2021 CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Draft Request for Proposals

Release date: TBD
Applications due: TBD

Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation
California Department of Food and Agriculture
1220 N Street
Sacramento CA, 95814

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND 2
FUNDING & DURATION 2
ELIGIBILITY 2
PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS 3
PROGRAM TIMELINE 5
HOW TO APPLY 5
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS 5
REVIEW PROCESS 5
GRANT RECIPIENT INFORMATION 8
APPENDIX A 10

DRAFT

BACKGROUND

The Conservation Agriculture Planning Grant Program (CAPGP) will fund the development of various types of agricultural conservation plans related to the California Department of Food and Agriculture's (CDFA) Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) programs. CSA addresses risks that climate change poses to agriculture. The funded plans will promote CSA efforts which will help to mitigate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, adapt to climate change impacts and promote environmental and agricultural sustainability. The CAPGP only funds the development of plans, and *not* the implementation of those plans.

- For the purpose of this program, a plan is defined as a comprehensive document that sets forth goals and recommends strategies to achieve them.
- For the purpose of this program, an agricultural operation is defined as row, vineyard, field and tree crops, commercial nurseries, nursery stock production, and livestock and livestock product operations, including dairies.

FUNDING & DURATION

- The maximum award amount is $250,000 per applicant.
- The maximum cost reimbursed is $20,000 per agricultural operation.
- Multiple plans may be used to account for the maximum award amount per agricultural operation.
- University of California (UC) and California State Universities (CSU) applicants applying for CAPGP may claim the established indirect cost rate with CDFA.
- All other eligible organizations applying for CDFA CAPGP may claim an indirect cost rate of 20% of total direct costs.
- Total award amount *includes* indirect costs.
- Matching funds are not required but encouraged.

Grant funds may not be expended prior to execution of the grant agreements for awarded projects, or after the completion of the grant agreement term.

The duration of the grant agreement is 24 months from the date of execution.

CDFA may offer an award different than the amount requested.

ELIGIBILITY

The CAPGP is designed to provide funding to eligible entities in California to assist California farmers and ranchers in developing plans for on-farm use. The following entities are eligible to apply for the 2021 CAPGP grants in collaboration with farmers or ranchers on private or recognized Native American Indian Tribal lands:

- Technical Service Providers (TSPs) registered by USDA NRCS
- Not-for-profit entities including agricultural industry not-for-profit entities

DRAFT

- Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs)
- Federal and University Experiment Stations
- University of California Agricultural and Natural Resources Cooperative Extension
- Public universities such as University of California, California State University and community colleges
- Agricultural cooperatives
- Federal and California Recognized Native American Indian Tribes
- Farmers and Ranchers (must provide qualified experts that meet eligibility criteria)
- Certified professionals (including, but not limited to: Certified Crop Advisor, Pest Control Advisor, Certified Rangeland Manager)

Entities applying for the CAPGP must collaborate with farmers and ranchers that need assistance with conservation agricultureplanning activities.

Applicants must have demonstrated technical expertise in the implementation of agricultural conservation practices that are included in any proposed plans for farmers and ranchers. Applicants must either be a Technical Service Provider (TSP) certified by USDA NRCS or provide documentation and/or certification of qualifications pertaining to the implementation of proposed agricultural conservation practices.

Plans Eligible for CDFA Funding under CDFA CAPGP (indicates the corresponding plan at USDA NRCS)

Plans eligible to receive funding through this program include:

- Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 102)
- Nutrient Management Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 104)
- Grazing Management Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 110)
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 114)
- Soil Health Management Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 116)
- Irrigation Water Management Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 118)
- Agricultural Energy Management Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 128)
- Agricultural Energy Design Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 136)
- Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition (USDA NRCS CAP 138; includes Organic Systems Plans)
- Pollinator Habitat Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 146)
- IPM Herbicide Resistance Weed Conservation Plan (USDA NRCS CAP 154)
- Carbon Farm Plans

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Entities must submit a proposal through the CDFA electronic application platform on (link to be inserted here).

The application submission period will be a competitive submission period and run from XX, 2021 to XX, 2021.

