

Application Packet

Minnesota Agricultural and Rural Leadership

Class XIII



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Welcome Letter #1

Executive Director

WELCOME TO MARL

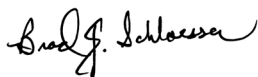
Welcome to the MARL Program, Minnesota Agriculture & Rural Leadership. This dynamic leadership program is for active and engaged adult agricultural and rural leaders in our state. You have a great opportunity to grow personally and as a leader by participating in this two-year educational experience. The program includes in-state seminars, a national study seminar in Washington D.C., an extensive international study seminar in a select foreign country, and between programs activities and study.

Over 350 individuals have participated in MARL. They are farmers, agribusiness professionals, non-profit personnel, government agency professionals, and educators. Since the inception when Class I (30 members) was formed in the year 2000 all have benefited from the experience. To date we have twelve classes who have experienced this robust personal growth and leadership development experience. MARL continues to deliver a premier experience.

A new group of people apply for participation in the MARL Program every two years. There are no academic prerequisites to apply to the program. Adults, ages twenty-five and older, who are working in rural communities, farming, ranching, or in allied fields (ag finance, inputs, biofuels, transportation, education, and others) with a sphere of influence in Minnesota all are welcome to apply to become a class member. The thirty seats that are available will have a broad representation across agricultural disciplines, so entrepreneurs, bankers, farmers, seed suppliers, rural community leaders, crop consultants, specialists in many avenues relating to food production and distribution, etc. all learn together and participate in leadership with each other. It is a leadership development experience like no other.

The MARL Program is a special collaboration project initiated at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall and the collaboration is a joint effort between the University of Minnesota Extension Program. A win for all people participating and supported by two systems in the state.

We hope you will seek to bring excellence in well-being and prosperity to agriculture and rural Minnesota. That is our mission; it is our hope we can collaborate with you.



Brad J. Schloesser
MARL Executive Director

Brad.Schloesser@smsu.edu | 507-420-6854

Welcome Letter #2

Program Director

Congratulations!

You have been identified as a potential applicant for the Minnesota Agriculture & Rural Leadership program (MARL). Being noticed and recognized by others is the first step in realizing your leadership potential. Now it is up to you to take the next step by applying to the program.

What does it mean to be in the MARL program? Being in MARL will help you with the following objectives:

1. Improve your leadership skills and competencies.
2. Enhance your level of self-awareness and emotional intelligence.
3. Improve your knowledge of and familiarity with MN agriculture, relevant issues, and the public policy process at the local, state, and national levels.
4. Enhance your personal and professional networks.
5. Implement a personal leadership development plan.
6. Practice what has been learned in MARL through a capstone project.

You will have an opportunity to achieve these objectives by being a member of a learning community or cohort. The people within this cohort will not only be your co-learners, but they will also become your colleagues, supporters, teachers, confidants, and life-long friends.

The MARL Program has been in existence for over 20 years and during that time the program has shifted to meet the needs and challenges of agriculture and rural communities. Do you want to be prepared for the changes happening in agriculture and rural communities? If so, apply into MARL today. You won't regret that you did, but you most certainly will regret it if you don't.

Sincerely,



Tobias A. Spanier, MARL Program Leader
Extension Professor
Leadership & Civic Engagement
Community Development Department
University of Minnesota Extension
(320) 235-0726 ext. 2020 (507) 220-1812
spani001@umn.edu

Welcome Letter #3 including list of Board of Directors

Board President

Dear MARL Class XIII Applicants:

Congratulations on taking the first step toward becoming a new class member of the Minnesota Agriculture and Rural Leadership (MARL) program. We are thrilled to welcome you to explore our esteemed program and are eager for you to apply to embark on this transformative journey.

The MARL program is committed to cultivating the next generation of leaders in agriculture and rural communities. As you consider joining this community, you will have the opportunity to enhance your leadership skills, broaden your understanding of the agricultural landscape in MN, United States, and world, and engage with the issues that shape rural life in Minnesota.

