



Georgia Farmland Conservation Program Application

The Georgia Department of Agriculture (“GDA”) and Georgia Farmland Advisory Council (“GFAC”) administer the Georgia Farmland Conservation Program (the “Program”). The Program utilizes nonprofit organizations and government entities to hold agricultural conservation easements to ensure the permanent conservation of farmland in Georgia. This allows protection of Georgia’s agricultural economy, the ecological benefits from agricultural lands and activities, community character enhanced by agricultural landscapes, and food production in the state.

GDA and GFAC appreciate your interest in participating in the Program. This application is intended to obtain basic information about your proposed project, as well as information that will allow GDA and GFAC to score your application for ranking against other applicants. Please take your time when filling out the application. If you need assistance filling out the application, please contact GDA at gafarmlandconservation@agr.georgia.gov.

Part 1 – General Applicant Information

Only certain entities are able to participate in the program. You must be a state agency, federal agency, county, municipality, or a 501(c)(3) organization to hold an easement for the Program.

Please answer the below to help GDA and GFAC get to know more about you.

1. **Applicant Type.** Are you a:

- State Agency,
- Federal Agency,
- County,
- Municipality, or
- 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

2. **Applicant Name.** What is the applicant entity’s legal name?

3. **Applicant Address.** Please include street address, city, state, zip code, and county.

4. **Applicant Point of Contact Information.** Please list the best person to reach out to about your application.



Point of Contact:	
Contact Email:	
Contact Phone Number:	

5. **Applicant Tax Information.** Please provide a relevant tax identification number, if applicable.

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6. **Federal Program Compatibility.** Please answer the following to help GDA and GFAC understand your compatibility with relevant federal programs like the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (“ACEP”) administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the USDA (“NRCS”).

Do you have experience working on conservation easement projects with NRCS?

- Yes
- No

Has the applicant entity participated in an ACEP Agricultural Land Easement (“ALE”) within the last five years?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how many projects have you completed with NRCS?



Part 2 – Basic Project Proposal Information

The Program funds matching grants for two purposes, to help qualified easement holders purchase agricultural conservation easements on qualified farmland, and to help fund the costs of acquisition related to purchasing agricultural conservation easements approved by the program.

Please provide us with a few details about your proposed project.

1. **Project Components.** Please select what part of your project proposal you are seeking a matching grant for from the program (select all that apply):

- Purchase of an agricultural conservation easement on qualified farmland
- Direct costs of acquisition related to the purchase of the agricultural conservation easement

2. **Qualified Farmland.** Does your project proposal only include agricultural conservation easements on “qualified farmland”? “Qualified farmland” means agricultural land in undeveloped areas or that has been developed only to the extent consistent with agricultural production, including row crops, livestock, nurseries, orchards, or pastures.

- Yes
- No

3. **Project Location and Size.** On what property is your proposed agricultural conservation easement located?

Project Site Street Address:	
Tax Parcel ID(s):	
City, State, Zip Code, and County:	
Project Acreage:	
USDA Farm and Tract Number (provided by FSA), if available:	

Please attach the following for your proposed project location:

- Proof of Ownership – deed with legal description, including legal access to easement (such as a county road or legal ingress/egress)
- Aerial map, such as one produced by Google Earth, with proposed easement boundary and access location identified
- Survey, if already conducted
- Appraisal, if already conducted



4. **Project Location Ownership and Use Information.** Please provide the following information regarding the ownership and use of the proposed project site land.

Property Owner(s) (include business names, if applicable)	
If the property is owned in part or in full by a business, does that business have a purchase agreement or lease-to-own agreement with a private individual who will exert their rights over the property once the easement is placed?	
Are there agricultural lessees on the property? If yes, for what maximum lease term?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	Maximum Lease Term:

5. **Property Description.** Describe details of the property of the proposed project site.

Briefly describe the property, including property history	
Describe the primary features of the property, such as pastureland, forest (managed or unmanaged), waterways, etc.	
Describe any buildings or structures on the property, such as residential structures, barns, equipment, storage facilities, etc.	
Is the property currently subject to any other land conservation program?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, please list and describe the program. Examples include Conservation Use Value Assessment (CUVA), Forest Land Protection Act (FLPA), or any other USDA conservation program.	List & describe program:
Describe any conservation or environmental practices currently implemented on the property.	



As a percentage, how much of the proposed easement is impervious surface? You may describe as greater or lesser than 2%.	<input type="checkbox"/> $\geq 2\%$ <input type="checkbox"/> $< 2\%$
Percent of cropland, pastureland, grassland, and rangeland in the property to be protected (add up total acreage of crops, pasture, and grass, then divide the sum by the total property acreage):	<input type="checkbox"/> $< 33\%$ <input type="checkbox"/> 34-50% <input type="checkbox"/> 51-65% <input type="checkbox"/> 66-80% <input type="checkbox"/> 81-90% <input type="checkbox"/> 91-100%

6. **Project Cost.** Please describe the total expected cost of your proposed project. Please note that GDA and GFAC are unable to fund more than 50% of the Total Project Cost through the Program.

