



Conservation Innovation Grants Classic Program



Fiscal Year (FY) 2022
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO)

No. USDA-NRCS-NHQ-CIGCLASSIC-22-
NOFO001218

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY INFORMATION

Federal Awarding Agency Name: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Commodity Credit Corporation

Notice of Funding Opportunity Title: Announcement for Program Funding for NRCS's Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) Classic Program for Federal fiscal year (FY) 2022

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NRCS-NHQ-CIGCLASSIC-22-NOFO001218: Conservation Innovation Grants Classic Program

Assistance Listing: This program is listed in the Assistance Listings on [Sam.gov](https://www.sam.gov) under 10.912, Environmental Quality Incentives Program

System for Award Management (SAM) is an official U.S. Government website application that collects, validates, stores, and disseminates non-Federal entity information, so that entities and individuals can register to do business with the Federal Government and participate in competitions for contracts and grants and the related electronic payment processes. On April 4, 2022, the unique entity identifier (UEI) used across the Federal Government changed from the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to the UEI generated by SAM.gov. Each entity receives a UEI that must be used in applying for all Federal awards on Grants.gov.

Notice of Funding Opportunity Summary

NRCS is announcing the availability of up to \$15 million in CIG funding to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies in conjunction with agricultural production. CIG projects are expected to lead to the transfer of conservation technologies, management systems, and innovative approaches (such as market-based systems) to agricultural producers through the development of technical manuals, guides and for practical instruction for the private sector.

Applications will be accepted from all non-Federal entities and individuals based in the United States (see [Section C.1](#) Eligible Applicants). Projects may be between 1 and 3 years in duration. The maximum award amount for a single award in FY 2022 is \$2 million.

For new users of Grants.gov, see [Section D](#) of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO) for information about steps required before submitting an application through Grants.gov.

Key Dates

Applicants must submit their applications through Grants.gov by 11:59 pm (EDT) on Tuesday October 11, 2022. For technical issues with Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800- 518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts.

For inquiries specific to the content of the NFO requirements, contact the Federal awarding agency (see [Section G](#) of this NFO). Please limit questions to specific information contained in this NFO (such as dates, page numbers, clarification of discrepancies, etc.) Questions related to eligibility or the merits of a specific proposal will not be addressed.

A webinar for CIG Classic applicants is scheduled for Wednesday, August 24, 2022, at 3 p.m. (EDT). Information on how to participate in the webinar can be obtained through the following link and phone number:

Join on your computer or mobile app

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only)

+1 202-650-0123

Phone Conference ID: 982 630 030#

Applicants are encouraged to visit the CIG website to learn more about the CIG program. Questions about this announcement can be directed to: nrcscig@usda.gov. A “Frequently Asked Questions” document based on potential applicants’ submitted questions will be posted on Grants.gov at least 2 weeks before the proposal due date.

The agency anticipates making selections by January 30, 2023 and expects to execute awards by May 1, 2023. These dates are estimates and are subject to change.

Federal Funding Floor and Ceiling Amounts

The funding floor for this opportunity is \$300,000, and the funding ceiling is \$2 million. The funding floor is defined as the minimum funding amount for the Federal share per agreement awarded. The ceiling is the maximum funding amount for the Federal share per agreement awarded. These numbers refer to the total Federal funding amount requested, not the total project budget, which includes a non-Federal share generally referred to as “match.”

Federal Financial Assistance Training

The funding available through this NFO is Federal financial assistance. Grants 101 Training is highly recommended for additional instruction on Federal financial assistance. The training is free and available to the public at <https://www.cfo.gov/grants-training/>. The course consists of five modules covering each of the following topics: (1) laws, regulations, and guidance; (2) financial assistance mechanisms; (3) uniform guidance administrative requirements; (4) cost principles; and (5) risk management and single audit. Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) agencies also apply Federal financial assistance regulations to certain non-assistance awards (e.g., non-assistance cooperative agreements).