We see and expect graduates of this program to move on to new leadership roles in their community, work, agricultural organizations, and government. This program, by design, will prepare you for this and add it to your support network with new colleagues from around MN.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or if there's anything I can assist you with as you prepare for this enriching experience. As an alumnus of the program, I continue to support and give back to so that others may experience similar opportunities.

Best,



Mark Enninga

MARL Board President

markenninga@yahoo.com | 763-656-9459

Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Mark Enninga – President
Kyle Peterson - Vice-President
Sarah Dornink – Secretary

Members

Dr. Bob Milligan
Bruce Tiffany
Brant Groen
Angela Guentzel
Sara Hewitt
Rodd Beyer
Chelsea Honnette
Roy Wookey
Leah Addington
Robert Byrnes

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What Is MARL?

Vision

MARL leaders collaborate in bringing excellence in well-being and prosperity to agriculture and rural Minnesota.

Mission

MARL inspires Minnesotans to work together to create new ways to meet an ever-changing future resulting in prosperity for all.

Values

- Personal growth
- Psychological safety
- Inclusivity
- Agility
- Enduring connections

Program Objectives

1. Improve participants' leadership skills and competencies.
2. Enhance participants' level of self-awareness and emotional intelligence.
3. Improve participants' knowledge of and familiarity with MN agriculture, relevant issues, and the public policy process at the local, state, and national levels.
4. Enhance participants' personal and professional networks.
5. Implement a personal leadership development plan.
6. Practice what has been learned in MARL through a capstone project.

History

In 1998, Southwest Minnesota State University engaged the Humphrey Institute and Extension at the University of Minnesota in a two-year research and development project. Their study led to the development of a two-year program plan and the first MARL class was selected in 2000 with the first MARL seminar in November of that year. Since then, new classes have begun every two years. Today, MARL is known throughout the state as the premier agriculture and rural leadership development program.

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Tim Alcorn served as the founding Executive Director of MARL from its inception until March 2011, when he accepted another assignment at Southwest Minnesota State University. Dan Hoffman continued to lead MARL from January 2012 until his retirement in January 2015. Olga Reuvekamp was named Executive Director from March 2015 to October 2022. Brad Schloesser, an alum of MARL, became the Executive Director in December 2022. He works virtually most days and maintains an office on the campus of SMSU in Marshall. As MARL Executive Director he works as an employee of Southwest Minnesota State University – Foundation Team.

Mike Liepold founding long tenured Program Leader, Eriks Dunens, Christy Kallevig, and Toby Spanier have served as Program Leaders. Toby Spanier, Leadership University of Minnesota Extension Specialist, currently provides expertise in curriculum development and delivery. Toby's office is at the University of Minnesota Extension Mid-Central Research & Outreach Center in Willmar.

Advice and guidance of MARL is directed by its Board of Directors composed of alumni and interested stakeholders.

Background

The MARL program has 329 alumni from the first eleven classes. Class XII is currently experiencing the second year of the program. Class XIII will be selected in 2024 to begin the 22-month leadership development experience.

MARL graduates are making a positive and profound impact on agriculture and rural communities throughout Minnesota. Our leaders serve on commodity boards and county commissions, in legislative chambers and chambers of commerce: building consensus, building teams, building Minnesota. You see the results of our leadership development program when our graduates serve as volunteers and leaders on school, city, church, healthcare, economic development, county, zoning, and industry boards. They are leading by example as members of commodity groups, lending institutions, agribusinesses, and governmental agencies. They are leading by positive influence in our state's legislature, in state agencies, and as governor appointees in various capacities. We are proud of what they have accomplished and of the positive results that will happen in the future. Much of that started when they made their decisions to take part in the MARL program. The MARL experience will prepare you for lifelong leadership opportunities and successes.

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Testimonials: Personal Gain Comments from MARL Graduates

The following are impact statements made by Class members at the conclusion of MARL Class experience...

What has my MARL experience meant to me? Marl has been a great opportunity to learn more about rural MN, including representation at the state and national level, develop connections with other leaders that are passionate about agriculture, and motivated me to engage the community in leadership growth.

