

Strategic Vision & Funding Road Map

A PHASED STRATEGY TO
ADVANCE LAND ACCESS
ALLIANCE'S MISSION



Cultivating Connection Through Common Ground

In alignment with the [Aspen Institute's Thrive Rural Framework](#), [Land Access Alliance](#) (LAA) embraces the belief that rural communities can thrive when systems-level barriers related to race, place, and class are dismantled. This framework emphasizes building inclusive narratives, fostering equitable outcomes, organizing collaborative infrastructure, and ensuring the community's voice shapes rural futures.

The Thrive Rural Framework strengthens LAA's work by offering systems-level guidance that supports the development of community-rooted land stewardship and inclusive infrastructure. LAA incorporates key elements of the framework—such as regional coordination, authentic rural narratives, and long-term investment in local leadership—into action plans and partnerships.

LAA's work is about more than just land; it's about connection—between people and place, across lines of race, class, and background, and among generations and cultures.

Drawing from national frameworks like [The Connection Opportunity](#) from [More in Common](#) and [The Common Ground Framework](#) from the [Trust for Public Land](#), LAA positions their work as land access that enables social cohesion by:

- Creating community-held lands that are co-governed and equitably accessed;
- Building trust through centering the voices of those historically excluded from land ownership;
- Offering experiences like foraging, gardening, and cultural land practices that root people in shared purpose; and
- Modeling regenerative land use and collaborative leadership that protect ecosystems and restore relationships.

Land Access Alliance



Gathering Land.
Sharing Community.
Restoring Trust.

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis—an evaluation of an organization’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats—is a powerful tool for strategic planning. By surfacing internal assets and challenges alongside external conditions, it helps organizations like LAA make informed decisions, align resources with mission, and prepare for emerging trends or risks.

For more information on how to conduct and use a SWOT analysis effectively, see [this guide](#) from the University of Kansas’s Community Tool Box.

STRENGTHS

Strengths are internal factors that give an organization a competitive advantage, like unique expertise or strong brand recognition. LAA’s strengths include:

- **Community Champions:** Full board, advisory council, and engaged community members.
- **Innovative Community Land Trust Model:** Promotes regenerative agriculture, community stewardship, and equitable land access, directly addressing systemic rural barriers.
- **Strong Community Engagement:** Horizontal governance through community visioning, storytelling, and participatory decision-making.
- **Focused Mission and Values:** Prioritizes low-income and BIPOC individuals, landless farmers, women, and neighboring Indigenous nations.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborates with [Land Trust Alliance](#), [Finland Food Chain](#), [North Shore Agroecology Center](#), University of MN Extension’s [Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships \(RSDP\)](#), [Blandin Foundation](#), and [Rural Pathways](#).
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Builds networks of farmer and forager support. Hosts educational webinars and peer mentorship opportunities.

AREAS OF ANALYSIS



STRENGTHS



WEAKNESSES



OPPORTUNITIES



THREATS



WEAKNESSES

Weaknesses are internal factors that hinder an organization's performance, like lack of resources or inefficiencies in processes. LAA's areas of weakness include:

- **Staffing Limitations:** Currently run by an Executive Director and an overextended volunteer board. Need to hire program and outreach staff.
- **Funding Instability:** Inconsistent resources and limited grant-writing capacity.
- **Visibility and Awareness:** Underrecognized in key areas like Two Harbors.
- **Operational Infrastructure:** Needs robust systems for finance, data, and evaluation.

OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities are external factors or trends that an organization can capitalize on to grow or improve. LAA's opportunities include:

- **Regional Interest in Climate Refuge Areas:** Northeastern Minnesota is emerging as a climate haven.
- **Policy Support for Land and Food Justice:** Increased funder and government interest in regenerative land use.
- **Collaborative Potential:** Shared land use, co-location, and other partnership possibilities with Finland Community Nature Child Care, [Finland Minnesota Historical Society](#), [Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center](#), North Shore Agroecology Center, and housing collaborators. Continue to strengthen connections across the Iron Range and Two Harbors area.
- **Community Demand:** High interest in food sovereignty and equitable access to foraging, gardening, and farming.
- **Narrative Alignment:** Funders prioritizing connection, belonging, and inclusion.

