



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
RON AMSTUTZ • JONATHAN HOFSTETTER • SUE A. SMAIL

January 5, 2024

Wayne County's Comprehensive Plan identifies long-term goals including:

- Conservation of farmland and protection of natural resources
- Preservation Wayne County's historic farm-based culture and rural character
- Supporting agriculture, agribusiness, travel, and tourism
- Enhancing the quality of life for those who live and work in the County

The Wayne County Board of Commissioners looks to further these efforts by participating in programs like the Ohio Department of Agriculture's (ODA) Clean Ohio Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program, or LAEPP.

As a Local Sponsor to the LAEPP, the Wayne County Commissioners assist the ODA in finding interested and eligible farms in our area and helps the landowner complete the application process. If selected for funding, the landowner can receive up to \$2000 per acre - not to exceed our 2024 allocation of \$81,108 - from the ODA in exchange for placing a permanent agricultural easement on their land.

This is a competitive program with several steps involved:

- If you are interested in being considered, please complete and submit the attached Questionnaire to the Wayne County Planning Department no later than March 1, 2024.
- The Planning Department will work with eligible landowners to complete the online application which is due in April. *This process will assign a point value to each application based on criteria from the ODA.*
- The top scoring properties will have their final applications submitted to the ODA in May.
- Once selected for funding by the ODA it may take an additional 1-2 years to finalize and close.
- Payments to landowners will be made at closing with closing costs deducted from the final purchase price.

Please note: Eligible properties must be at least 40 acres or touching another permanently preserved property.

Placing an easement on a farm is a major commitment that will affect how the land can be used FOREVER. This questionnaire will help you gain understanding of the steps involved in the process. Anyone considering this option should look into possible family, legal, and tax implications prior to applying.

Because this year's allocation (\$81,108) is lower than usual, we will be looking for very special properties to best use our available funds! Do not hesitate to contact our Farmland Preservation Specialist at AgPlan@WayneOhio.org or call 330-287-5420 with questions. You can also learn more about the LAEPP program at <https://agri.ohio.gov/programs/farmland-preservation-office/resources/resource-clean-ohio-local-agricultural-easement-purchase-program-laepp> or call the ODA's Farmland Preservation office at 614-728-6210.

Both County and State can only answer general program questions. Be sure to consult an attorney and/or tax preparer to see how an easement will affect your particular situation.

**LOCAL AGRICULTURAL EASEMENT PURCHASE PROGRAM (LAEPP)
PRE-SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Name(s): _____
 Best Contact Phone and/or Email: _____
 Mailing Address: _____

2. Parcel(s) to be considered for permanent conservation (attach additional papers if needed):

Parcel number	Appx. Acreage	Physical Address	# Houses

For LEAPP, the minimum size is 40 acres or 25 if adjacent to another already protected property. Multiple adjoining parcels that are under the same ownership must apply together. Attach more info if needed.

3. List of crops and/or other agricultural activities: _____

4. Is the land involved in any non-agricultural commercial activities? NO / YES _____

5. Is the farm mortgaged or under land contract? NO / YES, lender name _____
If "Yes", include a written communication indicating the subordination expectations and if an appraisal is needed.

6. Is the farm currently under an oil and gas, solar, or cell tower lease? NO / YES _____
Having a lease on the property doesn't automatically negate the application process, but may involve additional steps.

7. Is the farm enrolled in CAUV and Ag District with the Wayne County Auditor? NO / YES
Enrollment is mandatory, please attach forms.

8. Does the farm have a Conservation Plan (from the Soil & Water Department or NRCS) in place?
 Please provide information/contact: _____
A Conservation Plan must be in place by the time of closing.

9. Is the property enrolled in the Historic Family Farm Program: Y / N

10. Is the property in an Agricultural Security Area (ASA): Y / N

11. Provide a copy of the current deed(s) and current articles of incorporation, trust documents, etc. that show how the ownership structure operates if applicable.
All owners must be committed to the permanent preservation of the property.

Please submit to the Wayne County Planning Department: 428 West Liberty Street, Wooster 44691

-- This section for Planning Department use --

Located in Flood Plain: Y / N	Mineral Rights: Y / N	Date received: _____
% Prime soils: _____	Imperv. surface < 2%: Y / N	Twp(s): _____
LAEPP Points Est: _____	ACEP-ALE Qualify: Y / N	Notes: _____