– *Class XI*

The whole process has been a wonderful experience for me. There have been time constraints, frustrations, but also moments of reward as things have come together. I have really appreciated the opportunity to work closely with my classmates after spending the last two years learning and growing together, and to also work together with members of previous classes I otherwise would have never had the opportunity to do so. It has become an exclamation point on a wonderful two years of being in the MARL program, which has stretched my ways of thinking and pushed me in new directions I otherwise would probably never have pursued. Class XI

The MARL experience has been excellent for me. It has pushed me outside my comfort zone and challenged me in ways I did not anticipate. I have formed lifelong relationships with my classmates, and I look forward to watching them grow in their careers. Class XI

MARL to me has meant many things. It has reinforced for me the power of in-person learning and relationship building. It has taught me that when surrounded by a strong group of natural leaders that you can step back and follow and still be super impactful. It has taught me how important the little things are, like actually getting to know people at the most basic level and learning about them and their families, operations, and occupations. It has given me the opportunity to make friendships that are built solid, surrounding a lot of common interests. It was an epic experience that I'm so grateful to have experienced. Class XI

MARL has been a great chance to network with passionate agriculturalists from across Minnesota. I believe that the friendships formed throughout the two-year program will last a lifetime. In addition to the relationships, the leadership and learning opportunities will serve as a sound compass in life's travels. Class XI

MARL was a stepping stone for me. It gave me more confidence to go full-time to our business and gave me time to reflect on my strengths. I also learned what I need to continue doing to be fulfilled in my new endeavor. Class X

Rewards will be measured for years to come, and the content is fantastic and helps people access their own leadership skills and build upon them. Class X

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Without the two-year program we wouldn't have had enough time to truly develop our relationships as a class!
Class X

The impact was immeasurable. The things I learned about myself, the way I was able to grow regarding my EQ-i, and the experiences I had will benefit me, my family, and my community. I am a much better person because of this experience. Class X

I have grown personally and professionally because of the skills I have been taught, the people I have met, and the experiences I've had in MARL. I have been able to evaluate my strengths, my beliefs, and my relationships to find a better sense of self, a better balance and more. I feel like I am a stronger org. member, spouse, employee because of MARL. MARL has taught me how to prioritize, find the value in saying no and evaluate opportunities. Class IX

MARL offered a safe place to practice personal, social, and business development. Given the chance to grow and practice skills developed in life, business, and personal life. Class VIII

The leadership training and personal reflection was great. The EQI was the most beneficial assessment that we took. Along with that, the program stretched comfort zones which is always a plus. Class VIII

Being surrounded and connected with talented positive leaders. Greater self-awareness of specific areas of strength. This has allowed me to define some of the reasons for my areas of success in the past. It also has given me confidence to utilize these strengths more effectively. Greater self-awareness of specific weakness. Provides a road map for self-improvement and what kinds of people complement me. Class VII

I was unsure of myself when I joined MARL and wondered why I was in this group of excellent leaders. What did I have to offer? What did people see in me to nominate me? Why was I chosen by the interview committee? At some point, I realized I do have something to offer. I have become more confident in myself and more willing to put myself out there if I am a little more willing to take a risk. It's also helped at home. Positive reinforcement of my kids is so important. Class VII

The tours were very informative, in just a few hours we went from an Amish lifestyle to a carousel and robotic dairy – what a difference in mindset/landscape/business acumen. Even if you aren't interested in dairy, there was plenty to gain from this experience. Class VII

An international study tour is invaluable – the interactions with those who have a distinct culture (different than our own) is eye opening. Furthermore, while traveling in a group has its challenges and frustrations, it also has its benefits – many of which come with the added perspectives that each classmate brings and the added questions they bring to the table for discussion. Class VII

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Frequently Asked Questions

Selection Criteria

The Minnesota Agricultural and Rural Leadership program has the following qualifications:

- Resident of Minnesota.
- Committed to Minnesota agriculture and rural communities and their relationship to local, state, national, and international issues.
- A record of demonstrated leadership activity.
- Aspirations for future leadership roles of greater responsibility than previously achieved.
- Commitment by the individual, partners (if applicable), and employer (if applicable) to attend all seminars, pay tuition, and abide by MARL policies.

