



Buy-Protect-Sell Stage 1 Application

Background

Through our buy-protect-sell pilot, Ag + Open Space will purchase an agricultural property, protect it with an agricultural conservation easement and other protections, and sell it to a farmer, rancher, or other eligible entity. [See the program overview](#) for more details.

For this pilot, Ag + Open Space is seeking applicants with moderate to significant agricultural production and business experience. This would typically consist of approximately 5 years of relevant experience, some of which could be achieved through relevant education and qualifications. This stage 1 application will help Ag + Open Space determine whether applicants meet this threshold.

Applicants who meet or exceed this threshold will be accepted into our potential buyer pool. Applicants in this pool will be invited to participate in stage 2 of the application process. Stage 2 will occur once Ag + Open Space has identified the property that we will buy, protect, and sell through this pilot. In stage 2, applicants will develop proposals for this specific property, and one applicant will be invited to purchase the property. [See the program overview](#) for more details.

Ag + Open Space currently plans to leave this application open continually until we identify a specific property to buy, protect, and sell.

You may **email completed application forms** to BPS@Sonoma-County.org. When emailing your application, please use the following subject line: "Buy Protect Sell Application -- " followed by the applicant's first and last name or organization name. (Example: Buy Protect Sell Application -- Francis Farmer).

You may also **mail or deliver completed application forms** to the Ag + Open Space office at: 747 Mendocino Avenue, Suite 100, Santa Rosa, CA 95401-4850.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to Mary Chambers, Ag + Open Space Agricultural Specialist, should you have any questions regarding this application or the buy-protect-sell program overall.

Email: BPS@Sonoma-County.org

Phone: (707) 565-7263

Thank you very much for your interest in this program, and we look forward to reviewing your application!

California Public Records Act disclaimer: The California Public Records Act (PRA) allows the public to request and receive copies of records prepared or retained by any public agency, except as specifically exempted. Under the PRA, any materials submitted to Ag + Open Space in the course of applying to the Buy-Protect-Sell program, including your application, any attachments, and any associated emails or text messages, will be considered public records. Ag + Open Space may therefore be required to provide copies of these materials to a member of the public in the event of a request seeking such records. Applicants are encouraged to contact Ag + Open Space staff if they have any questions regarding the nature of the information requested by Ag + Open Space.

Contact Information

Name of Applicant:

Name of point of contact, if applicant is an organization:

Applicant's email:

Applicant's phone number:

Date submitted:

Eligibility

Eligible applicants may be any type of legal entity qualified to hold land, which may include individuals, cooperatives, nonprofits, corporations, or tribal or governmental entities. Entity types other than individuals must have a clear organizational and decision-making structure established. If you are unsure about your eligibility to apply to this program, please do not hesitate to reach out to Ag + Open Space (see contact information for Mary Chambers, above).

1. Please select your entity type below:

Individual/sole proprietorship

Corporation (including Limited Liability Company (LLC), S Corp, B Corp, or other types of corporations)

Partnership

Non-profit

Tribal entity

Government entity

Other (please describe:)

Entity types other than individuals will be required to demonstrate that this application is prepared and authorized consistent with their corporate governance. These entity types must submit a formal board resolution or other formal statement issued by their governing body authorizing their application. They must also provide copies of current bylaws, operating agreements, and other governance documents as requested by Ag + Open Space.

2. Please confirm that you will be able to secure a resolution/letter/other documentation from your governing body that includes:

- Authorization to pursue the acquisition of a property through this project
- A brief description of how the project fits the organization's goals and mission
- If applicable, a description of how your organization will prioritize staffing and funding resources to ensure the long-term successful operation of a property

Yes

No

Does not apply

3. Please confirm that you will be able provide copies of current bylaws, operating agreements, and other governance documents as requested by Ag + Open Space.

Yes

No

Does not apply

Goals for Participating in the Buy-Protect-Sell Program

4. Please share why you are interested in participating in the buy-protect-sell program. Some questions that you may use (but are not required to use) to guide your response include:
- What life experiences, interests, goals, or other background led you to want to be a farmer or rancher or to support farming or ranching?
 - What are your goals for your/your organization's future as they relate to farming or ranching?
 - How will participating in the buy-protect-sell program make a difference in your/your organization's ability to achieve your goals?

Max 550 words response

5. Please **briefly** share the main purposes for which you expect to use a property purchased through the buy-protect-sell program (for example mixed vegetable production, orchard, meat goat grazing, ag education for youth or adults, etc.).

Max 300 words response

Experience and Qualifications

For the pilot of the buy-protect-sell program, we are seeking applicants with moderate to significant experience that will enable them to successfully operate a farm or ranch. This would typically consist of a minimum of 5 years of relevant experience and/or education. Applicants **are not required** to own, or to have owned in the past, their own property or farm business.

For printed applications, please attach a separate sheet or sheets of paper if you need more space for questions 6-8.