DRAFT

- Eligible organizations may submit one application for a maximum award amount of $250,000 to develop multiple plans in collaboration with and for use by agricultural operations.
- Applicants may not be lead applicant on more than one application which will help CDFA distribute the funds widely.
- Applicants must use Comet-Farm, Comet-Planner or another similar greenhouse gas calculator tool that will quantify the benefits in CO_2e reductions for each practice in the plan. The results must be included in the plan.
- Agricultural operations do not need to be identified when applying however, if they are known at the time of application, the applicant should list the agricultural operations to be assisted.
- An estimate of the number of agricultural organizations and number of plans to be completed will need to be provided at time of application.
- Prioritized funding will be provided to CAPGP applicants in the following order;
    1. 25% of funds to be expended to assist Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers[1] (SDFRs)
    2. Additional prioritization of assistance to farms 500 acres or less. (SDFRs).
- This is a reimbursement program with cost incurred first by the awardee and invoices submitted to CDFA for reimbursement.
- 25% advanced payments may be provided with appropriate justification.
- 10% of the funds will be withheld until project completion, submission of all required reports and completed plans, and verification including prioritization of 25% of requested funds for SDFRs.
- Copies of finalized and farmer-approved plans will be provided to CDFA as part of project verification.
- The actual number of agricultural organizations assisted and number of plans completed will be required at time of reporting and invoicing.

The development of plans will be incentivized based on standard payment rates provided in Appendix A. Itemized budgets in a format different from CDFA provided template is not allowable.

CDFA aims to expend 25% of the planning assistance funds to benefit SDFRs. Grant recipients must prioritize assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SDFRs), and farms and ranches that are 500 acres or less. Additionally, grant recipients

[1] "Socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher" means a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. "Socially disadvantaged group" means a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. These groups include all of the following: (1) African Americans (2) Native American Indians (3) Alaskan Natives (4) Hispanics (5) Asian Americans (6) Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

DRAFT

may be required to prioritize assistance to additional groups to comply with requirements associated with specific funding sources, such as AB 1550 Priority Populations[2].

PROGRAM TIMELINE

Activity	Tentative Dates*
Application period begins	TBD
Applications due	TBD
Administrative review period	TBD
Technical review period	TBD
Anticipated date of finalized contracts and when work can start	TBD
Grant Agreement Term	24 months

*Dates are subject to change depending on allocation of funds to CDFA for the CAPGP.

HOW TO APPLY

The 2021 CAPGP application must be submitted online through the CDFA electronic application submission platform [link to be inserted]. The application materials and a link to application portal can be found at [link to new webpage to be inserted].

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

TBD and will include information on frequency/format of Q/A rounds depending on workshops.

REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals will be reviewed using a two-stage process:

I. **Administrative Review**

The purpose of the administrative review is to determine whether grant application requirements are met. Grant applications disqualified as a result of the administrative or financial review may be appealed.

[2] AB 1550 Priority Populations as applicable to California Climate Investments include Disadvantaged Communities identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) as the top 25% most impacted census tracts in CalEnviroScreen 3.0 , and Low-income Communities and Households, defined as the census tracts and households, respectively, that are either at or below 80% of the statewide median income, or at or below the threshold designated as low-income by the California Department of Housing and Community Development's (HCD) 2016 State Income Limits. For more information and mapping tool, visit https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/capandtrade/auctionproceeds/communityinvestments.htm.

During the administrative review, the following will result in the automatic disqualification of a grant application:

- One or more unanswered questions necessary for the administrative or technical review;
- Missing, blank, unreadable, or corrupt content;
- Unusable or unreadable attachments;
- Applications that do not comply with Eligibility or meet Program Requirements;
- Requests for more than the maximum award amount.

APPEAL RIGHTS: Any disqualification taken during the administrative review for the preceding reasons may be appealed to CDFA's Office of Hearings and Appeals Office within 10 days of receiving a notice of disqualification from CDFA. The appeal must be in writing and signed by the responsible party name on the grant application. It must state the grounds for the appeal and include any supporting documents and a copy of the CDFA decision being challenged. The submissions must be sent to the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Hearings and Appeals, 1220 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 or emailed to CDFA.LegalOffice@cdfa.ca.gov. If submissions are not received within the time frame provided above, the appeal will be denied.