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A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Legislative Authority

CIG is authorized under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) (16 U.S.C. 3839aa-8). The Secretary of Agriculture delegated the authority for the administration of EQIP, including CIG, to the Chief of NRCS. EQIP is funded and administered by NRCS under the authorities of Commodity Credit Corporation.

2. Overview

The purpose of CIG is to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies in conjunction with agricultural production. CIG projects present innovations that are expected to result in the transfer of conservation technologies, management systems, and inventive approaches (such as market-based systems) to agricultural producers, into technical manuals and guides, and for practical use in the private sector. CIG generally funds pilot projects, field demonstrations, and on-farm conservation research. On-farm conservation research is defined as an investigation conducted to answer a specific applied conservation question using a statistically valid design while employing farm-scale equipment on farms, ranches, or private forest lands.

3. Innovative Conservation Projects or Activities

- a.** CIG funds development and field testing, on-farm research and demonstration, evaluation, or implementation of:
 - i. approaches to incentivizing conservation adoption, including market-based and conservation finance approaches; and
 - ii. conservation technologies, practices, and systems.

- b.** Projects or activities under CIG must:
 - i. comply with all applicable Federal, tribal, state, and local laws and regulations throughout the duration of the project;
 - ii. use a technology or approach that was studied sufficiently to indicate a high probability for success;
 - iii. demonstrate, evaluate, and verify the effectiveness, utility, affordability, and usability of natural resource conservation technologies and approaches in the field;
 - iv. adapt and transfer conservation technologies, management practices, systems, approaches, and incentive systems to improve performance and encourage adoption; and

- v. introduce proven conservation technologies and approaches to a geographic area or agricultural sector where that technology or approach is not currently in use.

Technologies and approaches that are eligible for funding in a project's geographic area using an EQIP contract for an established conservation practice standard are ineligible for CIG funding, except where the use of those technologies and approaches demonstrates clear innovation.

NRCS intends to award at least 10 percent of the funds available through this notice to proposals from historically underserved producers or community-based organizations comprised of or representing these entities (see [Section D.3.f.](#), "Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers").

4. CIG Classic 2022 Priorities

For FY 2022, NRCS is only accepting proposals that address one or more of the priorities listed below. Each proposal must clearly identify a primary priority. The primary priority selected by an applicant will determine which expert peer panel will review the application.

Priority 1: Climate-Smart Agriculture

1a: Producer adaptation to extreme weather events

As climate change intensifies, agricultural producers are facing new obstacles to producing food and fiber while maintaining or improving their natural resource base. The increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and their indirect effects – such as emergence of new pests, disease outbreaks, and increasing soil salinity – have created new challenges.

Proposals submitted under this priority must propose an innovation to help farmers, ranchers, or foresters react and adapt in the short term to the increased intensity and frequency of extreme weather events and related impacts caused or exacerbated by climate change. Proposals must address one or more of the following subpriorities:

- i. Development of innovative or repurposed planning tools, guidance documents, or practices that help producers manage increased intensity and frequency of weather extremes or other events such as flooding, drought, flash drought, and decreased water supplies.
- ii. Field testing of innovative production techniques that give producers tools to adapt to extreme weather, such as demonstration of new crop varieties designed to better withstand increased drought, flooding, and/or innovative water management approaches.

- iii. Community-level or landscape-level strategies that help multiple local producers respond to extreme weather by exploring solutions at the community or geographic scale.
- iv. Communication tools and strategies that help producers interpret local climate related risks so that science, metrics, and general facts can be applied to on-farm operations. For already developed materials, applicants may propose field testing with producers to ensure materials work. Training approaches should not be the focus of proposals.

1b: Building resilience through emerging production systems for climate smart agriculture

The resilience of traditional agricultural operations in parts of the United States is being challenged by increased intensity and frequency of extreme weather events caused and exacerbated by climate change. Innovative management systems and practices, including non-traditional crops or unconventional management practices requiring fewer inputs, are needed to offer producers options for increasing the resiliency of their operations into the future.

