MARIN AGRICULTURAL LAND TRUST

Post Office Box 809
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www.malt.org

*** MALT ofrece asistencia con la aplicación en español. Por favor comuníquese con** lfaccinto@malt.org **(415-663-1158 ext. 302) para reservar una cita para que el personal de MALT le brinde asistencia.**
MALT is able to provide spanish translation assistance by appointment. Please contact lfaccinto@malt.org **(415-663-1158 ext. 302)** to be connected with MALT staff for assistance.

Small Grants Program Guidelines
Round 6

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 59,000 acres of West Marin's diverse mosaic of coastal grasslands, oak woodlands, rangelands, and pastoral open space through 99 agricultural conservation easements.

Small Grants Program Overview

MALT's small grants program has awarded $1.2M to date, building on the more than $4 million distributed to Marin County farmers and ranchers through our Stewardship Assistance Program (SAP) and Drought Resilience and Water Security (DRAWS) initiative. Together, these programs enhance best management practices and stewardship on the county's natural and working lands. We are excited to launch new rounds of small grants that advance MALT's vision of a thriving and inclusive agricultural community in a healthy and diverse natural environment.

The program funds projects that preserve agriculture, protect biodiversity, connect our community, and build climate resilience. It prioritizes agricultural and operational diversity and encourages climate-smart conservation practices that increase agricultural productivity, protect soil and water quality, and strengthen the long-term viability of both public and private lands across Marin County.

This year's round places a special emphasis on Next-Gen proposals: projects that address the real and pressing question of how Marin's farms and ranches will continue to thrive in a changing environment for generations to come. Next-Gen projects tackle agricultural viability head-on through succession and ranch management planning, operational diversification, new technologies, water resilience improvements, and climate-smart practices.

All funded projects also deliver a broader public benefit by sustaining agriculture in Marin County. This includes 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

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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.

Grant Round 6

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

Applications are accepted online through the Foundant online grant portal available through this link: https://malt.org/small-grants/

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. This round, added consideration will be given to proposals with a Next-Gen focus — projects that address the real and pressing question of how Marin's farms and ranches continue to thrive in a changing environment, for generations to come. For instance, succession and ranch management planning, operational diversification, new technologies, water resilience improvements, and climate-smart practices that strengthen the long-term sustainability of Marin's working lands. Proposals should demonstrate a commitment to operational and agricultural viability, and should have an ecological benefit to the soil and water quality that Marin's farms and ranches depend on.

Funding Guidelines

1. Maximum award amount is $50,000. Proposals between $5,000 - $50,000 will be accepted.
2. MALT will award up to a total of $400,000 in grants for Round 6 of the small grants program.
3. Awarded projects **must be completed within 18 months of grant agreement execution**, unless otherwise noted in the executed grant agreement. MALT reserves the right to rescind funding if the project is not complete within 18 months of a signed Grant Agreement.
4. Proposals must include an estimated project cost and budget, ideally with estimates, quotes or bids for proposed project materials and labor (see grant proposal form for more information).
5. Successful proposals include an applicant cost share of at least 10% of the total project cost. The 10% cost share is calculated from the total project cost once the project is completed *(e.g., 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).*

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6. Grants will fund materials and labor that are used for the specific project outlined in the Grant Agreement. Labor recorded by the applicant or associated employees will be reimbursed up to the rate of $33/hour (based on basic California labor rates from the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service).
7. MALT's small grants program is a reimbursement program. No grant will be paid out until the project is complete, MALT has confirmed project completion, and project standards have been met, as defined in the Grant Agreement. However, project applicants may submit a special request for advance payment via the advance payment form available by contacting MALT staff. Advance payment would allow for a portion of the grant *(up to 50% of the estimated project award)* to be paid before completion of the project. Labor and estimated labor costs are not eligible for advance payments. **Advance payments will be considered on a case-by-case basis.**