THREATS

Threats are external factors that could harm an organization's success, such as new competitors or changes in regulations. Threats to LAA's success include:

- **Rising Land Costs:** Competition from developers and investors.
- **Zoning and Regulation:** Complexities in land use law.
- **Funding Competition:** Scarce resources for grassroots land initiatives.
- **Environmental Volatility:** Climate change poses risk to regenerative models.

Flagship Program Spotlight:

Land Access Pathways Initiative

Fostering connection through common ground, participants deepen their relationships with the land and one another as they co-create and manage shared spaces—vegetable plots, foraging zones, and cultural gardens—that serve as living classrooms and gathering places. These collaborative efforts nurture intergenerational, cross-cultural, and ecological ties, advancing LAA’s mission of community cohesion through land stewardship.

Grounded in equity and inclusion, the program centers low-income, BIPOC, and landless community members, ensuring accessible entry points into land-based work and leadership. A sliding-scale fee model and scholarship-funded placements remove financial barriers and support LAA’s goal of dismantling systemic land inequities. The Initiative’s design is anchored by:

- **3-Phase Training Model:** Foundational, technical, and governance phases in regenerative agriculture, foraging, and land-trust stewardship.
- **Environmental and Food-Sovereignty Focus:** Curriculum and hands-on projects that build ecological resilience and improve access to healthy, local food.
- **Inclusive Recruitment:** Focused on BIPOC and landless communities, with future expansion to underserved youth aged 16–24.
- **Experiential Apprenticeships:** Opportunities at Two Harbors Garden and mobile learning pods, with plans to scale to a permanent training site.
- **Credentialing Pathways:** LAA micro-credentials and industry certifications to support sustainable land careers.

More details on the Initiative are integrated into the action plan.





Short-Term Goal Setting and Strategic Action Planning: 6-12 Months

GOAL 1: SECURE SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

Rationale: Financial stability is foundational to progress on all other goals.

Action: Develop and execute a targeted funding road map.

Implementation Steps: (1) Submit at least five substantial grant proposals; (2) Engage individual donors and foundations; (3) Build relationships with potential funders and explore support through Trust for Public Land and other aligned entities.

GOAL 2: STRENGTHEN ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Rationale: A fully staffed team is essential for implementing and expanding programs.

Action: Hire 2-4 staff based on need to focus on both community and land aspects.

Implementation Steps: (1) Define job descriptions based on needs; (2) Conduct inclusive, community-informed hiring processes; (3) Provide orientation and support for staff success.

GOAL 3: OPERATIONALIZE TWO HARBORS GARDEN

Rationale: The garden serves as a visible and functional demonstration of the mission. It is located on a plot of land that also includes a house serving as a space for unhoused community members. The garden provides more than just food; it

fosters fellowship and offers residents a meaningful way to engage with each other.

Action: Launch site development and community-based programming.

Implementation Steps: (1) Prepare infrastructure and seasonal planting plans; (2) Recruit volunteers and participants; (3) Use the site as a pilot for inclusive, regenerative land use.

GOAL 4: ENHANCE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Rationale: Trusted partnerships amplify impact and increase shared resources.

Action: Formalize collaborations with regional partners.

Implementation Steps: (1) Continued tribal education and outreach; (2) Initiate discussions with Finland Community Nature Child Care, Finland Historical Society, RSDP, and Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center to explore opportunities for co-location, shared programming, and joint fundraising; (3) Partner with local organizations including housing collaborators and North Shore Agroecology Center, along with community connections in the Iron Range and Two Harbors area.

GOAL 5: INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS

Rationale: Strong visibility supports funding, participation, and regional influence.



