

Small Grants Program

Executive Summary

Marin Agricultural Land Trust

Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT) is a nonprofit land trust created in 1980 by a coalition of ranchers and environmentalists to permanently protect Marin County farmland. Some of the Bay Area's most highly acclaimed dairy and cheese products, grass-fed meats, and organic crops are produced on farmland protected by MALT. MALT has permanently protected over 58,000 acres of West Marin's diverse mosaic of coastal grasslands, oak woodlands, rangelands, and pastoral open space through 98 agricultural conservation easements. In addition to these conservation easements, MALT also supports agriculture and conservation through other activities such as this grants program.

Small Grants Program Overview

The purpose of this program is to invest in projects that support both agricultural production and conservation of natural resources in Marin. The program is open to all commercial agriculturalists operating in Marin County - no conservation easement is required.

MALT's small grants program funds projects that protect and steward agricultural land through supporting a healthy local food system, expanding environmental benefits, and building climate resilience. The small grants program prioritizes agricultural and operational diversity, encourages climate-smart conservation practices that increase agricultural utility, protect soil and water quality, and strengthen the long-term viability of both public and private lands across Marin County.

MALT's small grants program, which has awarded \$800,000 to date, builds on the success of distributing over \$4 million through our Stewardship Assistance Program (SAP) and Drought Resilience and Water Security (DRAWS) initiative to farmers and ranchers throughout Marin County to enhance best management practices and stewardship for natural and working lands. We are excited to launch new rounds of small grants that will help build towards MALT's vision of Marin County's protected farmland supporting a thriving agricultural community and local food system in a healthy environment, benefiting everyone in the region and beyond.

Agricultural activities offer many benefits to the greater community including jobs and revenue to the local economy, as well as locally produced food, fiber, and other agricultural products. Protection of agriculturally productive land in Marin County also helps maintain open space, scenic views, and wildlife corridors. Given that healthy soils are the foundation for productive farms and ranches, Marin's working lands are dependent upon implementing smarter strategies to conserve soils and associated habitat, like grasslands, riparian forests, and other aquatic ecosystems such as creeks, ponds, wetlands, and groundwater, which all provide crucial habitat for native species.

Priority consideration will be given to proposals from applicants who meet the [California Farmer Equity Act](#) definition of socially disadvantaged farmer/rancher, or otherwise self-identify as being underserved.

Grant Round 5

We will accept project proposals that support MALT's mission to protect and steward Marin's farms and ranches for the benefit of all.

Grant Impact:

Grants will promote agricultural and conservation practices that protect and steward agricultural land through supporting a healthy local food system, expanding environmental benefits, and building climate resilience. Projects should support economic stability by contributing to the maintenance of existing agricultural production. Projects that also have an ecological benefit by improving soil health and/or improving water quality are encouraged.

Example Projects *Could Include*

- Fencing
 - Cross or interior
 - Exclusionary
 - Riparian
 - Springs
 - Ponds
- Types of fence may include:
 - Permanent
 - Smooth wire
 - Barbed wire
 - Woven wire
 - Temporary electric
 - Permanent electric
 - Virtual (including subscriptions and towers, if necessary)
- Water Development and Modernization
 - Spring improvements
 - Water storage
 - Troughs
 - Pipelines
 - Pumps, including solar
 - Irrigation reels
 - Rain catchment systems
- Landscape Restoration and Rangeland Management
 - Existing culvert and creek crossing management
 - Rangeland and pasture seeding

- Landscape Restoration and Rangeland Management (continued)
 - Tree planting
 - Riparian planting
 - Silvopasture
 - Hedgerows
 - Soil amendments
 - Compost
 - Lime
 - Gypsum
 - Biochar
 - Invasive species management
 - Prescribed burning (with appropriate permitting)
 - Shrub and woody vegetation management
 - Mastication
- Infrastructure or equipment improvements
 - Pond spillway repairs
 - Anaerobic digesters/manure management practices
 - Road repair and improvement
 - Grading
 - Rocking
 - Culverts
 - Water bars or rolling dips
 - Implements
 - No-till seed drills, etc.
 - Other infrastructure
 - Chicken tractors
 - Solar
 - Pelletizers
- Conservation Planning / Data Collection
 - Agricultural conservation plans
 - Soil testing/equipment
 - Educational opportunities/workshops