II. Technical Review

Proposals will be evaluated by a panel of technical reviewers on a first-come-first-served basis. Proposals will be evaluated based on the Minimum Qualifications Criteria provided on page 7. Proposals meeting the minimum qualifications will be selected for funding based on the order they were submitted and priority considerations.

DRAFT

Minimum Qualifications Criteria

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Identifies the number of agricultural operations or estimated agricultural operations to be assisted and number of plans.
- Identifies the agricultural operations needing plan(s) or the region's need for planning on agricultural private lands.
- Number of SDFRs that the entity will be planning to assist, the type of plans that SDFRs will be assisted with and cost of the plans.

2. STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS (SOQ)

- Does the SOQ clearly identify the capacity of the lead applicant organization to serve as an eligible entity for assisting farmers and ranchers establish a plan?
- Has the applicant appropriately explained how the education, work history, and technical expertise of key personnel makes them qualified for this role in developing the specific plan?
    - Is the applicant a TSP registered with the USDA-NRCS? If not, do the below criteria apply?
    - Do the resumes of individuals listed in the proposal align well with relevant expertise for the selected plan(s)?
    - Did the applicant provide relevant certificates for trainings mentioned in the resume?
    - Has the applicant previously assisted in developing such plans for agricultural operations and provided examples?
    - Did the applicant provide relevant transcripts for the education and coursework mentioned in the resume?

In addition to criteria listed above, CDFA will prioritize funding the following:

- Proposals that will provide at least 25% of all CAPGP assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SDFRs).
- Proposals that will prioritize assistance to additional groups to comply with requirements associated with specific funding sources, such as AB 1550 Priority Populations.

Notification and Feedback

All applicants will be notified regarding the status of their grant applications. Successful applicants will receive specific instructions regarding the award process, including information on invoicing and reporting requirements. Applicants not selected for funding

DRAFT

will receive feedback regarding their applications within 14 days after receiving notification.

CDFA will post a list of received proposals on the CAPGP website [link to be inserted] the applications it has received at least 10 days before awarding grant funds. After projects are selected and all funds are encumbered, CDFA will post an updated list within 90 days that identifies status of awarded project applications.

GRANT RECIPIENT INFORMATION

Grant Agreement

Applicants with projects selected for award of funds will receive a Grant Agreement package with specific instructions regarding award requirements including information on project implementation and payment process. Once a Grant Agreement is executed, grant recipients can begin implementation of the project. Grant recipients are responsible for the overall management of their awarded project to ensure all project activities are completed no later than 24 months after execution of the grant agreement.

Payment Process

CDFA will provide grant recipients with the necessary grant award and invoicing documents. Funds will be allocated on a reimbursement basis consistent with payment rates listed in Appendix A. Invoices must be submitted quarterly and include all supporting financial documentation to substantiate expenses.

CDFA will withhold 10% from the total grant award until the completed plan is submitted to ensure grant recipients meet all program requirements. Invoicing and project completion must be within the grant agreement duration.

Reporting

Progress Report

Grant recipients must submit a detailed semi-annual report to CDFA identifying tasks and activities accomplished in the reporting period. CDFA will provide a reporting template and schedule to grant recipients. Progress Reports must include, at a minimum:

- Total number of agricultural operations assisted, including name and contact information.
- Information of number and type of plans completed.
- Number of individuals assisted who belong to groups such as SDFRs and/or farms and ranches 500 acres or less.
- Description of plan development activities completed.

DRAFT

For auditing purposes, recipients are required to maintain detailed CAPGP records on-site.

Final Report

Grant recipients must submit a final report detailing all completed plans and associated information consistent with the Project Budget. Completed plans must be approved by the farmer or rancher and submitted to CDFA.

Critical Project Review

Grant recipients must agree to a Critical Project Review and audit during the project term to verify project progress as reported in the Progress Report submitted to CDFA, including number of farmers and ranchers assisted. If it is determined by CDFA from the Critical Project Review that at that time the grant recipient is not meeting and is unlikely to meet certain milestones, CDFA has the right to terminate the Grant Agreement pursuant to the Terms and Conditions of the Grant Agreement. If the grant is terminated and has incurred any costs during the term, the Grantee must return any previously reimbursed funds. Termination may result in forfeiture by the grantee of any funds retained pursuant to 10% retention policy. Critical Project Review may be completed through an auditing process.