Short-Term Goal Setting and Strategic Action Planning: 6-12 Months

Action: Launch a multi-channel outreach strategy.

Implementation Steps: (1) Enhance digital presence by strengthening social media engagement and updating website content to reflect recent milestones, projects, and organizational values; (2) Highlight impact through compelling success stories, visuals, and accessible data that demonstrate community benefit and outcomes; (3) Build a communications list by compiling contact information for supporters, partners, and stakeholders to launch a monthly or bi-monthly newsletter; (4) Foster community connections by hosting local events, informational sessions, and site tours to engage the public and share your work firsthand.

GOAL 6: FOSTER SHARED OWNERSHIP

Rationale: Stakeholders (e.g., community members, funders, and local leaders) are often more moved by visual storytelling than abstract descriptions. A compelling visual case study can help bring LAA's land stewardship vision to life, inspiring imagination, demonstrating strategic intent, and fostering a sense of shared ownership. Engaging the community early also ensures that future development reflects local values, reinforcing transparency, equity, and trust.

Action: Develop a visual case study that illustrates LAA's vision for the future land stewardship site.

Implementation Steps: (1) Compile previously discussed components such as foraging zones, teaching gardens, community gathering areas, and cultural-use spaces; (2) Develop a conceptual site map or illustration layered with narratives, envisioned activities, and quotes from community members; (3) Prepare a brief written overview, "before and after" imagery, and curated sample photos that reflect the site's potential; (4) Host feedback opportunities such as surveys, listening circles, or interactive exhibits to co-create the vision with the community; (5) Integrate the case study into grant proposals, donor outreach, and partner presentations to demonstrate readiness and alignment with community priorities.

GOAL 7: LAUNCH A FLAGSHIP TRAINING AND STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Rationale: Establish a pilot that demonstrates the program model, builds staff capacity, and activates the Two Harbors Garden as a living classroom—advancing LAA's vision of shared land and belonging.

Action: Develop and implement the Pathways Initiative with an inaugural cohort.

Implementation Steps: (1) Co-design curriculum and credentials. Partner with Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center, North Shore Agroecology Center, and Indigenous advisors to co-develop an

Short-Term Goal Setting and Strategic Action Planning: 6-12 Months

integrated curriculum with a three-phase approach:

- Core (8 weeks): Foundations of regenerative land stewardship—ecosystem principles, basic horticulture, cultural land practices, and governance structures.
- Craft (10 weeks): Specialized tracks—urban vegetable production, native plant restoration, wild food foraging, and land-trust co-management. Participants earn micro-credentials co-designed with local experts.
- Community (ongoing): Apprentice roles on demonstration sites (e.g., Two Harbors Garden), peer mentoring, and co-governance committees shaping future LAA land projects.

When designing credentials, use USDA and regional land-use reports to identify high-need skills in regenerative agriculture and conservation, ensuring relevance. Consider LAA Micro-Credentials like “Regenerative Garden Steward,” “Foraging and Food Sovereignty Facilitator,” and “Land Trust Governance Fellow,” as well as industry-standard certifications. Consider hosting career readiness workshops on cooperative management, grant writing for land projects, nonprofit governance, and small-scale enterprise development.

(2) Hire staff based on need to manage recruitment, partnerships, and logistics. This could include a Community Outreach Specialist.

(3) Recruit 10-15 participants from BIPOC

and landless communities via partner referrals, info sessions, and community events. Deploy mobile learning pods for seasonal foraging expeditions and farm-to-table demos. Participants may apprentice or volunteer at Two Harbors Garden co-leading maintenance, programming, and community events.

(4) Run the program at Two Harbors Garden. Collect feedback, refine curriculum, and publish interim impact reports for funders and partners.



Mid-Term Goal Setting and Strategic Action Planning: 2-3 Years

GOAL 1: ACQUIRE LAND

Rationale: Land ownership anchors programming and secures long-term vision.

Action: Secure land through purchase or easement.

