



UTAH DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

Land Conservation Program & LeRay McAllister Working Farm and Ranch Fund

UCC Meeting: Sept 30, 2025

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- UDAF



LeRay McAllister Working Farm and Ranch Fund

- Beginning in June of 2025, the Program began accepting applications on an ongoing basis, utilizing a batching model.
- This new process is intended to provide greater flexibility for applicants, encourage high -quality proposals, and allow for more thorough review and engagement by the Board and Program staff.
- The Board will allocate approximately 50% of the annual Fund budget to each batch. Unused funds may be rolled into the next batch cycle or reallocated at the Board's discretion.



LeRay McAllister Working Farm and Ranch Fund

- **Fall Batch:** Deadline August 31 (Beginning 2025)
- **Spring Batch:** Deadline March 31 (Beginning 2026)
- **Review & Award Timeline** (NEW for 2025 & 2026)
 - **Batch Deadline** → March 31 (2026) / Aug 31 (2025)
 - **Staff Review & Site Visit Window** → April–May (2026) / Sept–Oct
 - **Board Review & Final Decision** → June (2026) / November
 - **Award Notification** → July 1 (2026) / December 1



Overview of 2025 Fall Batch Submissions

- 12 applications
- Summit, Cache (6), Rich, Sevier (2), Wasatch, and Utah Counties
- 2/3 of the projects would protect cropland (mix of irrigated and dry)
- 50% of projects include some type of public access
- Total amount requested: **\$2,831,000**
- Amount available in this batch: **\$500,000**
- Unfunded applications will roll into the next batch, creating more competition for the best possible projects.



Land Conservation GRIT Initiative Proposal

- Executive Order 2025 -05 “Expanding Government Efficiency to Best Serve Utahns” directs each Agency and Program to identify and work toward at least one improvement project.
- The Land Conservation Program is proposing a streamlined application review pipeline, partnering with interested counties for funding agricultural conservation easements - tying into to HB 237 (Rollback Tax Amendments).
- Instead of each county running duplicative processes, UDAF is proposing to create a unified online application portal maintained by UDAF where qualified entities (such as land trusts, counties, or state departments) could apply once, and have their application considered for both state and County matched funding.



Land Conservation GRIT Initiative Proposal

- Counties would sign an MOU with UDAF to share information, create a committee (w/ ag representation) to review applications, and make funding determinations and commitments within a specified timeframe to align with LRM program.
- UDAF would manage the statewide application and intake process, eligibility screening, and ranking of projects for the LeRay McAllister Fund.
- Eligible projects would be referred to counties.
- The parties coordinate to avoid duplication of efforts and to maximize matching funding opportunities for land conservation projects.



Land Conservation GRIT Initiative Proposal

Workflow:

1. Qualified entity > submits application to UDAF on behalf of landowner
2. UDAF > screens, scores, and refers to County
3. County > reviews, and approves or rejects, notifies UDAF
4. UDAF > packages county funds with state grants, formalizes through standard grant agreement, signed by entity, state, and county officials
5. UDAF provides technical assistance throughout the process, reviews due diligence, title work, appraisals, and coordinates closing.
6. Easement closes > county is recognized as co -funder, receives annual monitoring reports.



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Questions?

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