DRAFT

APPENDIX A

2021 CAPGP Payment Rates

Plan	Type	Requirement(s)	CDFA Payment Rate
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) (NRCS CPS 102)	Revision		$2,753.63
	With Land Application	≤ 300 acres	$3,733.35
		> 300 acres	$5,008.73
	Without Land Application	≤ 300 acres	$2,255.10
		> 300 acres	$2,550.75
	Dairy Operation with Land Application	< 300 acres	$8,546.36
		≥ 300 acres < 700 acres	$9,740.58
		≥ 700 acres	$10,816.55
	Livestock Operation with Land Application	< 300 acres	$6,250.68
		> 300 acres	$7,785.83
	Non-Dairy Operation with Land Application	< 300 acres	$6,815.27
		≥ 300 acres < 700 acres	$8,786.34
		≥ 700 acres	$10,620.60
Carbon Farm Plans	TBD; CDFA is currently collecting cost data on these plans and coordinating with USDA NRCS		
Nutrient Management Plan (NRCS CPS 104)	Element of a CNMP	≤ 100 acres	$3,010.88
		101-300 acres	$4,215.23
		> 300 acres	$5,118.49
	Not part of a CNMP	≤ 100 acres	$1,806.53
		101-300 acres	$2,408.70

DRAFT

		> 300 acres	$3,010.88
Grazing Management Plan (NRCS CPS 110)		101-500 acres	$2,350.80
		501-1500 acres	$2,938.50
		1501-5000 acres	$3,526.20
		> 5000 acres	$4,113.90
Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM) (NRCS CPS 114)	< 50 acres		$1,505.44
	51-250 acres		$1,926.96
	> 250 acres		$3,010.88
Soil Health Management Plan (NRCS CPS 116)	Crops		$2,408.70
	Organic Crops		$2,709.79
	Crops and Livestock		$3,010.88
	Organic Crops and Livestock		$3,311.96
Irrigation Water Management Plan (NRCS CPS 118)	Conservation Activity Plan		$2,718.98
	With Pump Test		$4,272.68
Agricultural Energy Management Plan (NRCS CPS 128)	< 50 acres	One Enterprise within an agricultural operation	$1,803.12
		Two Enterprises within an agricultural operation	$2,798.30
		Three Enterprises within an agricultural operation	$3,241.42
		Four Enterprises within an agricultural operation	$3,946.59
	51-250 acres	One Enterprise within an agricultural operation	$2,246.24
		Two Enterprises within an agricultural operation	$3,793.48
		Three Enterprises within an agricultural operation	$4,236.60
		Four Enterprises within an agricultural operation	$4,941.77

DRAFT

Agricultural Energy Management Plan (NRCS CPS 128)	> 250 acres	One Enterprise within an agricultural operation	$2,951.40
		Two Enterprises within an agricultural operation	$5,177.09
		Three Enterprises within an agricultural operation	$5,697.89
		Four Enterprises within an agricultural operation	$6,480.75
Agricultural Energy Design Plan (NRCS CPS 136)	Low Complexity	One Design	$2,089.18
		2-3 Designs	$3,242.63
		4-5 Designs	$4,396.07
		6+ Designs	$5,549.52
	Medium Complexity	One Design	$3,160.10
		2-3 Designs	$4,313.54
		4-5 Designs	$5,466.99
		6+ Designs	$6,620.44
	High Complexity	One Design	$4,231.01
		2-3 Designs	$5,384.46
		4-5 Designs	$6,537.91
		6+ Designs	$7,691.36
Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition (NRCS CPS 138)	Crops OR Livestock		$3,784.32
	Crops AND Livestock		$4,434.75
Pollinator Habitat Plan (NRCS CPS 146)		Local TSP or expertise	$2,522.21
		No Local TSP or expertise	$3,663.20
IPM Herbicide Resistance	≤ 50 acres		$1,806.53
	51-250 acres		$2,348.48

DRAFT

Weed Conservation Plan (NRCS CPS 154)	> 250 acres	$3,613.05

DRAFT