Implementation Steps: (1) Identify suitable parcels and conduct feasibility assessments; (2) Explore shared land use models with interested partners; (3) Launch a land acquisition fundraising campaign using the visual case study as a key piece in engaging the community.

GOAL 2: SCALE FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE REGIONALLY

Rationale: Leverage pilot learnings to establish multiple training hubs, build an alumni network, and continue to refine LAA's core offerings.

Action: Deploy satellite cohorts and mobile learning pods; formalize alumni mentorship and site co-governance structures.

Implementation Steps: (1) Identify and secure 2-3 additional training parcels (easement or lease) in Iron Range townships; (2) Equip and rotate mobile pods for seasonal workshops on regenerative practices and wild-food foraging; (3) Recruit subsequent cohorts at each satellite; run integrated Core/Craft phases on-site; (4) Establish an alumni mentorship network to co-lead new cohorts and advise on site operations; (5) Collect mid-term feedback, refine

curriculum, and publish interim impact reports for funders and partners.

GOAL 3: STRENGTHEN ADMINISTRATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Rationale: Organizational sustainability depends on robust systems and internal capacity.

Action: Invest in financial and operational systems.

Implementation Steps: (1) Implement bookkeeping and financial management software; (2) Provide staff and board training in nonprofit compliance and governance.

GOAL 4: DEEPEN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SHAPE LOCAL POLICY

Rationale: Quarterly harvest celebrations and policy forums build local ownership, amplify participant voices, and generate actionable feedback, strengthening LAA's community ties and informing land access advocacy.

Action: Host four annual events that combine celebratory harvest showcases with structured policy discussions.

Implementation Steps: (1) Align each celebration with key seasonal milestones (spring planting, summer bloom, fall harvest, winter planning); (2) Coordinate

Mid-Term Goal Setting and Strategic Action Planning: 2-3 Years

with local government offices, tribal councils, and funders to co-sponsor forums. Publicize through community networks, social media, and partner newsletters; (3) Prepare presentation spaces where participants display project outcomes—produce, foraging finds, garden designs, governance proposals. Train participants to share testimonials and speak on program impact; (4) Set up feedback stations (e.g., comment walls, digital surveys, roundtable discussions) for community input on program design and policy priorities. Offer tasting tables, craft demonstrations, and youth-led tours to deepen connection; (5) Capture qualitative and quantitative feedback at each event. Analyze insights and circulate a summary report to LAA leadership, partners, and policymakers to guide program refinement and advocacy efforts.

GOAL 5: ADVANCE POLICY ADVOCACY

Rationale: Policy engagement is essential to remove barriers and support replication.

Action: Build regional coalitions and engage policymakers.

Implementation Steps: (1) Host policy forums and storytelling sessions; (2) Join advocacy efforts for zoning reform and land equity.



“As Executive Director of the Land Access Alliance, I am committed to exploring community-driven innovation grounded in lived experience, where ordinary people apply their social imaginations and collective power to shape solutions that reflect collective needs. This is how we grow resilient local food systems, advance equity, and build inclusive rural economies rooted in community care, land stewardship, and lasting impact.

—Rumbidzai Masawi”

Long-Term Goal Setting and Strategic Action Planning: 5+ Years

GOAL 1: ANCHOR A PERMANENT LAND SITE

Rationale: A long-term site ensures continuity, visibility, and public access.

Action: Steward a flagship community-owned land project.

Implementation Steps: (1) Finalize land acquisition with collaborative input; (2) Build shared infrastructure for community use; (3) Use the site as a regional learning and demonstration hub.



The LAA Visual Prototype (above) depicts a conserved property organized around housing, regenerative farming, cultural education, and wellness research. Arrows illustrate LAA's collaboration with partners to support a sustainable, community-led land stewardship model.

Long-Term Goal Setting and Strategic Action Planning: 5+ Years

GOAL 2: SECURE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL STABILITY

Rationale: Financial resilience ensures organizational sustainability across generations.