Mandatory Attendance

The ability to attend and participate in seminar learning experiences is a necessary part of the selection criteria. Because attendance is required, please check the dates of the Class XIII seminars (listed on pages 12-13) before applying to ensure your availability to attend. In total, the MARL commitment includes 18 days the first year and 24 days the second year away from home.

Family, Partner, and Employer Support

Full participation in the MARL program is necessary both for the success of each individual and for the class. In the last section of the application, you will sign a Statement of Commitment. It is important that you visit with family and partners to ensure their support. If you are employed (not self-employed), your employer must submit the Employer Support Form.

Participant Selection

The application and accompanying forms will be reviewed by the Executive Director, the Program Leader, and a Board member prior to a virtual interview using Zoom. The interview will be recorded so Board members can review them along with the recommendations. The MARL Board of Directors in discussion with the Executive Director and the Program Leader will choose those to include in Class XIII at the June meeting.

The class is anticipated to have thirty members. All applications will be considered, regardless of gender, race, religion, creed, disability, age, marital status, veteran's status, sexual orientation, or national origin. If applicants are not accepted, they are encouraged to re-apply for another class.

Most applicants are "qualified" to be in the class, but there is only room for thirty class members. MARL is seeking applicants who are receptive to experiential learning, have shown signs of accepting leadership positions, have the ability and willingness to contribute to the leadership of the class, and are dedicated to a career that advances agriculture and rural community development.

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Other considerations for selection include:

- Except in rare cases, close relatives (spouse, brother/sister) will not be selected for the same class.
- The number of participants from the same organization or business entity in one class may be limited.
- It is the goal of the MARL Board of Directors to have half of the class “hands-on” in a production agriculture occupation, and each class should have diversity among the types of production.

Application Timetable

January 2, 2024	Applications open for Class XIII
March 31, 2024	Completed applications (including Recommendations and Employer Support Statements) due to MARL. Submission of applications concludes.
April, 2024	Applicants sign-up for interview dates via Calendly (scheduling software platform)
June 3-6, 11, 2024	Virtual interviews with eligible applicants via Zoom (30-minute interviews)
June-July 2024	Board of Directors selects Class XIII, class members notified, public announcement of Class XIII members
September 11-13, 2024	First seminar meeting for Class XIII

MARL Class XIII Seminar

Eight Core Leadership Content Areas

- **Developing self and others:** learn to seek and use self-assessment and feedback to enhance understanding and performance; to provide others with appropriate and timely feedback and coaching to enhance performance; to create opportunities for development of self and others; to volunteer for and excel at performing various leadership responsibilities, often outside the specific requirements of position or role; and create an environment where risk and innovation is rewarded.
- **Communicating effectively:** learn to listen carefully and use questions skillfully to encourage honest responses; to communicate clear, direct, and honest messages to individuals and groups through speaking, writing and use of technology; and to maintain composure in stressful situations.
- **Leading innovation and change:** learn to recognize the need for innovation without indulging in change for change's sake; to create a vision for the future and communicate it to others; to monitor the external and internal environment for trends that anticipate change; to understand the range of reaction to change, including resistance, anxiety and uncertainty; to develop and implement a change process appropriate to the organization and the degree of change.
- **Fostering collaboration:** learn to see issues and opportunities from many perspectives; to link resources – public and private, national, and international; to balance the needs and expectations of many stakeholders; and to facilitate programs that collaborate across structural, organizational, and international boundaries.
- **Managing conflict:** learn to use a range of strategies to deal with conflict between self and others; to mediate conflict among others; to recognize the root causes of conflict; to engage in difficult conversations appropriately to both resolve the conflict and strengthen the relationship.
- **Valuing diversity and inclusion:** to express sensitivity and awareness of the diversity inherent in and vital to a modern society; to appreciate and actively engage human differences in social and professional settings; to develop the capacity to facilitate multi-cultural and inclusive relationships; to be an active part of creating organizational cultures that value diversity and inclusion.
- **Leading with integrity and values:** learn to understand and honor organizational and cultural values; to communicate personal values and influence personal leadership; to demonstrate consistency between espoused values and values in action; to respect the values of others; to act ethically.
- **Developing a deeper knowledge and appreciation of agriculture and rural communities:** learn to understand agriculture in its many different models; to understand the history and traditions of rural communities; to compare different models of agriculture; and to understand the role of leadership in producing economic, social, and environmental change in agriculture and rural communities.

