



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
LAND FOR MAINE'S FUTURE PROGRAM
22 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

AMANDA E. BEAL
COMMISSIONER

August 5, 2025

Town of Windham
Linda Brooks
8 School Road
Windham, ME 04062

Re: Stewardship Award Availability

Dear Linda,

As you know, applications for stewardship awards have been postponed pending the completion of an approved process and a mechanism for disbursing these funds. We are pleased to inform you that this process is now complete. You and other applicants from Round 10 through Round 12 who have closed your land acquisition projects are now formally invited to apply for stewardship funding. The Town of Windham is eligible to receive \$25,000.00 in stewardship funds for East Windham Conservation Project.

To help you decide whether to seek these funds and to understand the process for applying, please review the Stewardship Awards Fact Sheet included with this letter. Receipt of these funds imposes strict requirements and creates perpetual obligations. You must understand both before applying for or accepting a stewardship award.

For those with projects from Round 10 through 12 that have not yet closed, LMF staff will work to identify the optimal timing for an application, should you elect to apply.

On behalf of the Land for Maine's Future, thank you for your patience. We look forward to working with you to finalize your decision regarding these new LMF awards.

Sincerely,

Laura Graham
Director, Land for Maine's Future Program

cc:

Rex Turner, Rex.Turner@maine.gov, Bureau of Parks and Land



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Land for Maine's Future Stewardship Awards Fact Sheet for Applicants

Purpose

Stewardship awards are available to support the ongoing management and stewardship of land and conservation easements acquired with proceeds from the Conservation & Recreation Fund, Public Access to Maine Waters Fund, or Working Farmland Access and Protection Fund.

Eligibility

The landowner or holder of a conservation easement acquired with funds through the Conservation & Recreation Fund, Public Access to Maine Waters Fund, or Working Farmland Access and Protection Fund may apply for a stewardship award. Projects that applied for funding in Round 10 or later are eligible for these awards.

Award amount.

Projects will be eligible to receive a stewardship award of up to 5% of the first \$200,000 of appraised property value, then 2% of appraised property value over \$200,000, to a maximum stewardship award of \$25,000. These amounts are calculated based on the total value of all parcels receiving LMF funding, not individually for each parcel, and are subject to match requirements.

Matching funds.

All stewardship awards must be matched 1:1 by the recipient. Except as otherwise approved by the LMF Board, match must take the form of funds placed in a stewardship fund by or on behalf of the applicant, subject to the same restrictions as LMF funds. However, the LMF Board may allow excess match from the acquisition of the property (above 50% of land value) to serve as all or a portion of the match required for LMF stewardship awards when the applicant is not able to provide stewardship funds as match, AND the applicant demonstrates that stewardship of the property is adequately provided for through operating funds, a pooled stewardship fund, or other means.

Required documentation.

Before receiving stewardship funds, the applicant must provide LMF with its endowment policy, a projected stewardship budget for the property, proof of matching funds, and authorization from its governing body to accept the award and apply the award and matching funds per LMF policy.

Application Process and Timeline

Eligible projects that have already closed may request a stewardship award at any time before December 31, 2025. All inquiries and applications should be submitted to Jason Bulay, LMF Senior Planner, at jason.bulay@maine.gov.

Eligible projects that have not yet closed may request that stewardship funds be added to their final award of LMF acquisition funds for disbursement at closing. However, we recognize that this may not align with the timeline of every project, so any project closing in 2025 may request stewardship funds after closing, in which case the request must be received by December 31, 2025. Applicants requesting stewardship funds for an active project are encouraged to consult with the LMF Senior Planner assigned to the project to decide whether stewardship funds should be requested before or after closing. Inquiries and applications for stewardship awards for active projects should be submitted to the LMF Senior Planner assigned to the project.

Applicants should apply using the form provided by LMF. The LMF Board will act on requests for stewardship awards at its scheduled meetings. Applicants hoping to receive their award at a given meeting should confirm the deadline to be added to that meeting's agenda with LMF staff.

Disbursement of Stewardship Awards

Stewardship awards made while a project is active will be disbursed at closing; applicants should be prepared to complete the application and provide the required documentation and proof of match far enough in advance of closing to obtain all required approvals. Stewardship awards for projects that have already closed will be disbursed to the applicant when the application with all the necessary documentation is provided to LMF and approved by the Board.¹

Use of funds.