Proposals submitted under this priority area will be focused on developing new production systems that provide long-term, lasting solutions to help landowners build resilience to climate change and maintain viable businesses. Proposals must address one or more of the following subpriorities:

- i. Introduction of new cropping systems or non-traditional crops (e.g., perennial plantings or rotations such as agroforestry, systems that integrate perennial grains into rotation, or transition to xeric farming).
- ii. Improved operation management, such as innovations in fertilizer management that show potential to mitigate greenhouse gases.
- iii. Leveraging of community resources that increase cooperation among producers (e.g., shared grazing or water systems) to increase resilience of individual operations.
- iv. Integration of indigenous farming knowledge into cropping systems, such as multi-story cropping and introduction of native plants.

All projects awarded under this priority must include at least a partial budget analysis to demonstrate how management changes and conservation improvements impact a farmer's bottom line. Applicants are encouraged to use farmer surveys to gauge the intangible advantages and drawbacks of producer implementation of climate-smart agricultural innovations.

Applicants are encouraged to measure the climate mitigation effects of activities implemented through their projects (e.g., potential decrease in carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxide, or methane). Applicants who choose to propose measurement or modeling of

greenhouse gas impacts as part of a project must use quantification methodologies that align with the USDA report titled [Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Agriculture and Forestry: Methods for Entity-Scale Inventory](#). Applicants are encouraged to include evaluations demonstrating the full extent of project benefits to both producers and the environment, such as a full life cycle analysis or nutrient cycling measurements.

Priority 2: Combating Invasive Species

Combating invasive species is a complex, multi-scale challenge for the nation's producers and landowners. For example, the increase in herbicide-resistant invasive weeds in cotton in the Southeast, corn in the Midwest, forest pests in the Northeast, and wheat in the Pacific Northwest has resulted in some producers reverting to conventional practices that are energy and chemical intense, consequently losing ground on the expansion of no-till farming and other sustainable agricultural methods. Grasslands are being lost to woody encroachment in the Great Plains, while in the West, invasives such as kochia, cheatgrass, western bark beetle and others continue to increase, impacting productive lands, changing nutrient and hydrological cycles, and increasing risks to wildlife. Invasions are exacerbated by the impacts of climate changes such as drought, changes in weather patterns, or extreme weather events, altering fire and drought cycles throughout the United States.

This priority area addresses invasive species on private agricultural, range, grassland, and forest landscapes. The development of lasting solutions is challenging and depends on the invasive species present and the local habitat, among other factors. In some cases, engaging community groups involving both public and private land managers is essential to successfully limit or manage invasions. In other instances, private landowners and producers need options to detect and fight invasives on their own land, such as awareness and scouting, new spray programs, innovative rotations, or new cultivars that outcompete or suppress weeds.

Proposals submitted under this priority area must propose innovations for private landowners to more effectively prevent, detect, or combat invasive species to maintain healthy and productive working lands. Innovations should help prevent, control, or eliminate pest invasions or help restore land and prevent reinvasion. Each project must fit into at least one of the following three subpriorities:

- i. Innovative strategic approaches - Approaches should be designed to have a high likelihood of eradication and be strategically designed to remove risk of reintroduction, targeting refuge locations and vector pathways.
- ii. Reimagination of existing strategies - Proposals that combine or integrate new ideas with existing tactics to address invasive species with high transferability regionally or even nationally.
- iii. Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) - Proposals that support proactive invasive species management, particularly addressing invasive species with broad ecological niches that are expanding their range due to climate change.

Successful proposals are likely to create or enhance effective collaborations between private landowners and public land managers or community groups to collectively address invasive species in a joint watershed or region. Please note, species that already have dedicated NRCS funding, such as feral pigs will not be considered.

