

# Frequently Asked Questions About the 2023 County of Santa Clara Agricultural Resilience Incentive (ARI) Program

**NANCY CHANG, Community Education Specialist, Small Farms Program, UC Cooperative Santa Clara, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties; APARNA GAZULA, Farm Advisor, Small Farms & Specialty Crops, UC Cooperative Extension Santa Clara, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties.**

## 1. What is the County of Santa Clara's Agricultural Resilience Incentive Program?

The Agricultural Resilience Incentive (ARI) Program provides financial incentives to Santa Clara County growers and ranchers to implement agricultural management practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions and improve soil health. The objectives of this program are to build soil resiliency, increase soil organic carbon and reduce atmospheric GHGs.

## 2. What is the maximum amount of funds I can apply for?

You can apply for up to \$30,000 per application cycle.

## 3. When are the grant applications due?

The deadline to submit your completed grant application along with any supporting documents is May 31, 2023.

## 4. What is a Project Bid? How do I figure out how much to bid?

The program uses a reverse auction system, in which the applications will be ranked and awarded in part of soil health and carbon sequestration value in relation to the bid amount. In other words, if two applicants chose to apply compost, if one bid is at \$20,000, while the other bids at \$15,000-- the \$15,000 bid will be ranked higher and will be therefore more likely to be awarded because the cost to carbon ratio is lower. You can use the [CDFA COMET Planner](#) to help you determine how much to bid.

## 5. How long will I have to complete my project?

All 27 pre-approved ARI practices fall into two timeline categories: annual or perennial. Annual practices occur once within the annual cycle of an agricultural operation and may be proposed to recur for up to three years within one project application, e.g., cover cropping. Perennial practices consist of an initial activity that is followed by several years of maintenance to ensure successful establishment, e.g., hedgerow planting. A blend of these practices may be proposed in a single application. Projects that consist of recurring annual practices (e.g., three consecutive years of cover cropping) must be completed on a schedule proposed in the application and finalized in the executed grant agreement.

## 6. What are some examples of practices that the ARI program will fund?

Currently, the ARI program has [27 pre-approved practices](#) that growers and ranchers can select from. Some examples of practices funded under the ARI incentives program include, but are not limited to: for cropland – cover crops, compost application, mulching, reduced or no-till, conservation crop rotation, and hedgerow planting. For orchards or vineyards – compost application, conservation cover, cover crop, hedgerow planting,

and whole orchard recycling. For grazing lands – Compost Application to Grassland, hedgerow planting, prescribed grazing, range planting; silvopasture; and tree/shrub establishment.

#### **7. Who can apply to the ARI Program?**

All managers and owners of agricultural operations within Santa Clara County are eligible to apply. There is no acreage minimum or maximum. Renters must have written approval of the property owner.

#### **8. Where do I submit my application for funding?**

You can complete the 2 page application on the following website: <https://plandev.sccgov.org/policies-programs/agricultural-resilience-incentive-ari-grant-program> and submit by e-mail to [jfmorris@ucanr.edu](mailto:jfmorris@ucanr.edu)

#### **9. What information should I gather if I am interested in applying to this program?**

You need to demonstrate that the project takes place on agricultural lands within Santa Clara County, you would also need to know what practices you wish to apply for, history of crops on site, history of conservation practices, APN numbers for the fields where the practices will be implemented, and if you lease land – you will need to have written approval of the property owner.

#### **10. Can I apply even if I lease my land?**

Yes, even if the land is publicly or privately owned and you lease the land, you can still apply for ARI funding. You will need to provide written approval from the property owner (i.e. landowner agreement letter is required).

#### **11. Am I eligible for the ARI program if I share an APN?**

Yes, you are able to apply for the ARI program but when filling out the application, you must complete property owner information on additional sheets provided and attach to your application. A map including APNs will be required to delineate specific areas for each practice, prior to grant agreement execution. Technical assistance will be available to support the preparation of these maps.