Action: Create an endowment and diversify funding streams.

Implementation Steps: (1) Launch a donor cultivation strategy; (2) Establish corporate social responsibility (CSR) partnerships; (3) Create legacy giving opportunities; (4) Build and manage a permanent endowment to support operations and land stewardship.

GOAL 3: CONDUCT PROGRAM EVALUATION

Rationale: Evaluation ensures impact, accountability, and learning.

Action: Implement a mixed-method evaluation plan.

Implementation Steps: (1) Engage with Rural Pathways or another program evaluator to collect data from participants and partners; (2) Analyze and share findings with stakeholders and funders; (3) Use results to refine strategy, storytelling, and as rationale for future funding.

GOAL 4: INSTITUTIONALIZE AND SCALE THE FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE

Rationale: Embedding the program into LAA's core operations and broadening its reach secures financial resilience, amplifies

impact across the region, and generates replicable practices that advance inclusive land justice.

Action: Integrate the Pathways Initiative into LAA's endowment and fee-for-service portfolio, formalize governance structures, and publish a replication toolkit while expanding partnerships, policy influence, and peer learning networks.

Implementation Steps: (1) Launch a donor cultivation campaign to seed an Initiative endowment; (2) Roll out sliding-scale memberships, paid workshops, and scholarship support to generate earned revenue; (3) Publish *Building Belonging Through Shared Land*, outlining curriculum, governance models, credentialing pathways, and impact metrics; (4) Produce case studies and host "how-to" trainings for peer organizations and community partners; (5) Amend LAA bylaws to create dedicated leadership roles and co-governance boards for the Initiative; (6) Expand the board and advisory council to include diverse voices from BIPOC, youth, and landless communities; (7) Secure partnerships to launch new satellite training hubs in additional counties; (8) Host annual policy forums and storytelling sessions to advocate for inclusive land-access legislation and share best practices; (9) Conduct mixed-methods evaluations of participant trajectories, land conserved, and community-level outcomes; (10) Use findings to refine the model and report to funders, stakeholders, and the broader rural land-justice movement.



Recommendations for Engagement

THRIVE RURAL FRAMEWORK (ASPEN INSTITUTE)

- Embed systems-level strategies across all LAA programs and planning efforts.
- Use the Thrive Rural Framework as a diagnostic and design tool to identify and dismantle place-, race-, and class-based barriers to equitable land access.
- Integrate framework indicators into evaluation and learning agendas to assess progress over time.
- Engage Thrive Rural collaborators or alumni as thought partners or advisors for implementation.
- Reference: [Thrive Rural Framework PDF](#)

TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND (TPL)