Eligibility

1. Landowner approval *or* proof of right to manage the land is required for all applicants.
2. All agriculturalists engaging in commercial agriculture (i.e., producing food and/or fiber products for sale) in Marin County are eligible for this grant. A MALT Conservation Easement **is not required** to apply for a grant from this program.
    a. Please note that if your project is located on a property with a MALT Conservation Easement, the easements must be in good standing, with no active violations or significant compliance issues.
3. Applicants may be awarded only one (1) MALT small grant per fiscal year (July 1 - June 30). Small grants program recipients are still eligible for funding from MALT's Stewardship Assistance Program (SAP) for different projects, if applicable (limited to one (1) SAP grant per fiscal year). Applicants may not have an active small grants program project. The Review Committee will consider if an applicant has been awarded more than 2 Small Grant awards within the last 4 years of eligibility, though projects that build on the success of previously completed projects are welcomed.
4. Due to a limited funding pool, MALT requests applicants only apply if the resources are needed. In order to explain project need in your proposal please answer question 13 of the grant proposal: "If you don't receive funding what will be the outcome of this project or impact to your operation?"
5. Current members of the 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. [MALT Conflict of Interest Policy]
6. Project is shovel ready: The project will only be considered eligible if it does not require additional permits or trigger additional compliance issues, and can be completed within the 18-month grant period.

Proposal Deadlines and Dates

Times listed are pacific standard time.

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- **Monday, December 14, 2026** - Grant proposal form available to the public via MALT website, Proposal Open on Foundant .
- Technical and application assistance is available by phone, email or in-person by appointment 9am-5pm Monday through Friday. **Please note MALT's Office is closed between December 24th - January 1st.** Technical assistance by appointment will resume on January 4th, 2027, through the grant proposal deadline.
- Office hours will also be offered in person at the MALT Office, 145 A St, Point Reyes Station. Dates and times are subject to change - please contact MALT Stewardship staff for assistance, directions or further information.

    - Wednesday, **January 13th**, 2027, 3:00 - 5:00 pm, MALT Office
    - Thursday, **January 28th**, 2027, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm, MALT Office
    - Tuesday, **February 2nd**, 2027, 9:30 am - 12:00 pm, MALT Office
    - Thursday, **February 4th**, 2027, 3:00 - 6:00 pm, MALT Office
    - Monday, **February 8th**, 2027, 3:00 - 6:00 pm, MALT Office (Last Day)

- **Monday, February 8, 2027** - Grant proposal deadline. Proposals and supporting documents must be submitted **by 6:00 pm** through the online portal.
- **March 8th through 12th** - Grant awardees contacted.

  Please Note: If your proposal is selected, MALT staff will need to meet with you at the project site the week of March 9th or the week of March 15th in order to move forward with your grant agreement.
- **March 31, 2027** - Grant awardees publicly announced

Proposal Evaluation and Selection

1. Proposals will be evaluated, scored, and ranked by selection criteria found in Exhibit C.
2. All eligible proposals will be evaluated by a review committee composed of MALT staff, representatives from partner organizations and/or previous award recipients.
3. MALT staff may visit the proposed project site as part of any project proposal evaluation.
4. Proposals will be reviewed, and all proposal applicants will be notified of their proposal status per the timeline above (Proposal Deadlines). A non-exhaustive list of potential projects can be found in Exhibit A.
5. All necessary permitting must be pursued by the applicant as part of the project. If permitting has not been sufficiently addressed in your proposal, staff may request additional information. If permitting requirements are unlikely to be addressed to allow for implementation of a project within an 18 month period, your project may be considered ineligible. Please contact MALT Stewardship staff with questions.

