defined, measurable impact and feasible plan    | Impact is clear but lacks detailed execution      | Unclear impact or impractical implementation |
| Matching Fund Potential  | Eligible and likely to receive matching funds        | Eligible but unlikely to receive matching funds   | Not eligible for matching funds              |
| Recognition & Engagement | Provides strong recognition and employee involvement | Offers some recognition and engagement            | No recognition or employee involvement       |

### Scoring Guide:

- **24-30 Points:** Strongly recommended for funding.
- **18-23 Points:** Considered for funding based on available resources.
- **12-17 Points:** Needs improvement; may require further information.
- **Below 12 Points:** Not recommended for funding.