Priority 3: Conservation in Urban Agricultural Systems

It is estimated that 83 percent of the U.S. population lives in urban areas. In recent years, demand and supply of urban farming has increased along with interest in local foods and resilient food systems. With this increase in urban food production comes conservation challenges and opportunities.

Proposals submitted under this priority must address the conservation of natural resources on private lands within urban areas and small agricultural systems. Proposals must address one or more of the following subpriorities:

- i. Demonstration of the natural resource impacts or economic benefits (e.g., air and water quality indicators, groundwater or aquifer recharge, community health indicators like food access metrics, or reduction in related urban planning and infrastructure costs for maintaining agricultural land) that result from increased conservation implementation in urban agricultural systems.
- ii. Projects that show conservation benefits with the implementation of multistory cropping systems, urban forestry systems, or integrated systems. Examples include increasing wildlife and pollinator populations through improvements in urban forests, expanded use of water resources by combining aquaculture with plant production, integrating new crops to decrease nutrient and pesticide needs and improved air quality through expansion of urban agriculture.
- iii. Development and evaluation of the effectiveness of innovative management systems or emerging and innovative technologies that can improve efficiency and effectiveness of natural resource conservation on urban farms.
- iv. Translating existing conservation practices (i.e., conservation practices typically used in rural agricultural landscapes) that may not translate effectively to smaller and urban production systems. Projects within this sub-priority may:
 - demonstrate how to improve conservation planning in urban or small acreage settings, or
 - demonstrate how to modify or adjust conservation practices in urban or small acreage settings.

Proposals submitted under this priority must address a natural resource concern and not be solely focused on urban agricultural production issues. In addition, proposals may not qualify if they address urban agriculture on public lands or natural resource issues under the purview of municipal regulations (e.g., wastewater treatment).

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Available Funding

a. Estimated Funding

The Federal funding agency expects to award approximately \$15 million through this opportunity. However, the agency retains the discretion to award a larger or lesser amount.

b. Start Dates and Performance Periods

Projects may be 1 to 3 years in duration. Applicants should plan their projects based on an estimated project start date of May 1, 2023.

c. Number of Awards

The agency expects to make between 15 and 20 award(s).

2. Type of Award

a. Type of Federal Award

The agency plans to award grant agreements pursuant to this opportunity.

b. Procurement Contracts

The agency does not expect to award procurement contracts associated with this NFO.

c. Eligibility of Renewal or Supplemental Project Applications

Applications that renew or supplement existing projects are not eligible to compete with applications for new Federal awards. An application to renew is an application submitted to continue an existing agreement that meets the objectives and requirements of this NFO. An application to supplement an existing project is an application to add components to an existing agreement so that it would meet the objectives and requirements in this NFO.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Applicants and applications must meet eligibility criteria by the application deadline to be considered for award. Eligible applicant type is determined by the implementing program statute. Applicant entities identified in the SAM.gov exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted, or excluded from receiving Federal contracts and certain Federal assistance and benefits will not be considered for Federal funding, as applicable to the funding being requested under this Federal program (2 CFR 200.206(d)).

All non-Federal entities and individuals based in the United States are eligible to apply for projects carried out in the United States. "Based in the United States" includes all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin

Islands), and the Pacific Islands Area (Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands).

2. Other

Any award made pursuant to this NFO will be made to a single entity. Applicants that apply as “partnerships” or other similar groupings must clearly describe the relationship between the applicant and the “partner” parties. In all but exceptional cases, an awardee/sub awardee relationship must be reflected in the award.

An applicant organization may submit more than one application for different projects or that propose different approaches. In the case of applications submitted as revisions or corrections to a previously submitted application under this NFO, the agency will consider the last application submitted prior to the established deadline.

