



## FARMER VETTING POLICY (Reviewer’s Instructions)

### **Step 1: Minimum Requirements**

Read the application materials for a general overview, and assess the following. If Need Requirements, Holistic Proposal, and Minimum Requirements are not met, then the candidate is not qualified for a SILT farm. If applicants indicate they are members of an underserved class, this may be a reason to waive minimum requirements for a candidate. Reviewers can proceed with scoring to determine whether to recommend that the board waive the minimum requirements for a candidate. In this first level of vetting, the reviewer is instructed to comply with SILT’s diversity policy by being cognizant of and proactive in adjusting for bias against historically underserved populations.

#### **Need Requirements**

Does this candidate meet SILT’s need requirements; do they lack reasonable access (including via land inheritance, current ownership, or ability to purchase) to farmland suitable for the enterprise being proposed?

**Yes**

**No**

Notes:

#### **Diversity & Equity Values**

Is this candidate:

- A beginning farmer<sup>1</sup>?    **Yes No**

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<sup>1</sup> Defined as farming 10 years or less based on schedule F filings

- A veteran? **Yes No**
- A socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher<sup>2</sup>? **Yes No**
- An economically disadvantaged farmer or rancher<sup>3</sup>? **Yes No**

**Holistic Proposal**

Does this candidate’s proposal set forward a comprehensive plan appropriate for the farmland in question (for specific application), with a business plan that matches the candidate’s experience and character, and enterprises that fit into the candidate’s life plan? Taken as a whole, can this candidate realistically carry out this proposal?

**Yes No**

Notes:

**Minimum Requirements**

Does this candidate meet the minimum requirements, which are as follows:

**Experience:** At minimum<sup>4</sup>, the applicant should have:

- 2 full years of work in the enterprise being proposed
  - At least 1 of those years should be on the same farm through a whole season of the enterprise

**Yes No**

**Business Plan:** All the required sections must be included for the business plan to be considered complete and reviewed. At minimum, the business plan should show a clear vision of where the applicant is going and a realistic plan for how to get there.

**Yes No**

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<sup>2</sup> USDA’s defines a **Socially disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher** as: a farmer or rancher who has been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudices because of their identity as a member of a group without regard to their individual qualities. This term means a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. Specifically, a group whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. Those groups include African Americans, American Indians or Alaskan natives, Hispanics, and Asians or Pacific Islanders

<sup>3</sup> Income at or below the county poverty level.

<sup>4</sup> Minimums for highly niche, specialized, or new enterprises that are not well-developed in Iowa, such as mushroom cultivation, may be given special consideration, but candidates should show a good faith effort to maximize experience in farming and familiarity of their proposed enterprise within those limitations.

**Character Traits:** At a minimum, all three references should vouch for the candidate's integrity.

**Yes**                      **No**

**Life Plan:** At minimum, the candidate should articulate a life plan and a clear rationale for how farming fits into it.

**Yes**                      **No**

Notes:

## **Steps 2 & 3: Scoring Candidates Based on SILT's Criteria**

The following guide assists reviewers in scoring candidates based on SILT's criteria. Reviewers should keep in mind that we are looking for candidates who are the most likely to be successful farmers. Criteria can be scored initially, then adjusted after interviews are conducted and references called. References will be especially key to corroborate the candidate's length and depth of experiences, including the skills learned and competency at key tasks. References will also be important in determining the candidate's character traits.

SILT's criteria include the following categories and values:

**Experience- 50 points**

**Business Plan- 25 points**

**Character Traits- 15 points**

**Life Plan- 10 points**

**Reviewers:** See SILT Farmer Vetting Procedure for the form for interviewing candidates and reviewing their applications.