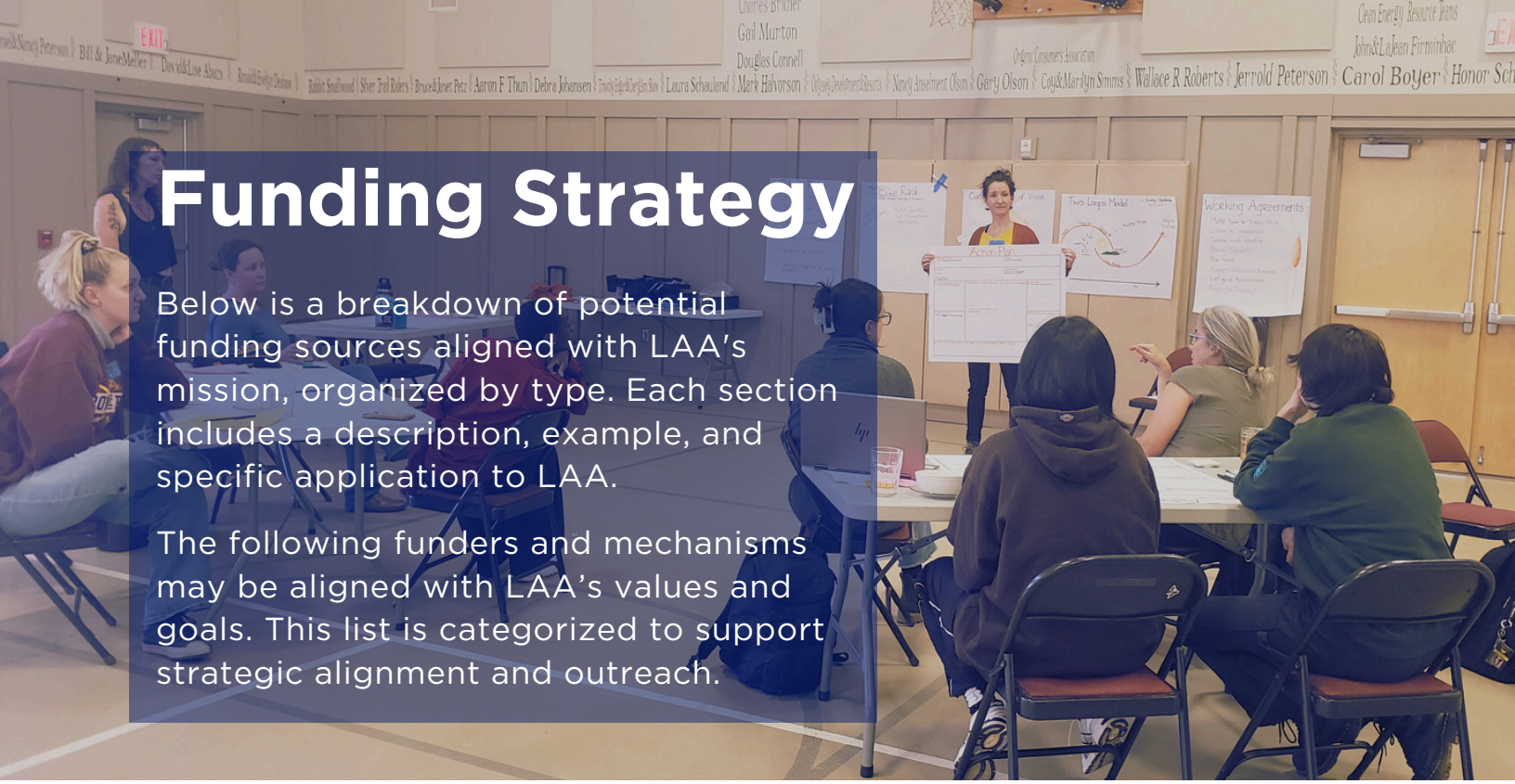
- Apply the Common Ground Framework to develop messaging that emphasizes social cohesion and inclusion.
- Collaborate with TPL or similar organizations on conservation finance mechanisms that can fund long-term land stewardship.
- Leverage TPL case studies to make the case for the public benefit of inclusive land access in grant proposals and policy advocacy.
- Engage TPL for insights on conservation finance.
- Reference: [TPL One-Pager](#)

PHILANTHROPIC ALIGNMENT

- Position LAA's work within the "Connection Opportunity" movement, using language that speaks to bridging divides and promoting belonging.
- Develop funder-facing materials (one-pagers, videos, stories) that connect LAA's land work to mental health, community healing, and intergenerational engagement.
- Encourage funders to support general operating and capacity-building needs as a form of systems-change investment.
- Reference: [The Connection Opportunity](#)

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND NETWORK PARTICIPATION

- Join regional and national coalitions focused on land justice, rural regeneration, and food sovereignty (e.g., [National Young Farmers Coalition](#), [HEAL Food Alliance](#), [Rural Climate Partnership](#)).
- Share learning and practices by presenting at conferences, writing for publications, and participating in peer learning cohorts. Consider developing publications such as a case study series ("Stories from the Common Ground") and a toolkit for replication ("Building Belonging Through Shared Land").
- Develop an internal knowledge management strategy that captures stories, data, and lessons to inform replication and evaluation.