#### **12. Am I eligible for the ARI program if I am a non-profit organization?**

Yes, as long as you are a rancher or grower in Santa Clara County, and either own the land, OR have written approval from the property owner if you are leasing the land.

#### **13. Can I apply to implement multiple practices?**

Many of the 27 pre-approved practices can be implemented concurrently. Multiple practices per application are encouraged and each practice requires its own total cost estimate.

#### **14. Can I submit applications for multiple parcels?**

Multiple parcels may be included in one application. However, only one application per parcel or multiple parcels is allowed per applicant.

#### **15. What is the grant selection process?**

Grants will be awarded primarily on the basis of which proposals offer the most cost-competitive means of sequestering atmospheric carbon by improving soil health or increasing woody biomass by planting perennials. In other words, the applicant who proposes a project with the highest rate of carbon sequestration for the lowest grant project bid will be most likely to receive funding. Learn more about the selection process on pages 4-5 of the [ARI Procedure Guide](#).

**16. How does the County of Santa Clara verify my project?**

If approved, you will be required to complete an outcome evaluation form within one hundred eighty days of project implementation. You must also hold onto copies of receipts, as well as photos, of purchased materials for your approved project. For example, if you were to select “Compost application” as your practice, you would share with us a copy of the receipt of purchase and photos of compost piles.

**17. How do I get paid?**

Funding for practices will be provided following execution of the grant agreement and in advance of implementation. Funding for recurring annual practices will be funded in annual increments according to the schedule finalized in the executed grant agreement. Five percent (5%) of the total project funding will be held until project implementation is complete.

If the project cannot be completed within the required timeframe, the grantee may be required to return any unexpended funds to the County and may become ineligible for future applications. Unforeseen circumstances, like wildfire or drought, may permit additional flexibility in project implementation.

**18. If there is leftover money from my flat-rate payment, do I get to keep it?**

Yes, if there is leftover money you may use it at your own discretion (e.g. pay labor costs, shipping costs, etc.). Grantees will be required to include an actual accounting of the year-one cost of implementation for each practice in the outcome evaluation form. No changes will be made to the funding amount or grant agreement as a result of the actual cost; this information will only help to inform the County’s understanding of the grant program and the total cost of implementing soil carbon sequestration.

**ARI Grant Resources:**

- **ARI Application Form:** [https://stgenpln.blob.core.windows.net/document/ARI\\_form.pdf](https://stgenpln.blob.core.windows.net/document/ARI_form.pdf)
- **ARI Grant Procedural Guide:** [https://stgenpln.blob.core.windows.net/document/ARI\\_guide.pdf](https://stgenpln.blob.core.windows.net/document/ARI_guide.pdf)
- **ARI Management Practices:**  
[https://stgenpln.blob.core.windows.net/document/ARI\\_management\\_practices.pdf](https://stgenpln.blob.core.windows.net/document/ARI_management_practices.pdf)
- **ARI Grant Agreement Template:**  
[https://stgenpln.blob.core.windows.net/document/ARI\\_grant\\_agreement\\_template%20.pdf](https://stgenpln.blob.core.windows.net/document/ARI_grant_agreement_template%20.pdf)
- **CDFA COMET Planner:** <http://comet-planner-cdfahsp.com/>

**If you interested in submitting an application and need one-on-one assistance, please contact us:**

**Aparna Gazula**  
Small Farms & Specialty Crops  
Advisor  
[agazula@ucanr.edu](mailto:agazula@ucanr.edu)  
Off: 408-282-3127  
Fluent in English

**Nancy Chang**  
Community Education  
Specialist  
[nchang@ucanr.edu](mailto:nchang@ucanr.edu)  
Cell: 408-478-5767  
Fluent in Mandarin and English

**Paulina S. Hernandez**  
Community Education  
Specialist  
[pshernandez@ucanr.edu](mailto:pshernandez@ucanr.edu)  
Off: 408-201-0684  
Fluent in Spanish and English