

Advancing Agricultural Land Equity in California

Recommendations of the California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force

Select recommendations for technical assistance

Overview

California faces an agricultural land equity crisis that must be promptly addressed. For decades, many producers and Tribal land stewards have been systemically excluded from owning and holding onto agricultural land due to race, ethnicity, gender, class, and citizenship status, among other factors.¹ Today, the resulting inequities in ownership and secure access to agricultural land are worsened by increasing land consolidation and financialization, climate change, and burdensome regulations.²

The California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force was established in the California Budget Act of 2022 (**AB 179**) to submit policy recommendations to the Governor and Legislature on how to equitably increase access to land for food production and traditional Tribal agricultural uses. The Task Force developed recommendations through a collaborative public process that engaged over 400 producers, California Native American Tribal leaders and members, and others across California. The final report was submitted in December 2025.

Recommendations are divided into six sections



Prioritize Tribal stewardship and land return.



Fund and incentivize land acquisition for priority producers and Tribal land stewards.



Halt, mitigate, and reverse agricultural land consolidation.



Preserve California's agricultural land while prioritizing equitable land access and stewardship.



Prioritize and protect secure land tenure.



Support urban agriculture.

Agricultural land equity is when priority producers and Tribal land stewards have access to secure, affordable, and viable land for the stewardship and cultivation of food, fiber, medicine, and cultural resources without systemic barriers, disparities, or exploitation.

Priority producers and Tribal land stewards are those who have been historically and systematically excluded from landownership and secure tenure for agriculture and traditional Tribal uses.

Select recommendations for technical assistance

Achieving agricultural land equity requires stable and secure relationships to land and conditions that promote long-term economic viability. Tailored technical assistance is crucial to meet this need. Throughout the Task Force's process, priority producers and Tribal land stewards emphasized the importance of technical assistance to help navigate the complicated process of finding, acquiring, and staying on the land long term. Specific services include real estate, legal, and financial expertise, assistance in complying with regulations, and support navigating local zoning and permitting requirements.

Below is a selection of recommendations intended to increase the accessibility of technical assistance. For detailed information, including complementary recommendations and a more comprehensive understanding of how land equity may be achieved, please review the [full report](#).

1.1.b Utilize the Ancestral Land Return Fund to support awardees with:

- Converting fee land to trust land.
- Navigating deeds, titles, water rights, succession plans, and trusts, with specific support focused on consolidating ownership of highly fractionated lands.

2.1.b Utilize the Restorative Land Fund to support awardees with:

- Navigating deeds, titles, water rights, succession plans, and trusts, with specific support for resolving heirs' landownership.
- Developing appropriate business and governance plans, including cooperative and community landownership structures.

2.7.a Provide funding to technical assistance providers who assist priority producers and Tribal land stewards with the following services:

- Advice and guidance on agricultural land access and acquisition.
- Legal and technical assistance to navigate deeds, titles, and water rights; conduct agricultural land and business succession planning; establish business entities and trusts; resolve heirs' landownership and succession issues; and address barriers to secure land tenure.
- Land-linking services that help connect landowners and land seekers.

2.7.c Increase support for technical assistance providers who serve priority producers and Tribal land stewards in more effective, thorough, and equitable ways by funding services that:

- Are offered in diverse languages, demonstrate cultural humility, include digital technology support, and are responsive to unique regional needs.
- Support farmworkers and beginning producers and Tribal land stewards in transitioning to agricultural business ownership and operations.

- Include tailored expertise and assistance for cooperatives governed by producers and farmworkers who co-own and co-steward land.

4.2.e Fund the creation and delivery of training programs for land trusts, public agencies, appraisers, lenders, and technical assistance providers that:

- Teach how to develop conservation tools that benefit priority producers and Tribal land stewards.
- Promote cultural humility, especially in working with California Native American Tribes.

5.1.d Create funding for and increase access to legal support, technical assistance, and mediation services for priority producers and Tribal land stewards at low or no cost, including contract and relationship development and negotiation services.

5.3.a Establish and fund new, permanent Ag Ombuds positions within public, non-regulatory agencies, such as University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) or Resource Conservation Districts.

5.4.b Require that all regulatory programs provide technical assistance to assist priority producers and Tribal land stewards with compliance.

Endnotes

- 1 California Department of Food and Agriculture. (2020). "2020 Report to the California Legislature on the Farmer Equity Act." Last accessed Feb. 26, 2026 from <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/farmerresources/pdfs/2020FarmerEquityReport.pdf>
- 2 O'Connor, Teresa. (2024). "What the 2022 Census of Agriculture confirms about California." American Farmland Trust. Last accessed Oct. 2, 2025 from <https://farmland.org/2022-census-of-agriculture-california/>



The full report in English, report summaries in multiple languages, and more information about the Task Force can be found online at: bit.ly/ALETF-about