Funding Strategy

Below is a breakdown of potential funding sources aligned with LAA's mission, organized by type. Each section includes a description, example, and specific application to LAA.

The following funders and mechanisms may be aligned with LAA's values and goals. This list is categorized to support strategic alignment and outreach.

PROGRAM FEES

Program fees can be an important part of a sustainable funding strategy—when designed with equity in mind. While the goal of LAA is to ensure open and inclusive access to land, certain fee structures can help generate modest, recurring revenue to support programming, infrastructure, and long-term stewardship.

Example: A community land trust implements a sliding scale membership model, allowing individuals to contribute what they can. Higher-income members pay full price or more, while those with fewer resources pay reduced or symbolic fees, or access is fully covered by scholarships funded through donations.

Application to LAA: LAA can maintain its commitment to access while introducing fees in a way that honors equity, dignity, and participation:

- **Sliding Scale Memberships:** Annual fees based on income. No one is turned away.

- **Scholarship-Funded Access:** Secure sponsors or donors to underwrite program fees for individuals or families who opt in at low or no cost.
- **Special Event Fees:** Host paid workshops, seasonal celebrations, or farm-to-table dinners that appeal to broader audiences
- **Group or Partner Programming:** Collaborate with schools, universities, and community groups that can cover or subsidize program fees through grants or education budgets.

This approach allows for diversified income without compromising the foundational value of equitable land access. Transparent communication about how fees support community-led land stewardship can also deepen engagement and trust.



Funding Strategy

PUBLIC FUNDS

Public dollars often form the foundation for major community-driven projects. City, county, and state agencies often invest in projects that align with local development, equity, or climate resilience goals.

Example: A city council allocates CDBG funding to cover infrastructure improvements that support public or nonprofit land projects.

Application to LAA: Local governments, including Lake County and IRRRB, can be approached for public infrastructure support related to land acquisition, site preparation, or community access enhancements for a permanent land stewardship site.

- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG): Distributed by counties in MN. Connect with Lake County to find out how they disperse these funds.
- Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB): New rounds of grant funding start July 1. Their Culture & Tourism Grants are open July-October. Additionally, the IRRRB does very low interest rate loans (1-2%).

GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Government grants from federal, state, or local agencies provide significant support for land access, conservation, or infrastructure development. These grants typically require clear outcomes and alignment with public benefit priorities.

Example: USDA Rural Development programs offer grants and low-interest loans to support land acquisition or site development for agricultural and conservation purposes.

Application to LAA: LAA engages with USDA or explores other state/federal programs to fund key components of land acquisition or regenerative agriculture infrastructure.

- USDA: Re-engagement with USDA programs may be possible in the future. Currently, they are not actively dispersing monies.
- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development: May be applicable if LAA offers certifications and credentials that align. See, for example, Youth at Work Competitive Grants.



Funding Strategy

FOUNDATION GRANTS

Philanthropic foundations support equity, land justice, rural development, and climate resilience. These grants are ideal for general operating support, programming, and strategic growth.

Example: The Bush Foundation has supported rural systems-change initiatives that build equity and local capacity.

Application to LAA: Foundations such as Bush, Northland, or Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation are ideal partners to support staffing, land planning, or participatory community design efforts.

- Blandin Foundation: Opening again in 2026
- Bush Foundation
- Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation
- LKJ Foundation
- Minneapolis Foundation/Saint Paul Foundation
- Northland Foundation
- Margaret A Cargill Foundation: Donated to a large dormitory at Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center
- McKnight Foundation
- Head of the Lakes United Way

CORPORATE GRANTS

Corporations with community-facing missions often offer funding through corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs, especially when projects support local families, education, or sustainability.

Example: COMPEER Financial offers up to \$10,000 in grants for rural infrastructure, farming, and nonprofit capacity building.