Cost of Purchasing a Qualified Agricultural Easement:	\$
Direct Costs of Acquisition (<i>please list in the chart immediately below</i>):	\$
Total Project Cost (<i>Add Cost of Purchasing a Qualified Agricultural Easement and Direct Costs of Acquisition</i>):	\$
Requested Matching Funding (<i>Total Project Cost x 0.5</i>):	\$

If you are seeking matching funding for the direct costs of acquisition, please list the proposed included costs below. Indicate whether the cost has already been incurred or is an estimate. Examples include, but are not limited to, appraisals, title commitments and searches, closing fees, etc.

Cost of Acquisition:	Amount:	Incurred or Estimated:



7. **Project Basis.** Please describe the basis for your total project cost, including whether or not the value is based on an estimate or actual appraisal. Note that an appraisal is not necessary simply to submit this application. If your estimated total project cost is based on an actual appraisal, please submit that appraisal.

Property Value (Express as total and price per acre)	
Easement value (Express as total and price per acre)	
Has the property been appraised in the last 5 years?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, provide the appraised value.	Appraised Value: _____
Is your easement value based on an estimate?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, select the method used to estimate the easement value below.	<input type="checkbox"/> Comparative easements (other easements that have been done in the area) <input type="checkbox"/> Summary appraisal (appraisal that doesn't require a site assessment) <input type="checkbox"/> 60% of fair market value of the proposed easement

8. **Matching Funding.** Please describe your actual or anticipated source of matching funding.



Part 3 – Minimum Criteria and Scoring Factors

GDA and GFAC are required to review and approve applications for the Program based on certain minimum criteria and scoring factors. Project proposals that best demonstrate how a project facilitates the scoring factors for the Program will be reviewed as stronger applications are more likely to receive funding, as available.

1. **Minimum Criteria.** To be eligible for funding through the Program, a proposed project must meet at least the criteria below.
 - a. Does your project proposal request funds for less than or equal to 50% of the purchase value of an agricultural conservation easement on qualified farmland plus the direct costs of acquisition?

 Yes
 No
 - b. Will the agricultural conservation easement proposed for your project be of the maximum legal duration, be incapable of assignment or enforcement by a third party without the express written consent of the landowner, and align with existing federal and local programs?

 Yes
 No
 - c. Is the primary purpose of your proposed project to advance farmland conservation and support active farming and food production in Georgia?

 Yes
 No
2. **Scoring Factors.** Project proposals that meet all minimum criteria will be analyzed and scored by GDA for GFAC review and approval. GDA will consider the eight factors provided by law and score proposed projects on a scale of up to **120 points**.

Please note: GDA will strongly favor applications that provide supporting materials demonstrating a project's ability to meet the scoring criteria.



- a. How will your proposed project protect agricultural lands that are susceptible to development, subdivision, and fragmentation? (20 points maximum)

- b. How will your proposed project protect farmland that is in active or planned cultivation? (20 points maximum)

- c. How will your proposed project prevent development or fragmentation that would result in farmland loss? (20 points maximum)

- d. How will your proposed project support the transition of affordable farmland to next-generation farmers? (20 points maximum)



- e. How will your project leverage local, federal, or private funding, taking into account whether such funding includes a match requirement? (10 points maximum)

- f. How will your project support conservation priorities, including, but not limited to, protection of habitat, water quality, watershed conservation, climate resiliency, local conservation plans, and public viewshed (meaning the visible area seen from public land)? (10 points maximum)

- g. How will your project preserve or enhance soil quality and health? (10 points maximum)



- h. How will your project create or further enhance compatibility with existing military installations? (10 points maximum)

Part 4 – Certifications

1. I certify that the information on this application is true and correct in all respects. I understand that submission of false or misleading information on this application may result in civil or criminal liability.
 I certify the above.
2. I understand that if my project is selected for funding, the applicant will then enter into a Project Agreement with GDA upon the terms provided therein, including the maintenance of complete financial records for all activities related to the project, the submission of quarterly progress reports, and other responsibilities.
 I certify the above.
3. I understand that if my project is selected for funding, that the applicant will not receive funding pursuant to a Project Agreement until submission of project closing documents or sufficient evidence of costs of acquisition.
 I certify the above.
4. I hereby represent that I have the authority to, and do consent on behalf of the applicant, to GDA or GFAC accessing the property to ensure compliance with Program requirements at any time within typical business hours, with or without advance notice.
 I certify the above.

[Sign and Date]