Awards made pursuant to this NFO are not Farm Bill incentive contracts; therefore, the awards themselves are not limited by the payment limitation in 16 U.S.C. Chapter 58. However, any agricultural producers receiving a payment through participation in a project awarded under this NFO must meet the eligibility requirements of 7 CFR Part 12 and 7 CFR Part 1400 and have control of the land involved for the term of the proposed award period.

a. CIG-Specific Eligibility

All CIG projects must involve EQIP-eligible producers that meet EQIP’s eligibility requirements listed in [7 CFR 1466.6\(b\)\(1\) through \(3\)](#):

- i. Must comply with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions (7 CFR Part 12).
- ii. Must be a person, joint operation, Indian tribe, or Native corporation, or other legal entity that is engaged in agricultural production or forestry management or has an interest in the agricultural or forestry operation as defined in [7 CFR Part 1400](#).
- iii. Must have control of the land involved for the term of the proposed contract period.

b. EQIP Payment Limitation and Duplicate Payments

The following provisions apply to CIG funding:

- i. CIG funds are awarded through grant agreements. These grant agreements are not EQIP contracts; thus, CIG awards themselves are not limited by the payment limitation found at Section 1240G of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C.

3839aa-7), which limits payments to \$450,000 for all legal entities, including individuals, that entered an EQIP contract between FY 2019 and FY 2023.

- ii. All agricultural producers receiving a payment through participation in a CIG project must meet the eligibility requirements of [7 CFR 1466.6\(b\)\(1\) through \(3\)](#) noted previously. In addition, producers receiving a payment for participating in a project must meet the adjusted gross income requirements under Section 1001D(b)(1) of the 2018 Farm Bill (7 U.S.C. 1308-3a(a)(1)). All agricultural producers receiving a payment through participation in a CIG project must have an adjusted gross income (AGI) that does not exceed \$900,000. If awarded a grant, grantees must self-certify and maintain records showing that participating producers receiving payments using CIG funding meet the EQIP eligibility and AGI requirements. Section 1704(a)(3) of the 2018 Farm Bill states that the Secretary may waive the AGI limit on a case-by-case basis, if the Secretary determines that environmentally sensitive land of special significance would be protected as a result of such waiver. CIG grantees may request waivers for participating producers once their project commences.
- iii. Section 1240B of the Food Security Act of 1985, [16 U.S.C. 3839aa-2](#), prohibits duplicative payments. Accordingly, direct or indirect payments cannot be made for a practice when an individual or legal entity has already received funds or is contracted to receive funds through any USDA conservation program (e.g., Conservation Reserve Program, EQIP, Agricultural Management Assistance, Conservation Stewardship Program, etc.) If awarded a grant, grantees must self-certify that payments to producers using CIG funding are not duplicative.

c. Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers

NRCS is committed to the success of our nation’s Historically Underserved (HU) producers, businesses, and partners. HU producers play a vital role in securing a healthy agricultural economy for our country and are momentous leaders in protecting, enhancing, and sustaining our valuable natural resources. NRCS encourages proposal submissions from entities that represent or are composed entirely of HU producers.

For the FY 2022 CIG award process, at least 10 percent of the total funds available for CIG are set aside for proposals that benefit HU producers. This HU set-aside will ensure that equity is incorporated in the planning and delivery of CIG projects to align with NRCS’s Justice 40 goals. Projects that benefit HU producers also qualify for a reduced rate of matching funds, as detailed in [Section D.3.f](#). The regulatory definitions of the HU farmer or rancher categories are located at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/people/outreach/slbfr/>.

To compete for set-aside funds, applicants must signal their intent by following the instructions in [Section D.3.f](#). Applicants competing for the HU set aside are given an abatement on non-Federal match requirements.

Applicants competing in the HU set aside must meet all other requirements of this announcement, including addressing at least one CIG [priority](#) listed in this notice.

d. Technical Assistance for CIG Projects

All technical assistance required to carry out a CIG project is the responsibility of the grantee. NRCS designates an NRCS employee as a Technical Contact for each grant award. Technical Contacts provide oversight activities during the project, such as site visits, reviewing performance reports, financial reports, and audits to ensure that standards, objectives, terms, and conditions for the projects are accomplished. Technical contacts also evaluate project results and work with grantees on any relevant end-of-project efforts to disseminate project results. NRCS employees, however, are not substantially involved in carrying out grant activities.