Program Structure and Delivery Method

The program is a two-year educational experience featuring a mix of in-person sessions, hybrid sessions (virtual and small group in-person) and mini-virtual leadership content presentations. In-person sessions include a variety of communities and regions across the state of Minnesota, a national session in Washington, DC, and an international session. The specific schedule, locations, and dates can be found in the Program Schedule and Outline section.

In addition to the designated MARL sessions, participants are expected to continue leadership learning and development throughout their enrollment in the program. This includes monthly assignments, peer coaching meetings, leadership development plans, and capstone projects.

Program Schedule and Outline

The following schedule is tentative and subject to change but provides an outline of what is to be covered during MARL. Seminar topics and activities are not all included. Specific workshops may need to be shifted from one seminar to another depending on speakers, tours, and facilities available, etc.

Year 1

Dates and Location	Theme, Topics, and Activities
August 7, 2024 Redwood Falls (Optional Attendance)	Farmfest Picnic – Announcement of Class XIII Networking with MARL Alumni and Stakeholders
September 11-13, 2024 Itasca State Park	MARL Class XIII Leadership Journey Preparing for Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Leadership Context • Growth Mindset • Strengths Based Leadership (StrengthsFinder Assessment) • Peer Coaching
December 4-6, 2024 Austin	Developing Self and Others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional Intelligence Assessment • Personal Development Planning
January 15-17, 2025 Mankato – MN Ag Expo	Visionary Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision Web and Starting with WHY
February 19-21, 2025 St. Paul Legislative Session	Communicating Effectively <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State and Regional Demographics and Economies • Art of Questioning and Listening
March 19-21, 2025 Regional Locations (Virtual and Regional In-person)	Leadership Search <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Assets & Community Capitals
June 25-27, 2025 Pipestone	Leading Groups and Teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating to Lead • Group Dynamics • Year One Review & Year Two Overview & Commitment

Year 2

Dates and Location	Theme, Topics, and Activities
August 6, 2025 Redwood Falls (Optional Attendance)	Farmfest Picnic – Networking with MARL Alumni and Stakeholders
September 10-12, 2025 Duluth	Innovation and Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading Change • Change Assessment
November 16-20, 2025 Washington, DC	Fostering Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative Appointments • Agricultural Policy • Leadership Search
January 7-9, 2026 Willmar	Navigating Conflict with Success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas Kilmann Conflict Assessment • MARL Shark Tank
February 11-13, 2026 Northwest MN (Thief River Falls or Perham)	Ethical Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence and Power • Preparing for International Seminar
March 18-31, 2026 International Seminar (Dates in above window – 10-12 days)	Inclusive Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market Basket Survey • MARL Amazing Race
June 25-26, 2026 Marshall, Southwest Minnesota State University	Graduation and Capstone Presentations

* In selecting international seminar locations, the board considers factors such as: educational potential of the destination, safety issues, program budget, length of travel, contacts in the country, and other logistical issues. Every effort is made to select a challenging yet meaningful destination, and the final decision on location is always a board decision, in consultation with a committee and with the executive director and program leader.

Recent Past International Seminars with MARL

2024 – Panama

2022 – Ecuador

2020 – Cambodia & Taiwan

2018 – Croatia

2016 – Vietnam

2014 - Ecuador

Financial Commitment

There is no cost to apply to the program. If selected, there is a class member tuition fee of \$6,000.00, which can be paid in four installments during the program. Payment is accepted by check or credit card.