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Grant Awards

1. MALT will enter into a Grant Agreement with the grant recipients (and landowner, if different from the grant recipient).
2. The Grant Agreement will include a detailed project scope, deliverables, the grant amount, any monitoring requirements, and property owner approval.
3. Grant recipients must allow MALT to photograph and video any completed projects, develop narratives around the project, and permit MALT to use such photographs, videos, and project narratives for fundraising and publicity purposes. Grant recipients may also be asked to be interviewed about the impact of the project or attend MALT events to share their project and the results of the grant.
4. MALT staff will visit the project site before project construction to take photographs and video to document conditions, and confirm project extent and scope.
5. Project evaluation by MALT will be completed after the project is fully constructed and properly functioning. MALT staff will visit the project site to assess functionality, ensure project completion, and confirm that the terms of the Grant Agreement have been met. MALT staff will take photographs and video to document conditions of the completed project, interview the grant recipient about the impact of the project, and confirm project extent and scope.
6. 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 execution of the Grant Agreement** unless otherwise noted in the executed Grant Agreement.
7. Monitoring of completed projects may be included in annual easement monitoring visits for applicants with MALT easements, or separate visits. For projects on properties without MALT easements, MALT may monitor the project for up to five years after the project is completed. Monitoring may take place through visits, email, phone, video, and remote monitoring.

Reserved Rights

1. MALT reserves the right to request clarification and/or supplemental information from any applicant to facilitate evaluation of the proposed project.
2. MALT reserves the right to award funding it deems fit. This reservation includes and is not limited to: the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason; the right to award funding in different amounts to varying applicants; the right to award funding for multiple projects to the same applicant; and the right to request that an applicant reapply to remedy errors in submission.
3. MALT shall not be held liable for any expenses incurred by applicants before the date of the Grant Agreement.
4. MALT reserves the right to modify these guidelines, the attached exhibits, and any of the procedures at any time.
5. MALT reserves the right to terminate the program at any time and shall not be held liable for any projects without an executed grant agreement at the time of termination.

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Attachments:

Exhibit A: Example Project List
Exhibit B: Grant Proposal Form (content provided for information; application is online)
Exhibit C: Round 6 Selection Criteria

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EXHIBIT A: EXAMPLE PROJECT LIST
MALT Round 6 small grants program

The following examples are shared to support applicants. This is not an exhaustive list. MALT staff are available to discuss potential projects during office hours or by appointment.

- Fencing
    - Cross or interior
    - Exclusionary
        - Riparian
        - Springs
        - Ponds

  Types of fences may include:
    - Permanent
        - Smooth wire
        - Barbed wire
        - Woven wire
    - Temporary electric
    - Permanent electric
    - Virtual (including subscriptions and towers, if necessary)
- Water Development Improvements and Modernization
    - Spring improvements
    - Water storage
    - Troughs
    - Pipelines
    - Pumps, including solar
    - Irrigation reels
    - Rain catchment systems
- Landscape Restoration and Rangeland Management
    - Rangeland and pasture seeding
    - Tree planting
    - Riparian planting
    - Silvopasture
    - Hedgerows
    - Soil amendments
        - Compost
        - Lime
        - Gypsum
        - Biochar
    - Invasive species management
    - Prescribed burning (with appropriate permitting)

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    - Shrub and woody vegetation management
        - Mastication
- Infrastructure or equipment improvements
    - Pond spillway repairs (with appropriate permitting)
    - Anaerobic digesters/manure management practices
    - Existing Road repair and improvement
        - Grading
        - Rocking
        - Culvert Improvement
        - Water bars or rolling dips
    - Implements
        - No-till seed drills, etc.
    - Other infrastructure
        - Chicken tractors
        - Ag-utility solar
        - Pelletizers
- Planning / Data Collection
    - Agricultural conservation plans
    - Soil testing/equipment
    - Project design, permit planning, engineering reports (i.e. geotechnical reports) that support initial phases of a broader project
    - Succession planning services (i.e. non-profit consultant services, ranch management plans that include succession, does not cover attorneys fees)

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EXHIBIT B: ROUND 6 GRANT PROPOSAL FORM

The following is the content of the application form. It is provided to support proposal development through the application process. Applications are accepted through the online form available at https://malt.org/small-grants/. Please contact MALT staff for any support with the application process, or assistance with the online system.