3. Cost Sharing (Match)

This NFO requires an applicant to provide cost share, also known as “match”, of at least 50 percent of total project costs (total project costs include the Federal and non-Federal portions), except for applicants competing for HU funding (see [Section D.3.f](#)). Applications that do not include the required level of cost-sharing will be considered ineligible for award and will be eliminated from the competition through an initial proposal screening. Cost sharing may be achieved with contributions of cash, services, materials, equipment, or third-party in-kind contributions. Recipients with unrecovered indirect costs may also use those to meet cost-sharing obligations. Refer to [Section D.3.i](#) of this NFO for information about any required submittals related to cost-share.

While the pace of cost-sharing may vary throughout the award period, the agency will actively monitor cost-sharing levels as it receives payment requests to ensure the total cost sharing requirement is met by the award period of performance end date. Additional details about cost sharing or matching funds/contributions are located at [2 CFR 200.306](#).

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Information for New Users of Grants.gov

a. Overview

While a Grants.gov account is not required to download an NFO and related documents, your organization is required to have a Grants.gov account to submit an application. If your organization has never applied through Grants.gov, please be

aware that there are several steps you must take to register your organization before you can submit an application. **Completing these steps can take a significant amount of time, so plan accordingly.**

For information about the Grants.gov preaward phase of the grant lifecycle see <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grants-101/pre-award-phase.html>.

b. Register for a SAM account and obtain a SAM number

Check your SAM account registration to make sure it is active. If you have an active SAM account and SAM number, move on to step c. If you do not have an active SAM account and number, follow the steps in [D.1.e](#) to obtain an account and number. An active SAM.gov registration is required to apply for this funding.

SAM registrations may take several weeks. Therefore, organizations should begin the process early to ensure they have sufficient time to complete registration and meet required application submission deadlines.

For more information on SAM, see [Section D.3.o](#) “Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM).”

c. Register to Apply through Grants.gov

Carefully review the registration steps and gather information requested prior to beginning the registration process to avoid last-minute searches for required information. For assistance with the registration process, contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

Organizations must complete all steps to register (see [Section D.1.f](#)). Complete organization instructions are included at Grants.gov: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>.

Although registration for a Grants.gov account can typically be completed in 1 day, please allow sufficient time to register in case of scheduled or unscheduled system outages.

Individuals are not subject to the UEI or SAM requirement and may skip to the first step in [D.1.f](#), Create a Grants.gov Account.

d. How to Register for a Unique Entity Identifier

All entities applying for funding must have a UEI issued by SAM.gov. Applicants must enter the UEI in the data entry field labeled "UEI" on the Standard Form (SF) 424 form.

e. How to register with the System for Award Management

All organizations must register with SAM to apply online through Grants.gov. SAM registration must be renewed annually. Part of the SAM registration process includes designating an Electronic Business (EBiz) Point of Contact (POC). **The EBiz POC plays an integral part in the organization’s Grants.gov registration and application process.** The individual in that role must authorize all other roles in Grants.gov. For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>.

f. How to register with Grants.gov

- i. *Create a Grants.gov Account:* From the Grants.gov webpage (<https://www.grants.gov/>), click “Register” in the top right-hand corner and follow the on-screen instructions or refer to the detailed instructions at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration.html>.
- ii. *Add an Organization Applicant Profile to a Grants.gov Account:* A profile in Grants.gov corresponds to a single applicant organization the user represents (i.e., an applicant) or an individual applicant. If you work for or consult with multiple organizations and have a profile for each, you may log into one Grants.gov account to access all your grant applications. To add an organizational profile to your Grants.gov account, enter the UEI for the organization in the UEI field while adding a profile. For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/add-profile.html>.
- iii. *EBiz POC Authorized Profile Roles:* After you register with Grants.gov and create an Organization Applicant Profile, you must establish roles for individuals in the organization. The Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) role is critical; it gives an individual permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. Please be aware that the EBiz POC and the person with the AOR role cannot be the same person. Without this role, the organization cannot submit any applications. The request for role assignment will be routed to the organization’s EBiz POC for approval. Once approved, the AOR can submit an application online. For more detailed instructions about creating a EBiz POC authorized profile on Grants.gov, refer to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/authorize-roles.html>.

