

Grant Guidelines for Land Conservation Easements

Amended May 6, 2013

Background: The Harrison County Community Foundation Supporting Organization, Inc. (HCCFSO) recognizes the value of protecting farm, forest and open spaces for the generations to come. While we acknowledge the many variables encountered in protecting property using conservation easements, the following guidelines have been established to inform conservation proponents, easement donors, and interested land trusts on the limits of HCCFSO participation in this program.

Grant Process: Grant applications will continue to be required from the Harrison County Land Conservation Committee (HCLCC). The opportunity for increased funding remains an option if the conservation easement warrants and is approved by the HCCFSO Board of Directors. *These guidelines do not guarantee the HCLCC grant application will be approved.*

Grant Amount: A typical grant for a conservation easement, under the guidance of the HCLCC, will not exceed \$18,000 per easement. Any additional costs for an easement that exceed the amount of the HCCFSO grant must be met by other sources. *A grant award is for one conservation easement and may not be commingled with another HCCFSO conservation easement grant award. Unused funding from an HCCFSO grant may not be spent for another purpose or used for another conservation easement.*

Property Easement Limits: A grant for the purpose of a conservation easement will be limited to one (1) for a single-owner adjacent property. An owner may qualify for additional easement grants, but only if subsequent property easements are separated from a previous property by one or more tracts owned by other property owners. *This requirement may be waived if at least ten (10) years has passed since a conservation easement grant supported an adjoined property.*

Appraisals are the donor's responsibility. As the landowner has the option to claim the easement donation as a tax reduction, HCCFSO will not allow grant funds to pay this cost.

Legal Defense HCCFSO will not grant funds for Legal Defense.

Legal Fees are similar to closing on a real estate transaction. HCCFSO will allow up to **\$2,000** per easement in legal fees; reimbursed to HCLCC after closing.

Surveys are the largest variable depending primarily on the acreage. The HCCFSO will allow up to **\$5,000** for this cost; reimbursed to HCLCC after closing and presentation of surveyor's invoice.

Signs/Markers promote the program and inform the public there is a conservation easement on the property. HCCFSO will allow up to **\$1,000** per easement grant for signs, markers, or other promotion; reimbursed to HCLCC upon presentation of appropriate invoice(s).

Stewardship Fee is a calculated amount that considers a variety of costs to the land trust for continued monitoring of a conservation easement such as staff time, mileage to/from the property, size of the property, supporting admin, etc. HCCFSO will allow up to **\$10,000** deposited into an endowment *held by the Harrison County Community Foundation (HCCF)* for the benefit of the land trust to steward a grant-supported Harrison County conservation easement. The land trust assigned to steward a conservation easement through this program must submit billing to HCCF along with a request to withdraw available income from the fund for any annual monitoring costs.

HCCF Match Program: If the property owner and participating land trust agree that additional funding into the endowment is necessary for perpetual stewardship and HCCF has a qualifying match program in place, any additional funding donated to the HCCF for the stewardship endowment will qualify for the offered match.