- July 31, 2024 \$ 1,250
- October 15, 2024 \$ 1,250
- July 31, 2025 \$ 1,750
- October 15, 2025 \$ 1,750 Total tuition = \$ 6,000.00

Class member tuition covers approximately 30 percent of the total cost of the program, with the balance paid by corporations and associations who share our vision for strong leadership, and alumni and supporters of MARL. Financial assistance may be available to help those selected offset their tuition.

MARL pays for hotel rooms when part of a seminar, airfare to and from the National and International Seminars, bus transportation during a seminar, and most meals incurred during seminars.

The cost of getting to and from each seminar or a hub airport is not included in class member tuition. There may be some meals not paid for by MARL, transportation or other minor incidental costs, and gratuities for professional drivers and tour guides. Participants will be notified in advance of these occasions.

Expectations & Requirements

Each person selected for the program will be expected to adhere to MARL expectations and policies. These include a fundamental respect for each other, the advancement of each member's leadership education, and the reputation of the MARL program. The following summarizes the program expectations.

Professional Attitude

Participants are investing time and money in their participation, as are the many MARL investors. Participants are expected to have an open mind, a willingness to learn and grow, to function as a team player, respect opinions that differ from their own, and a commitment to greater service to the betterment of agriculture and rural communities.

Conduct

As an ambassador for the agricultural industry and rural Minnesota and as a representative of the MARL program, each member is expected to conduct oneself with integrity and in an appropriate manner befitting a leader. Behavior displayed during seminars, both during sessions and during unscheduled time, should be a positive reflection on the MARL program. Alcoholic beverages will not be consumed during official seminar activities, and intoxication or tardiness due to alcohol are not accepted. The use of tobacco or vaping products during indoor meetings or class activities also is not permitted.

Attendance

Attendance at all seminars is expected. The only exception is for personal or family emergencies or serious illness.

Attire

As with any business or distinguished program, participants should always present themselves in a professional manner. Participants are expected to dress in Business Formal or Business Casual attire as specified on the agenda for most seminar days, with less formal attire required for site tours or special weather conditions. Jeans are permitted only when specified on the agenda. Field or farm attire is not appropriate.

Vaccination Status

MARL prioritizes the health and safety of our class while recognizing that health decisions are a personal matter. MARL does not require COVID-19 vaccination for selection to the program. However, applicants should be aware that their vaccination status may affect their ability to participate in some educational and travel experiences. MARL will respectfully abide by all masking and vaccination requirements and guidelines of our seminar locations and the sites we visit.

Travel and Roommates

To reduce program expenses and promote conversation and friendship between class members, MARL will assign same-sex roommates for each hotel night provided by the program. Class members are expected to stay with the roommate assigned, and to stay at the hotel even if the seminar location is close to home. Lodging is provided for seminar nights; if class members wish to come early or stay late, that will be at his/her expense.

Fundraising Participation

Each MARL class holds a fundraising auction at the end of the program to contribute toward the expenses for the next class. Each class member is expected to participate in the effort to produce the auction event as a gesture of support towards the future of the MARL program, regardless of any other personal or professional fundraising obligations.

Ready To Apply?

Instructions

MARL uses an online application portal. You may wish to prepare your responses in advance, then copy and paste them into the electronic application portal. Please see Appendix A of this Application Packet for the application questions.

All applicants will receive acknowledgment of receipt of their application and recommendation forms from MARL. The selection committee will screen all applications. MARL will notify each applicant of his or her acceptance status after the selection has been made.

Checklist

1. Complete the Application Form, which includes contact information for three people you have asked to complete a Recommendation for your application.
2. Provide the link to the Recommendation Form (Appendix B) to the three people you have identified as references.
3. If you are not self-employed, you must provide the link for your workplace supervisor to complete the Employer Support Form (Appendix C).

