

Municipal Partnership Program

Municipal partnerships allow the Centre County Agricultural Land Preservation Board (CCALPB) to leverage municipal dollars to preserve more prime farmland acres faster. By helping the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Centre County place an agricultural conservation easement on a farm, participating municipalities demonstrate their investment in farmers in their communities and also jointly hold the development rights to each farm they preserve.

Benefits to the Municipality

- Leverage State and County funding to preserve as much prime farmland as possible in each municipality.
- Lessen the tax burden on the community by helping to keep property taxes down. For every dollar paid in property taxes, a farm family uses only 33 cents in public services. Tax revenues collected from farmland far exceed the cost of providing return services to that land.
- Contribute without incurring the incidental costs of preserving the property.
- Help steward this farmland by viewing the County's annual easement monitoring and enforcement reports.

Process

In January of each year, the CCALPB certifies available funding with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Farmland Preservation. This certification determines the State's funding allocations to each County. The greater the amount the Centre County Board of Commissioners certifies, the greater the State's match will be.

Prior to the annual certification date, officials of contributing municipalities are asked to indicate how much they plan to commit to preserving farmland in their respective townships. The municipality dedicates this amount to farmland preservation, but holds the money until the landowners close on their easements. At that time the municipality will issue a check to be presented to the landowner. Municipal funds only support the preservation of farms within that contributing municipality.

Farm Selection

Centre County's active PACE program applicants are ranked annually by a set of Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) Criteria.

This ranked list is shared with the CCALPB and with contributing municipalities to start the process of committing funds to preserve the top-ranked farms selected for preservation. The CCALPB may purchase easements by combining municipal funds with County, State and Federal dollars.

Funding Commitment

Municipal officials can commit funds as a lump sum without assigning them to a specific farm, or select a farm within their municipality from the ranked list. Municipal commitments do not expire, and the municipality holds them until it's time to close on the agricultural conservation easement.

Become a Participating Municipality

Any municipality with an established Agricultural Security Area is encouraged to participate in the Municipal Partnership Program. A Memorandum of Understanding will be provided to any interested township officials. The ranked list will be provided as it becomes available.