Applicant Information

1. Project Name _____
2. Total Estimated Project Cost (including applicant's cost-share) _____
3. Grant Amount Requested (Maximum $50,000) _____
4. Property/Ranch Name _____
5. Applicant/Landowner Name _____
6. Project Contact or Operator/Lessee (if different) _____
7. Property Physical Address _____
8. Mailing Address (if different) _____
9. Telephone _____ 10. Email _____
11. Applicant Signature _____ Date _____
12. Landowner Signature (if applicant is not) _____ Date _____
13. Property Easement Status (please check one) ___MALT easement __No MALT easement
14. Is the applicant or landowner a current board member, staff member, or of immediate relation to either? [See MALT Conflict of Interest (COI) Policy]

    No ____ Yes (explain relation) _____
15. How did you hear about MALT's small grants program?_____

Successful proposals include an applicant cost share of at least 10% of the total project cost. The 10% cost share is calculated from the total project cost once the project is completed. *(For a project that costs $40,000, the landowner will be reimbursed $36,000. For a project that is $75,000 the applicant will be reimbursed at the maximum grant allowance of $50,000.)*

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Key Logistics and Information

See small grants program guidelines for grant details, eligibility, deadline, and list of selection criteria.

- Technical and application assistance is available by appointment from 9am to 5pm Monday through Friday.

- Office hours will also be offered on the following days at MALT's office:
  - Wednesday, **January 13th**, 2027, 3:00 -5:00 pm, MALT Office
  - Thursday, **January 28th**, 2027, 10:00 am- 1:00 pm, MALT Office
  - Tuesday, **February 2nd**, 2027, 9:30 am- 12:30 pm, MALT Office
  - Thursday, **February 4th**, 2027, 3:00 - 6:00 pm, MALT Office
  - Monday, **February 8th**, 2027, 3:00 - 6:00 pm, MALT Office (Last Day)

All proposals must be submitted by 6:00pm Monday, February 8, 2027, All projects must be completed within 18 months of grant execution, unless otherwise noted in the executed grant agreement.

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

Please complete and submit your proposal online at https://malt.org/small-grants/.

Project Description

Please provide sufficient detail for the review committee to fully understand the size, scope, intended goals, and impact of the proposed project.

1. Agricultural operation summary: Describe the agricultural operation that you are requesting funding to support including the size, years of operation, location, etc.

2. Project Summary: Describe the proposed project and how it aligns with the goals of the small grants program, which are to promote agricultural and conservation practices that protect and steward agricultural land.

3. Project Impact: How will this project impact your agricultural operation(s)? How will it impact agricultural working lands? How does this project align with the short and long-term goals of your operation(s).

4. Project Relevance: Describe how the project will help you protect and steward agricultural land. Are there any unique environmental or climate benefits to this project in relation to your operation?

5. Project Readiness: Describe the stage of planning and design of your project. Describe the steps needed and anticipated timing of implementation if the project is funded. For example, is the project fully designed and shovel ready, or do certain details need to be finalized before

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construction begins? Are there other time considerations such as order processing, shipping or permitting?

6. **Project Timeline and Deliverables:** Explicitly list the key deliverables of your project, such as feet of fencing, number of troughs, acres seeded, etc. and the anticipated completion date of each deliverable. (MALT shall not be held liable for any expenses incurred by applicants before the date of the signed Grant Agreement, or after the end of the term of the Grant Agreement). The Grant Agreement term is for 18 months.

   Anticipated project start date _____

   Anticipated project completion date _____

7. **Does your project require additional permits or trigger compliance issues? If you are unsure, please contact MALT Stewardship Staff.**
   - No
   - Yes
     If yes, describe permits required or compliance issues below. If no, describe how this determination was made:
     _____
     _____

8. **Check the box that applies:**
   - The project has received funding from external sources (describe below).
   - The project is seeking funding from external sources but this funding is not confirmed (describe below).
   - The project is not seeking additional funding from external sources.