All LMF stewardship awards and matching funds committed by the applicant will be subject to the terms of a Gift Instrument that will contain provisions substantially similar to the following:

- a. Stewardship Funds must be held by or on behalf of the Cooperating Entity as an endowment fund of perpetual duration and managed in accordance with the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA), 13 M.R.S. §§ 5101 et. seq. (2023) and any amendments to UPMIFA or successor statutes.
- b. The Stewardship Funds may be transferred to another entity to hold and manage on behalf of the Cooperating Entity, subject to the following conditions:
 - i. The Cooperating Entity must notify the DSA and LMF of any proposed transfer of the Stewardship Funds, including transfer from one third party to another, at least 30 days prior to the transfer;
 - ii. The Stewardship Funds must be transferred in their entirety;
 - iii. The Cooperating Entity must provide the entity receiving the Stewardship Funds with a copy of this Contract;
 - iv. The Cooperating Entity must obtain from the entity receiving the Stewardship Funds written acknowledgment of this Contract; and
 - v. The Cooperating Entity remains responsible for complying with all provisions of this Contract.
- c. Any appropriation for expenditure that, pursuant to 13 M.R.S. § 5104(7), creates a rebuttable presumption of imprudence requires the prior written approval of the LMF Director, which approval will be granted only if the LMF Director determines that extraordinary circumstances warrant the expenditure. Any such requests for approval must be made to the LMF Director in writing at least 30 days prior to the proposed appropriation and must detail the extraordinary circumstances that justify the request. To evaluate the request, the Director may request additional information, including, without limitation, an accounting of Stewardship Fund expenditures. Before granting or denying written approval, the LMF Director may elect to seek the LMF Board's approval at the LMF Director's discretion.
- d. Stewardship Funds must be held separate from all other funds of the Cooperating Entity, but, pursuant to 13 M.R.S. § 5103(4), may be pooled with other funds for purposes of management and investment provided that Stewardship Funds are accounted for separately.

¹ For awards disbursed to Cooperating Entities at closing, the applicable Gift Instrument will be included in the LMF Project Agreement. For awards made after closing, the applicable Gift Instrument will be included in a service contract between the recipient and the State of Maine.

- e. The Cooperating Entity may use Stewardship Funds only for expenses related to the stewardship and management of the Premises. If the Cooperating Entity incurs stewardship or management expenses that cannot reasonably be identified as being specific to the Premises (e.g., the cost of preparing a forest management plan covering the Premises and adjacent land, or management of an access road that serves multiple landowners), the Cooperating Entity may apportion expenses based on acreage or other relevant measurements.
- f. The Cooperating Entity may use Stewardship Funds for any expense related to stewardship and management, including monitoring expenses, legal action against persons who have damaged the Premises, and legal expenses necessary to defend ownership of the Premises. Stewardship Funds may not be used to pay any penalties imposed against the Cooperating Entity by a government agency or court of competent jurisdiction.
- g. The annual report described in Part II, Section F of the PA must include at least the following information: the balance from the most recent quarterly report, all expenditures of Stewardship Funds in the past year, and any planned expenditures in the year ahead.
- h. If the Premises or any portion thereof are transferred pursuant to Section 5 of the PA, the Stewardship Funds, or a proportionate share of the Stewardship Funds in the event of a partial transfer, must be transferred to the recipient of the Premises.
- i. In the event of a transfer of all or part of the Premises that is subject to Part II, Section H(iv) of the PA, the LMF share of the Stewardship Funds, or a proportionate share thereof, must be repaid to the Land for Maine's Future Fund. If the Land for Maine's Future Board accepts replacement property in lieu of repayment, the Stewardship Funds may instead be placed in a perpetual endowment for the replacement property, subject to all the restrictions herein. In the event of a partial transfer, the Land for Maine's Future Board may waive repayment and allow the Cooperating Entity to apply the Stewardship Funds to the retained portion of the Premises.

These provisions do not apply to any funds the Cooperating Entity holds or expends for stewardship of the Premises other than those identified above as the Stewardship Funds.