

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY
LERAY MCALLISTER WORKING FARM AND RANCH FUND
2023 FUNDING CYCLE NOW OPEN

June 1, 2023

Overview

The LeRay McAllister Working Farm and Ranch Fund provides grants to preserve and restore working agricultural land in Utah, benefiting open space and wildlife as well. The Program uses funds appropriated by the Utah Legislature to purchase conservation easements on important pieces of private land, acquire small parcels in fee title under limited circumstances, and provide small restoration grants to improve conserved lands.

The Fund is administered by the Land Conservation Board, pursuant to Utah Code (UCA 4-46-301). The Board has the authority to adopt grantmaking rules and ranking criteria, and review completed applications for conservation easement funding, fee purchases of real property, and other related documents necessary to effectuate those transactions (UCA 4-46-302). Since 2002, the LeRay McAllister Fund has conserved nearly 100,000 acres of critical lands in Utah.

Award Funding

A total of \$3,000,000 is available to be awarded for 2023. Matching funds are required. Please see Grant Manual for details on matching fund requirements.

Important Dates:

- **June 1, 2023:** Funding Cycle Opens.
- **June 30, 2023:** Pre-Applications Due
- **July 1 – Sept 1:** Qualified applicants are invited to submit a Full Application. Staff will begin scheduling site visits as applications are received and will undertake the evaluation of proposals; Landowner and/or applicants will be invited to present to the Land Conservation Board during this time.
- **Sept 1, 2023:** Final day to submit Full Application
- **Fall 2023:** Grant Recipients are notified of award and amount. The applicant will have two years from acceptance to implement the project.

Applicant Eligibility

Eligible applicants are counties, cities, towns, the Utah Department of Natural Resources, other Utah Agencies, Land Trusts, and charitable organizations that qualify as tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Review Process

The review process for 2023 will consist of two stages: a pre-Application followed by a Full-Application by invite only. The pre-application will determine initial eligibility of the landowner and subject property. Qualified applicants will then be invited to submit a Full Application. The full application contains criteria used by the Land Conservation Board and UDAF staff to objectively evaluate each proposal and rank them according to conservation impact, cost effectiveness, and other factors.

Ranking Criteria

The Land Conservation Board has adopted Ranking Criteria which will enable them to make an objective determination of the project's merits, weighed against the other projects vying for funding in the current cycle. Projects will be ranked based on the following:

- Local Support for the project
- Effect on housing affordability and diversity
- Adjacency and connectivity of the subject property with other conserved or working lands.
- Cost effectiveness and project leverage
- Project Urgency
- Public benefit (doesn't necessarily mean public access)
- Impact to food production
- Impacts to water quality, wetlands, and riparian habitat
- Water rights and the willingness of the landowner to encumber the water to protect the agricultural viability and other conservation values of the property.
- Priority will be given to projects that protect prime soils, crop land, pastureland, grassland, and range land.

Eligible Costs for Easement or Fee Title Acquisition

- Purchase of land or conservation easement
- Direct costs related to the transaction (Note: these costs must be approved separately by the Land Conservation Board before they will be paid) such as:
 - Environmental assessments Surveys
 - Title insurance
 - Legal costs, such as drafting a conservation easement, conveyance of water rights, etc.

Note: Due diligence items cannot be more than 5% of the grant. The remainder must be used for the acquisition cost.

Eligible Costs for Restoration Projects:

- project planning, mapping, and engineering
- wetlands delineation
- acquisition of water rights
- soils testing
- grading
- excavation
- channeling
- stabilization
- soil application
- revegetation, planting and seeding.

It is very important that applicants prepare the project budget as accurately as possible. Due to limited funds, the Board discourages applicants from submitting requests for additional funds after a grant has been approved, although we retain the option to entertain an additional request if there is a compelling reason. We want to be clear to applicants that it is highly unlikely for an additional funding request to be granted for a previously approved project. This does not mean that applicants are discouraged from submitting subsequent applications for new projects or planned phases of a project.

For more information, contact Jeremy Christensen, Land Conservation Program Manager, 385-441-4106, jeremyc@utah.gov