9. **Description of Other Funding Sources:** If the project has received funds from sources outside MALT or is in the process of seeking funding from other sources, please list the sources here and describe the status of the funding process and the amount expected or received.

10. **Project Budget:** Please list budget line items that would be funded by the grant award. This should include details of materials and labor expenses to complete the project. A downloadable template can be found here. If quotes are available, please include them as an attachment.

Description of Material or Labor *(Example: 3 water tanks at $5,000 each, total $15,000. Labor for installation, 100 hours at $35/hour, total $3,500)*	**Other Funding Sources (if applicable)**	**Estimated Project Expense ($)**

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Total Requested Grant Funds		

11. **Project Budget Narrative:** Describe the project budget and how the budget line items match with project tasks and intended outcomes and deliverables. Describe any additional sources of funding, including in-kind support.

12. **Other Considerations:** Describe any other expected benefits and/or desired outcomes of the proposed project not listed above.

13. **Project Need:** If you don't receive funding this round, what will be the outcome of this project or impact to your operation?

14. **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** Priority consideration will be given to proposals from applicants that address equity issues. This could be through the applicant meeting the CDFA definition of limited resource farmer/rancher, beginning farmer/rancher, or socially disadvantaged farmer/rancher. This could also be through the project serving 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. If applicable, complete the table below.

Name of Applicant	Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher[1]	Beginning Farmer or Rancher[2]	Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher[3]	Veteran Farmer or Rancher	Other
	●	●	●	●	●
	●	●	●	●	●
	●	●	●	●	●

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	•	•	•	•	•
If applicable, please describe how the project addresses equity and inclusion:					

[1] Has a total household income at extremely low income level for a family of four, defined in Marin County as $58,000 (2025)
[2] Has operated a farm or ranch for 10 consecutive years or less
[3] **Socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher as defined by the CA Farmer Equity Act (AB1388), refers to farmers or ranchers that are members of s**ocially disadvantaged groups: African Americans, Native Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanic, Latino/a, Asian Americans and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islander groups. Other historically underserved groups of farmers include urban farmers, veteran farmers, women farmers and LGBTQ farmers

Supplemental Information: MALT will ONLY accept the following supplemental materials:

1. One map of the project site. MALT staff are available to assist with the creation of project maps
2. Up to four (4) photos of project site
3. Available quotes as indicated in the Project Budget
4. Carbon Farm Plan, Grazing Plan, or other conservation management plan

Please complete and submit your proposal online through the Foundant online grant portal available through this link: https://malt.org/small-grants/

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EXHIBIT C: ROUND 6 SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection criteria - each will be scored on a scale of 1 to 5.	
Criteria	***Description***
Project Deliverables	*Project deliverables and activities are described clearly.*
Project Relevance to MALT's Mission and the Program	*Project promotes agricultural and conservation practices that protect and steward agricultural lands.*
Project Impact	*Project would create measurable impact.*
Innovation and Next-Gen Focus	*Project presents novel, innovative approaches, addresses agricultural and operational viability, is forward-looking and considers how the operation will continue to thrive in a changing environment.*
Agricultural Resilience	*Project contributes to maintaining stability for existing agricultural production during erratic and unpredictable swings in temperature and precipitation (i.e. climatic) conditions.*
Economic Impact	*Project helps reduce long term costs, increases efficiency and/or increase the capacity of agricultural production on the ranch using climate smart practices*
Ecological Benefit	*Project contributes to ecological benefits by improving soil health, increasing species diversity in rangelands, and/or improving water quality are encouraged as part of a nature-based solution for climate resilience.*
Additional Benefits/Outcomes	*Project narrative clearly describes additional benefits and outcomes not mentioned previously in the application.*
Project Budget and Narrative	*Project budget is accurate, reasonable, and includes costs of all activities to achieve project deliverables.*