

MALT Small Grants Program FAQ

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Small Grants Program FAQs

What is the need of the Biodiversity in Agricultural Working Lands funding round?

Biodiversity supports our basic needs, underpins global health, and drives everything from fresh water to healthy soils to food security. In agricultural working lands, farmers and ranchers can rely on biodiversity for ecosystem services such as pollination, soil fertility, water quality, and natural pest control.

Agricultural methods such as rotational grazing, cover cropping, hedgerows, pasture seeding, tree planting, organic farming, and producing value added products can help promote biodiversity through maintenance and creation of diverse habitats, improving soil health, and reducing reliance on chemical inputs. The goal of this small grants cycle is to provide resources to help agriculturalists promote biodiversity in their working lands.

Grants will fund practices that promote biodiversity through innovative practices and techniques. Projects will help increase understanding of the connection between agricultural working lands and biodiversity, lead to more diverse landscapes, increase productivity, and protect environmental resources and services.

Is this different from SAP?

Yes, the small grants program is open to all agriculturalists engaging in commercial agriculture in Marin County. A MALT Conservation Easement **is not required** to apply for a grant from this program. To be eligible for Stewardship Assistance Program funding, a MALT Conservation Easement is required.

Is DRAWS retired?

With the lifting of drought restrictions in the spring of 2023, MALT sunsetted the DRAWS initiative. If drought conditions exacerbate, we are ready to bring back drought-related grants as needed.

Who is the program open to?

The small grants program is open to all agriculturalists engaging in commercial agriculture (i.e., producing food and/or fiber products for sale) in Marin County. Current members of the MALT Board of Directors, MALT staff, and their immediate family members are not eligible for funding.

Can someone apply for this program round while they have received a recent SAP or DRAWS grant?

Yes, however, applicants may be awarded only one (1) small grant and one Stewardship Assistance Program (SAP) grant per fiscal year (July 1 to June 30).

What are the conflict of interest policies around this grant program?

Current MALT Board of Directors, MALT staff, and their immediate family members are not eligible for funding. For more information, please see the [MALT Conflict of Interest Policy](#).

How much application assistance will be offered?

MALT staff is available to assist with the application process. Please contact Eric Rubenstahl at erubenstein[at]malt.org, (415) 663-1158, ext: 319 for assistance.

What is the applicant cost share?

The applicant cost share must be at least 10% of the total award amount. The 10% is calculated from the total project cost once the project is completed. For example, for a project that costs \$40,000, the landowner will be reimbursed \$36,000, and for a project that is \$75,000, the applicant will have maxed out the grant amount at \$50,000.

Who is on the selection committee?

The selection committee is composed of MALT staff and representatives from partner organizations such as the Marin Resource Conservation District, Point Blue, UCCE, NRCS, etc.

How will we rank the projects we fund? What are the selection criteria?

Projects are evaluated to the degree that they advance MALT's mission and the goals of the small grants program to preserve agriculture, protect biodiversity, connect our community, and/or build climate resilience. In addition, the grant program values social equity and justice, prioritizes agricultural and operational diversity, and encourages climate smart conservation practices that increase agricultural utility and protect soil and water quality.

Priority consideration will be given to proposals from applicants serving/and or located in communities of Marin County that are most impacted by social and economic inequities due to race, income level, gender, identity, religion, immigration status, disability, age, sexual orientation, or zip code.

The project should have an impact on Biodiversity in Agricultural Working Lands.

Proposals will be evaluated, scored, and ranked by the following selection criteria:

- Project alignment with mission and theme
- Project impact
- Project innovation
- Implementation and timeline
- Project readiness
- Permitting and other compliance issues
- External funding
- Additional benefits/outcomes
- Budget and budget clarity
- Diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice

How are we addressing bias?

We are addressing bias in the funding process through a number of means including our conflict of interest policy, eligibility for all Marin County agriculturalists, a selection committee that includes partner organizations, and transparency about the scoring and ranking criteria.

Do we think there will be any funds left remaining after we award grants?

We believe all \$200,000 in available funds for this grant round will be awarded.

How long after project completion do grantees get reimbursed?

Funding reimbursement will occur upon successful implementation of the proposed project, as determined by MALT staff after a site visit. All projects **must be completed within 18 months of grant execution**, unless otherwise noted in the executed grant agreement. MALT will follow up nine months after project approval if we have not heard from the landowner/applicant.

MALT reserves the right to rescind funding if the project is not complete within 18 months of a signed Grant Agreement.

Why did my project not get funded?

Because this is a competitive funding opportunity and we have limited funds, we do not anticipate all proposals will be funded. It is dependent on the funding needs versus the resources available. Projects that will have been funded will have ranked higher on the scoring of the selection criteria.

If someone is rejected from this round, can they apply for a future round with the same focus?

Yes.