Your application is not complete until the MARL Executive Director has all application components in hand. Please allow your references and employer plenty of time to complete their forms in advance of the application deadline of March 31, 2024.

Thank you again for your interest in the MARL program! Please feel free to contact Brad Schloesser, Executive Director, with any questions.

Contact information: Email -> Brad.Schloesser@smsu.edu cell phone -> 507-420-6854

Application Portal

<https://forms.gle/Uhtkw2VxNtqhnafd8>

Minnesota Agriculture and Rural Leadership (MARL) APPLICATION FORM for CLASS XIII (2024- 2026)

MARL Applicant: It is recommended that you prepare your answers in a word document and then paste them into this on-line application form. Following completion of the form – click submit.

This form auto saves as soon as you enter your email into the application.

Your [application](#) must be submitted by March 31, 2024.

* Indicates required question

1. Email *



Minnesota Agriculture and Rural Leadership shall provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Complaints of discrimination may be filed through <https://www.smsu.edu/administration/affirmativeaction/index.html>

CONTACT INFORMATION

2. First Name *

3. Last Name

4. **Minnesota Resident ***

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

5. **Current Address ***

6. **Cell Phone Number ***

7. **Work Phone Number ***

8. **Preferred Email Address for MARL Communications**

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

9. **Please list ALL schools attended back to (and including) high school, include military and institutions where licensure education was pursued. Also list significant non-degree educational activities (e.g., certification courses, professional development programs.) ***

Name/Location - Degree/Certificate/Completion - Area of Study

Example:

SMSU/Marshall, MN - BS - Agribusiness Management

OCCUPATION AND EMPLOYEMENT

10. Which of the following best describes your occupation? (Select all that apply) *

Check all that apply.

- Full time farm owner/operator
- Part time farm owner/operator
- Agribusiness Owner
- Agribusiness Employee
- Not-for-profit organization, government agency, educational institution

11. Current Employment

Business Name - Title - Years in Position - Supervisors Name ("self" if self-employed)

Example:

ABC Farm - Farm Operations Manager - 8 years - Ben Smith

12. Briefly describe the business or businesses you work in including size, type, number of employees, any recent changes, etc. (Limit to 100 words) *

13. Briefly describe your work responsibilities. (Limit to 100 words) *

14. Please list previous employment: Employer name, dates of employment, and your position. *

COMMUNITY SERVICE

15. List your voluntary contributions to your community. Please include the organization, activities performed, and the date range. *

16. List your memberships and offices held in organizations (agricultural, commodity, church, civic, political, fraternal groups, service, etc.). Please include the organization, activities performed, and the date range. *

AWARDS AND HONORS

17. Please include the Organization, the Award, and the Date received for each one. *

ESSAY QUESTIONS

18. What are the two most important agricultural issues today and why are they important? *

(Limit each response to 100 words or less)

19. What are the two most important issues facing your community and rural Minnesota. Why are they important? *

(Limit each response to 100 words or less)

20. Briefly describe something you think you need to learn or develop to become a more effective leader. *

(Limit each response to 100 words or less)

21. What leadership talents/strengths and/ experiences do you think you could share with your classmates? *

(Limit each response to 100 words or less)

22. **MARL is investing in your leadership development, how do you plan to use the knowledge, contacts, and experiences gained?** *

(Limit to 200 words)

23. **Recognizing that attendance at all sessions is mandatory, what hurdles or challenges do you see inhibiting your participation in MARL? How will you overcome these hurdles or challenges?** *

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

24. **Please check all Boxes as an agreement for each item.** *

Check all that apply.

If selected, I will attend all scheduled sessions of Year 1 (2024-2025) and follow through on agreed upon responsibilities.

If selected, my tuition of Year 1 - \$ 2,500 total, will be covered timely. First installment of \$ 1,250 on July 31, 2024, Second installment of \$1,250 on October 15, 2024.

I also understand that the final selection of applicants is the sole responsibility of the MARL Board of Directors.

I further understand that in May 2025, I will consider committing to Year 2 (2025-2026) for that portion of the program.

