Farmland Access and Transfer Navigator Certification Program

Session Overview and Core Competencies

February 2, 2027

Session 1 - Introduction to the Farmland Access and Transfer Certification Program and Cohort

This opening session will provide participants with an outline of the certification program through an introduction to the structure and topics for the series. We will take time to get to know one another in the cohort and set intentions for how the program will impact your professional objectives and agricultural networks.

Core Competency: Assess how you will apply your goals and values with the objectives of the program, and how to best leverage the program for your own career path.

February 9, 2027

Session 2 - Explore Your Role in Navigating Farmland Access and Transfer with Farmers and Ranchers

Our second session will explore the opportunities and boundaries that a Navigator plays in a land access or transfer process. We will explore tools and frameworks Navigators use to serve farmers and ranchers. Participants will identify your core values as a service provider and establish goals for during and after your time in the certification program.

Core Competency: Articulate the possibilities and limits of role of a Navigator in supporting land access and transfer.

February 16, 2027

Session 3 - Working Together for Better Outcomes: Team-Based Strategies For Land Access and Transfer

The Navigator has a big job ahead of them, but luckily, it's not a job they do alone. This session will outline the importance of having a land access or transfer team, who those various team members are, and how to best identify and vet these associates to support your impact with farmers and ranchers..

Core Competency: Establish a plan for developing a land access or transfer support team.

March 2, 2027

Session 4 - Support Business Technical Assistance in Land Access or Land Transfer Scenarios

Providing business technical assistance to farmers and ranchers could be a course in and of itself. In this session, we will cover when those business decisions intersect with farmland access or transfer scenarios. We will explore how to identify key metrics of farm business performance, how to support beginning and exiting farmers with their financial literacy, and workshop best practices for providing business technical assistance in an access or transfer situation.

Core Competency: Provide business and farm viability guidance as it relates to land access and transfer.

March 9, 2027

Session 5 - Evaluate Models and Approaches to Secure Farmland

With farmland prices skyrocketing year after year, the next generation of farmland access will take creative pathways to acquiring land. This session will explore the various pathways by which beginning farmers can access land, and what strategies exist for overcoming barriers to land access. We will also discuss how these pathways result in various power dynamics of land transfer.

Core Competency: Evaluate land access models and approaches.

March 16, 2027

Session 6 - Listen to Understand: How to Center Listening in Your Work With Farmers and Ranchers

Listening to understand is a foundational skill for effective Navigator work. This interactive session focuses on building and practicing listening skills that help foster trust, strengthen relationships, and support meaningful conversations with farmers, landowners, and other stakeholders. Participants will learn a practical framework for listening to understand the thoughts, emotions, and motivations driving decisions.

Core Competency: Apply active listening skills to build trusting relationships.

April 6, 2027
Session 7 - Tools for Affordability: Understand Financing Tools and Funding Resources

The incoming generation of farmers needs a leg up to access farmland, and the exiting generation needs the financial resources to retire. In this session, we will cover the various funding resources that exist within land access and transfer scenarios, and how those resources connect to overall farm viability and the success of farmland transfer.

Core Competency: Recommend potential grant and loan opportunities that meet farmer and rancher needs.

April 13, 2027
Session 8 - Learn to Guide Conversations Through Conflict and Disagreement

A land access or transfer situation is primed for conflict, but it doesn't have to derail progress. This session is grounded in participants' real-world experience and collective wisdom. Through discussion and reflection, participants will explore what helps and hinders productive conflict conversations, examine their own conflict styles, and learn how stress affects communication and decision-making. Building on this foundation, the session introduces practical conflict-management tools that Navigators can use to support land access, transition, and transfer conversations.

Core Competency: Apply conflict management techniques to land access and transfer situations.

April 20, 2027
Session 9 - Support Farmers and Ranchers to Find and Assess Land

An incoming farmer needs the right parcel of land to make their farm or ranch a success, and doing homework ahead of time is key. Participants will explore the important aspects of a site assessment, how to use farmer priorities and goals to rank aspects of a site, and evaluate if and when to bring in appraisers, soil health scientists, or other associated experts.

Core Competency: Build confidence in the process of finding land and conducting a site assessment with farmers and ranchers.

May 4, 2027

Session 10 - Negotiation Skills: Learn to Navigate Multiple Positions and Interests

Land access, succession, and transfer decisions often involve multiple people with different goals, concerns, and visions for the future. In this session, participants will build practical negotiation skills for working with complex farm and land transfer situations where positions may appear to be in conflict.

Using real-world examples, guided discussion, and interactive role-play exercises, participants will learn how to uncover underlying interests, separate relationship dynamics from substantive issues, and help parties move from competing positions toward shared understanding and workable solutions.

Core Competency: : Apply principles of negotiation to separate relationship dynamics from substantive issues and uncover interests underlying stated positions

May 11, 2027

Session 11 - Explore Policy Work for the Future of Land Access and Transfer

Navigators have a role in serving farmers and ranchers today but can also shape the landscape of farmland access and transfer for future generations. This session will explore policy opportunities that alleviate land access and transfer barriers in local, regional, and national landscapes.

Core Competency: Develop strategies for supporting or becoming involved in effective land access and transfer policy.

May 18, 2027

Session 12 - Closing Session: Celebrate Your Learning, Professional Growth and Networks

Now that we've wrapped up this important journey as a cohort, what comes next? We'll use this time to evaluate our professional goals, determine plans and next steps for our networks, and celebrate the important work happening across the country.

Core Competency: Create a plan for maintaining your Navigator Certification.