



People, Food & Land Foundation
Nourishing Land Empowering Communities

The Marigold Fund Progress Report 2025 - 2026

We launched the Marigold Fund for Unincorporated California in 2025 and resources have already hit the ground like water on parched land, igniting new microbial relationships left long dormant and awakening seeds to their relationship with air and sun. The Marigold Fund was created to address the exclusion of California's unincorporated rural communities, Tribal communities, and grassroots organizations from funding opportunities that shape the future of land, food, water, and climate resilience. Year 1 has been the targeted and highly effective moisture needed to prepare life to flourish.

So Far

6

unincorporated rural community projects
have been funded (4 Tribal or
Indigenous-led initiatives supported),



ranging from

\$10k- \$100k

100% flexible general operating support

Community-led Grantmaking

(decisions made by a small group of local experts called the Axil Committee)

Designed as a community-led participatory effort, the Fund expands access to flexible funding for agroecological land stewardship, supporting community-controlled solutions to climate change, strengthening Indigenous and rural stewardship practices, and building up the set of much-needed, and oft-overlooked, leaders who stand to drive investment into California's heartland.

Project Examples



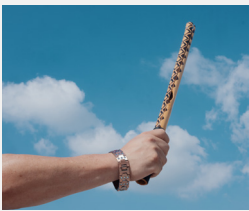
Five Points Community Garden

Cinco Puntas, or Five Points, Community Garden is advancing community-led agroecology and regenerative land stewardship in a rural farmworker community. The project focuses on building local capacity for food production, soil health, and community resilience while creating opportunities for residents to participate directly in shaping the future use and stewardship of local lands.



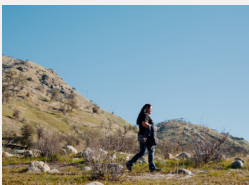
Northern Band of Mono Yokuts

The Northern Band of Mono Yokuts plan to build a traditional roundhouse on family land in Fresno County. The project is envisioned as a place for Indigenous healing, cultural revitalization, intertribal gatherings, education, and recovery, reconnecting people to traditional land-based practices and community relationships. The project leaders have relatives who are loggers, firefighters, ranchers, and builders. They envision “relying on our family working together to build the structure” and source the materials. The roundhouse project is a culmination of the way the Tribal members were brought up to value and care for natural resources.



Native Star Foundation

Native Star Foundation supports Indigenous food sovereignty, cultural preservation, and community wellness through land-based education and agriculture. The organization develops opportunities for Native families, particularly youth, to reconnect with traditional foods, medicines, and ecological knowledge while strengthening local food systems and community leadership.



Fresno American Indian Health Project (FAIHP)

The Fresno American Indian Health Project serves Native communities throughout the Central Valley by integrating health, cultural wellness, and food sovereignty initiatives. Its work includes community gardens, traditional foods programming, youth engagement, and culturally grounded approaches to improving health outcomes and strengthening Indigenous identity.



Comunidad Nuevo Lago

Comunidad Nuevo Lago is a predominantly farmworker community in Fresno County that purchased their mobile home park as a cooperative after winning a lawsuit against their landlord. They are now building more community-based infrastructure, like space for food production and a soccer green, on additional acres just outside their mobile home park.



Traditional Choinumni Tribe

The Traditional Choinumni Tribe is working to restore ancestral burial grounds in their homelands. Estimated to be at least 6,000 years old, the burial ground, which once had a much larger footprint across the valley, was taken away from the tribe early in the last century. Then, in the 1960s, after a protracted battle, the county returned about one acre of land to the Choinumni people, which is the only land the federally unrecognized tribe with about 100 active members has legal access to. Their efforts on burial ground restoration focus on cultural revitalization and reconnecting tribal members with the land.



Although many projects remain in the early stages of implementation, including several efforts to establish or strengthen 501(c)(3) infrastructure, grantees have already demonstrated the value of community-controlled funding. Tribal communities have advanced plans for cultural infrastructure, such as traditional roundhouses, burial grounds, and gathering spaces, while community gardens and food sovereignty initiatives have expanded access to locally grown food and created opportunities for education, cultural exchange, and community gathering. Across the portfolio, the Central Valley's dormant corners come alive with fresh foliage and root systems.

The Marigold Fund's early results affirm its core premise: modest, flexible grants can unlock significant community leadership when resources are placed directly in the hands of local residents and Tribal communities. Rather than imposing external priorities, the fund trusts communities to define solutions to challenges shaped by climate change, economic inequity, and extractive development. By investing in projects that integrate land stewardship, food systems, cultural revitalization, environmental justice, and community governance, the fund is creating a living guide for where state agencies and other sources of public investments should turn their attention. The Marigold Fund is also modeling a different approach to philanthropy and climate solution-making: one that invests in the hearts and minds of people who have stewarded California's sacrificial landscapes for generations.

Contact

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