Application to LAA: LAA could work with regional partners or employers (e.g., cooperatives, energy providers, local banks) to secure sponsorships or named support for programming, signage, or infrastructure at demonstration sites.

- T-Mobile Community Grant: Up to \$50,000
- COMPEER Financial: Up to \$10,000 in general operating funds and technical assistance through their Community Grant
- Essentia Health Foundation: Up to \$25,000 but will do more via Letter of Inquiry. Possible funding areas that align with LAA are their focus on healthy foods and neighborhood improvements that promote health and safety
- Aspirus Health Foundation: Newer to the region; would be good to check with their program officer about how they give

Funding Strategy

SOCIAL IMPACT INVESTMENTS

Impact investors look for projects that create both social good and financial return. These funds may be structured as loans, equity investments, or recoverable grants.

Example: The Mortenson Family Foundation provides impact investing support for rural communities focused on sustainability and equity.

Application to LAA: As LAA moves toward land acquisition, developing a blended finance strategy that includes impact investment (e.g., repayable loan for land secured by public contracts or rental income) could be viable.

- [Mortenson Family Foundation – Impact Investing](#)
- [REI Cooperative Action Fund](#)
- [Ben & Jerry’s Foundation – National Grassroots Grant Program](#) (Rolling deadline)



COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

Grassroots fundraising mobilizes residents and local businesses to support land access, stewardship, and shared infrastructure. These campaigns cultivate local ownership and help build a culture of shared investment in rural equity.

Example: The “Build the Future” campaign invited community members to contribute toward key project elements like playgrounds and site improvements, recognizing donors through plaques and naming opportunities.

Application to LAA: LAA could implement grassroots strategies such as community dinners, site tours, auctions with donated goods, crowdfunding, and direct donor appeals to support land acquisition and infrastructure projects. Engaging local businesses and families in fundraising will strengthen ties and increase visibility. These funding sources reflect alignment with community development, environmental justice, regenerative agriculture, rural equity, and connection-based land initiatives.



Funding Strategy

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OPPORTUNITIES

Below is a summary of specific grant programs available to support LAA's technical capacity needs, including grant writing, strategic planning, and evaluation:

- **IRRRB**

- Technical Assistance Program
- Funding: One-to-one match of up to \$3,000
- Use: Primarily for grant writing support
- Status: Ongoing until funds are exhausted; release new funds July 1
- Contact: Shawn Herhusky (Shawn.Herhusky@state.mn.us or 218-735-3067)

- **Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation**

- Programs:
 - Two Harbors Area Fund (up to \$10,000)
 - LaBounty Family Fund (up to \$15,000)
- Deadline: March 3
- Disbursement Date: June 1
- Recommendation: Contact a grants team member to confirm eligibility and alignment

- **Northland Foundation**

- Quarterly Grants
- Funding: Typically \$10,000 or more
- Deadlines: January 5, April 1, July 1, October 1
- Recommendation: Contact Michelle Ufford (michelle@northlandfdn.org) to discuss project eligibility

- **Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation**

- Management Improvement Fund
- Funding: Up to \$10,000
- Next Deadline: May 8
- Notification: Within two months of submission
- Recommendation: Schedule a pre-application conversation with a grants team member to strengthen proposal focus

CONCLUSION

LAA offers a timely and transformative response to urgent rural challenges—disconnection, inequity, and environmental decline. Through community-rooted stewardship, regenerative agriculture, and a commitment to equity, LAA is cultivating not just land, but resilience and belonging. Informed by national frameworks like Thrive Rural, the Connection Opportunity, and the Common Ground Framework, this plan charts a collaborative, inclusive, and scalable path forward. With strong partnerships, creative funding, and intentional relationships, LAA is shaping a model for rural regeneration where land sustains people, and people sustain each other.

We invite funders, partners, and community members to help bring this vision to life. Together, we can reimagine land as common ground.

This report was prepared by



**Rural
Pathways**

Bold strategies for quiet places.

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