

How to Get into the Preservation Program

What is a MALPF?

MALPF is an acronym that stands for Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation. The program has been in existence since 1977. It is one of the most successful programs of its kind in the country.

The program's primary purpose is to preserve sufficient agricultural land to maintain a viable local base of food and fiber production for the present and future citizens of Maryland. The Program purchases perpetual agricultural conservation easements on eligible farmland throughout the state. In other words, we pay landowners to continue what they have done for years, decades, or sometimes a century or more – continue to farm their land.

Below are the eligibility criteria and procedures for the sale of an easement.

SIZE: The minimum easement size is fifty contiguous acres. If a property is less than fifty acres, a landowner may be eligible to apply and should visit our website to review Fact Sheet Five, "Small Properties in the Agricultural Preservation Program," or confer with the local program administrator.

If a property is contiguous to an existing easement, the landowner may apply to sell an easement regardless of the acreage.

PRODUCTIVITY: An easement is purchased on land that is either currently being used for producing food or fiber or has the capability to do so. Woodland management and harvesting operations are eligible to join this Program. The productivity of the soil as measured by the USDA's Soil Conservation Service Land Classification System is a major criterion. Soil requirements for the property to qualify to participate in the Program are:

- at least 50% of the land is classified as Class I, II or III soils; or,
- if the land is wooded, 50% of the land is classified as Woodland Group 1 or 2 soils; or,
- if the reason the land could not meet the above conditions was because of flood-plain or wetland soils, those areas could be excluded as a percentage of land; or,
- if there is an insufficient percentage of Class I, II or III soils alone and there is an insufficient percentage of Woodland Groups 1 and 2 soils alone, the land would qualify if the combination of the two exceeded 60%; or,
- land with lower soil capabilities may qualify under certain conditions.

LOCATION: Land that lies within the boundaries of a ten-year water and sewer service area plan is generally not eligible unless it has extraordinary productive capability and is of significant size.

LOCAL CRITERIA: The criteria listed above are the minimum eligibility standards set by the State. The Program is administered by county and State in an equitable partnership. The county may impose criteria which could be in addition to or more stringent than the State criteria.