6. Please describe your farming or ranching experience, education, and/or qualifications. This may include but is not limited to:

- Farmworker experience/farm or ranch employment
- Farm or ranch management or operation
- Indigenous land management experience
- Farm or ranch apprenticeship
- Incubator farm training
- Living and/or working on a family farm or ranch
- Significant agricultural production experience through FFA or 4-H
- College or high school coursework in agriculture and related topics
- Other agricultural education, programs, certificates, or training
- Other relevant experience

7. Please describe your business-related experience, education, and/or qualifications. This may include but is not limited to:
- Managing, operating, or participating in decision making at an agricultural business or other type of business
 - Experience with budgeting, accounting, or record-keeping, as a treasurer, accountant, or similar roles, in a paid or a volunteer position
 - College or high school coursework in business and related topics
 - Other financial or business education, such as participation in a business skills program, an agricultural business certificate, or significant financial or business skills development and practice through FFA or 4-H
 - Other relevant experience
8. If you have other work and/or life experience, education, or qualifications that will contribute to your ability to successfully operate a farm or ranch but that are not covered above, please share them here. Please briefly explain how each experience, education, or qualification is relevant to your ability to successfully operate a farm or ranch.

Financial Readiness

The goal of the buy-protect-sell program pilot is to sell an agricultural property to a qualified agricultural producer. While the protections that Ag + Open Space will place on the property are expected to reduce the sale price of the property, we anticipate that the typical applicant may need to seek additional capital (for example through fundraising or a loan) in order to purchase the property. Ag + Open Space is therefore seeking to understand what resources and information may be most helpful to applicants as they participate in the selection process.

9. Please use the following checkboxes to indicate your thinking on how you will access capital to purchase the property. Note that your answer to this question **will not** affect your acceptance into the potential buyer pool.

Select all that apply

I have not thought about how I will access the capital to purchase a property.

I will use savings.

I will borrow money, and I would like help navigating the lending process.

I will borrow money, and I will not need help navigating the lending process.

I will fundraise.

Other (please describe): _____

10. Please **briefly** describe how you will use the resources selected above to purchase the property. For example, if you plan to borrow money, please describe from what lender or lenders you plan to borrow, if known (i.e. Farm Service Agency loan, personal loan from family member, etc.).

Max 300 words response

Interest in Information and Resources

In stage 2 of the application, applicants will be asked to prepare a Farm Business Proposal, outlining planned activities and a basic business plan for the specific identified property. They will also be asked to demonstrate their financial readiness by describing how they will access capital to purchase and operate the property if they were to be selected. [See the program overview](#) for more details about how applicants will be assessed during stage 2 of the application process.

Ag + Open Space is investigating whether and how we can work to connect applicants with resources that will support their success in the application process. We would like to hear what resources you would most benefit from during this process. Some examples that others have shared include:

- Information on how to access a loan and the lending process
- Information on how to prepare a business plan
- Information on marketing
- Information on fundraising
- Information on financial planning
- Information on taxes for agricultural producers
- Information on legal support services for agricultural producers and small business owners
- Information on landowner regulatory obligations

Please note that Ag + Open Space cannot guarantee our ability to provide any particular resources; the intent of this question is to help us identify what we should look into.

11. Please briefly describe what resources or support you would most benefit from during the application process.

Max 300 words response

Other

12. What is your preferred language?

13. What are your preferred pronouns? (i.e. she/her, he/him, they/them, he/they, etc.)

14. Please share any other information you would like us to know.

Max 900 words response

Optional: Demographic Information

Ag + Open Space is collecting demographic information about applicants in order to better understand who we are reaching through our programming and outreach efforts. We also hope that this information will help us to identify gaps in who we are reaching, so that we can improve our efforts to engage with the full diversity of our Sonoma County community.

Please note that **this section is optional**. You may complete all, part, or none of this section. You may also select or write “decline to state” as your answer to any question. Your answers in this section **will not be used to make any decisions** about your acceptance into the potential buyer pool.

1. What is your race?

Select all that apply

American Indian/Alaska Native

Asian

Black/African American

Middle Eastern or North African

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

White

Other: _____

Decline to state

2. Are you of Hispanic or Latino/a/x origin?

Yes

No

Decline to state

3. Are you a veteran?

Yes

No

Decline to state

4. Do you have a disability?

Yes

No

Decline to state

5. If yes, are there any accommodations that would help you to participate in the application process?

6. What is your gender? (i.e. man, woman, genderqueer, agender, etc.). You may also write “decline to state.”

7. Are you transgender or cisgender?

Transgender/Nonbinary

Cisgender

Questioning

Decline to state

8. What is your sexual orientation? (i.e. gay, straight, bisexual, queer, etc.) You may also write "decline to state."

9. How did you first hear about the Ag + Open Space Buy-Protect-Sell pilot program? Please select one option.

Social media (Instagram, Facebook, etc.)

Radio

Flyer

Newspaper

Email or e-newsletter

Community group

Event/presentation

Word of mouth

Other _____