The Underrepresented Communities, California Tribes (Federally and non-Federally recognized Tribes), and Small Farmers Groundwater Technical Assistance (URCTA) Program was developed and is administered by the Department of Water Resources (DWR). The URCTA Program, started in 2021 and expanded in 2023, provides groundwater-related technical assistance (TA) services to eligible individuals, communities, and Tribes within Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA)-regulated basins, **free of charge.**

DWR, working in coordination with the [Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF)](), the [University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR)](), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), has developed an eligibility criterion for the URCTA program.

The eligibility of a small farmer for the purpose of the URCTA Program is defined as meeting **one or more** of the following criteria:

1. A rancher that is socially disadvantaged as defined by California's Farmer Equity Act of 2017[1], grazes livestock on rangelands, and has gross meat sales of less than $1,000,000.

2. A farmer or rancher operating on **80 acres or less** that meets **one or more** of the following criteria:

   - Is socially disadvantaged as defined by California's Farmer Equity Act of 2017[1].
   - Sells 50% or more of products to direct markets.
   - Cultivates crops for California and is not represented by commodity boards or trade organizations.
   - Has undergone a transformation from conventional agricultural processes to regenerative agricultural processes within the last 10 years. Regenerative agricultural processes include indigenous farming methods, cover crops, agroforestry, permaculture, or any other farming and ranching practices that results in a regeneration of the soils to increase carbon sequestration.[2]

3. A farmer or rancher operating on **200 acres or less** that meets **two or more** of the following criteria:

   - Is socially disadvantaged as defined by California's Farmer Equity Act of 2017[1].
   - Cultivates a diverse crop mix of four (4) or more crop types.
   - Sells 75% or more of products to direct markets.
   - Cultivates crops for California and is not represented by commodity boards or trade organizations.
   - Has undergone a transformation from conventional agricultural processes to regenerative agricultural processes within the last 10 years. Regenerative agricultural processes include indigenous farming methods, cover crops, agroforestry, permaculture, or any other farming and ranching practices that results in a regeneration of the soils to increase carbon sequestration.[2]

For more information about the program and the services it provides, as well as applicable program documents, please visit [DWR's URCTA program website](). To contact program staff, please email [URCTA@water.ca.gov]().

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1 Per AB 1348, "Socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher" means a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. "Socially disadvantaged group" means a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. These groups include all of the following: African Americans, Native Indians, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders." (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/farmequity/).

2 Per the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Regenerative Agriculture Work Group Draft Definition: "Regenerative agriculture," as defined for use by State of California policies and programs, is an integrated approach to farming and ranching rooted in the principles of soil health leading to improved target outcomes. This approach recognizes and respects the traditions and innovations from the original Indigenous stewards of the land. Further information on the target outcomes and meeting regenerative outcomes can be found on CDFA's Regenerative Agriculture Website (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/RegenerativeAg/).