I will participate in a June 2024 interview with the MARL selection committee (you will receive selection date via email in late April or early May via Calendly).

REFERENCES

25. List below the names and contact information for the three people you have asked to complete the online [Recommendation Form](#), due **March 31, 2024**. Please include name, email address, and phone number for each. *

APPLICANT SIGNATURE

26. I hereby certify that all statements made in this application are true and complete. *

Signature: Please type your name as a form of E-signing

INTERVIEW DATES – block these dates for potential MARL Selection Interview

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APPENDIX B. This is an exact copy of the form your three references will see.

Minnesota Agriculture and Rural Leadership (MARL) CLASS XIII Recommendation Form

MARL Applicant:

Please provide the hyperlink of this form to each of the three persons you named in the References section of your application.

Reference: MARL is searching for people with leadership potential for selection into the **MARL CLASS XIII 2024-2026**, a 2 year leadership development program. We would appreciate your frank evaluation of the applicant's abilities and attitudes. All information will be treated confidentially and will be used only by members of the Selection Committee.

For more information on MARL, visit <http://www.marlprogram.org/>.

All [recommendation forms](#) must be submitted by **March 31, 2024**.

* Indicates required question

1. Email *



Minnesota Agriculture and Rural Leadership shall provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Complaints of discrimination may be filed through <https://www.smsu.edu/administration/affirmativeaction/index.html>

RECOMMENDATION FORM

2. Applicant's First Name: *

3. Applicant's Last Name: *

4. **I know the applicant in a business or personal capacity: ***

Mark only one oval per row.

	Thoroughly	Fairly well	Superficially	Not Applicable
Business Capacity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal Capacity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. **How long have you known the applicant? ***

6. **What is the nature of your association with the applicant? ***

7. **Please comment on what you think the applicant would contribute to the class, the industry and/or the community. (Strengths to share) ***

8. **Please provide one or two growth areas for the applicant. (Opportunities for improvement) ***

REFERENCE

9. **Signature: Please type your first and last name as a form of E-signing.**

10. **Title/Occupation: ***

11. **Address (Street #, Street Name, City, State, and Zip Code): ***

12. **Cell Phone #: ***

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APPENDIX C. This is an exact copy of the form your employer will see.

Employer Support Form for Minnesota Agriculture and Rural Leadership (MARL) CLASS XIII

Dear **Employer**,

Please complete the following information to confirm your organization’s willingness to grant the requesting MARL applicant time away from work for attendance at the MARL seminars, if selected.

MARL members will be expected to attend eleven seminars during the 22-month program. MARL Seminars are normally held from Noon Wednesday to Noon Friday, with some exceptions. The time commitment for seminars of MARL Class XIII will be 18 days the first year and 24 days the second year. Ten seminars rotate around the state, one is held in Washington, D.C. in Year 1 (‘24-26), and an international study seminar will be held abroad – destination to be determined, in Year 2 (2026).

For more information on MARL, visit <http://www.marlprogram.org/> .

Please feel free to contact the MARL office if you have any questions.

Phone: 507-420-6854

Email: Brad.Schloesser@SMSU.edu

MARL Applicant: If you are not self-employed, please provide your workplace supervisor this form hyperlink. Your employer must authorize your absence from employment to participate in the MARL program.

[Employer Support Form](#) must be submitted by March 31, 2024.

1. Email *



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Complaints of discrimination may be filed through <https://www.smsu.edu/administration/affirmativeaction/index.html>

EMPLOYER SUPPORT FORM

2. **MARL Applicant's First Name:**

3. **MARL Applicant's Last Name:**

4. **It is agreed that if above applicant is accepted into Class XIII of MARL, their absence from work will be arranged during seminars.**

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

EMPLOYER

5. **Supervisor Signature: Please type your first and last name as a form of E-signing.**

6. **Title:**

7. **Business Name:**

8. **Business Address (Street #, Street Name, City, State, and Zip Code):**

9. **Cell Phone #:**