Track Role Status: To track your role request, refer to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/track-role-status.html>.

g. Electronic Signature

When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization applicant with the AOR that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application as the electronic signature. Please be aware that the EBiz POC and the person assigned the AOR role cannot be the same individual. The EBiz POC must authorize people who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization as a user with the AOR role. Step iii at [D.1.f](#) is often missed, but it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.

h. Workspace.

Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. For each NFO, you can create individual instances of a workspace. An applicant can start an application in Workspace and return to work on it later.

i. Apply for an Opportunity

The following is an overview of applying through Grants.gov. For complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities, refer to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>.

- i. Creating a workspace allows you to complete an application online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.
- ii. To complete a Workspace, add participants to the workspace so that you can work on the application together, complete all the required forms online or by downloading PDF versions, and check for errors before submission. The Workspace progress bar will display the status of your application process as you apply. Using Workspace during your application allows you to access context-sensitive help by clicking on the blue question mark icon near the upper-right corner of each page.
 - If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms online you can download individual PDF forms from Workspace to use in Adobe Reader. After you download and save the individual PDF forms to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drives, you can then access them through Adobe Reader.

NOTE: Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>.

- In the forms, you will note fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color. These fields are mandatory and must be completed to successfully submit your application.
 - You should complete SF-424 first. The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant's name, address, and UEI. Once SF-424 is completed, the information will transfer (i.e., prepopulate) to the other forms.
- iii. Submit your application through workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.
 - iv. After a workspace application is successfully submitted, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application. The number will be listed on the confirmation page that is generated after submission. Using the tracking number, access the Track My Application page under the Applicants tab or the Details tab in the submitted workspace.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html>.

2. Electronic Application Package

Applicants interested in applying to this NFO must submit their application through Grants.gov; the agency will not accept applications submitted by email or any other method. Applicants are urged to submit early to the Grants.gov system. For technical issues with Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts.

Address to Request Application Package

All information necessary to apply for this opportunity is included in the [Grants.gov](#) opportunity announcement.

3. Content and Form of Application Submission

The agency may choose not to consider applications that are incomplete or that fail to comply with the required content, format, and page limits.

Applications must contain the content, format, and information set forth in this section to receive consideration for funding. Submit a separate application for each project if

submitting more than one. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of NRCS or others as to the relative merits of the project described in the application.

Applicants must submit a single copy of the application in the following format:

- Each page of the document must be numbered, letter-sized (8.5 x 11 inches), and use a white background that has 1-inch margins; and
- The text of the application must be typed, single spaced, black, and in a standard font (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial, Courier, or similar) no smaller than 12-point.

a. Application Form

Complete SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance. See Instructions for Completing SF-424 in Attachment A to this NFO.

b. Cover Page (1 page maximum)

Applications that fail to provide a cover page will be rejected in the first stage of screening. On a single page, provide the following information in the order outlined:

- i. The applicant entity's name.
- ii. The project title.
- iii. The project duration in years.
- iv. The amount of Federal funding requested.
- v. The amount of non-Federal cost-share committed.
- vi. The name, phone number, and email address for the applicant's technical contact (usually project director), this is considered the primary contact for the project by NRCS.
- vii. The name, phone number, and email address for the applicant's administrative contact (usually an individual in a grants office or project manager working under a project director).
- viii. The geographic location of the project, be sure to list all states involved.
- ix. The priority that is addressed by the project, list only one priority from [Section A.4](#). If the proposal addresses more than one priority, you must select a primary priority. The priority that you select will determine the panel that will review your application.
- x. If the selected priority has more than one sub-priority, identify the sub-priority by number and name.
- xi. An estimated number of participating producers expected to be involved with the project.
- xii. Identify if the project is competing for historically underserved set aside (see [Section D.3.f](#) for further definition).
- xiii. An estimated number of historically underserved (HU) producers expected to be involved with the project.
- xiv. A brief description (1–3 sentences) of the innovative conservation approach or approaches that is the focus of the project—please be concise.

- xv. List any NRCS practice standards that this project could potentially inform (if multiple exist, select the top five), if relevant.

c. Project Abstract (1-page maximum)

Provide a concise project summary (in nontechnical language) that captures the issue or problem the project will address, the project goal, the innovative approach to be employed (including the role of participating partners), the anticipated project results and key deliverables, and the predicted impact to conservation more broadly.

d. Project Narrative (15-page maximum)

The project narrative must cover all proposed activities to be carried out using both the Federal and non-Federal matching funds. Activities related to the project but beyond the scope of the CIG project budget should be described in the background section only.

The project narrative description must include all the following information (i - xiii), in this order.

- i. **Project goal:** Describe the main purpose for conducting this project. The goal should be compelling and refer to achieving a desired outcome in a set period of time.
- ii. **Project objectives:** Outline the supporting objectives that will help this project reach the previously listed project goal. Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART¹).
- iii. **Project background:** Provide background information that identifies the issue or problem necessitating the proposed innovation. Provide evidence that the proposed innovation has been studied sufficiently to indicate a high probability for success. Be sure to give enough details to demonstrate to the reviewers why this innovation is compelling.
- iv. **Project design and methods:** Describe clearly the design and methodology of the project. Describe details of the processes that will be used, scientific tests that will be conducted, tools that will be developed, any sampling that will be performed, and background on why these choices were made, especially if different from convention. We encourage new grant writers to consider using a logic model approach to improve clarity of this section. For more on the logic model, see <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/programdevelopment/logic-models/>.

¹ SMART objectives are described by several organizations. This link provides an example from the Centers for Disease Control: https://www.cdc.gov/phcommunities/resourcekit/evaluate/smart_objectives.html.

- v. **Project evaluation:** Describe the methodology that will be used to evaluate the project and describe how results will be quantified. It should be clear to the reviewers how project objectives relate to the evaluation.
- vi. **Project Deliverables/Products:** Provide a list of specific deliverables and products that will be produced from this project. The deliverables should directly relate to the project objectives and outcomes, and they should be referenced in the project timeline. The deliverables should reflect the project performance and be tangible to allow NRCS to monitor project progress (e.g., knowledge gained could be written in the deliverable section as a report on a targeted topic). In addition to project-specific deliverables, CIG grantees are responsible for:
- Participating in at least one event (e.g., conference or workshop) during the grant period where the grantee presents on the activities of the project; and
 - Submitting a project Fact Sheet at the project's conclusion.
- vii. **Project outcomes and benefits:** Identify the short- and long-term benefits and outcomes of the project, translating how project outcomes could potentially benefit society and impact conservation at large. Please note, project outcomes are often the result of the project deliverables (for instance, if a training event is the deliverable, the impact that training event has on producers, such as increased adoption of a new practice, would be the outcome/benefit). In addition to short term outcomes, forecast the long-term outcomes of project results, giving reviewers an idea of potential long-term impact of the innovation. Identify project beneficiaries (i.e., agricultural producers) by type, region, or sector; historically underserved producers and communities; rural communities; or municipalities.
- viii. **Geographic location and size of project or project area:** Identify the geographic location and the estimated size and scope of the project area (e.g., acres, farm types, demographics). Maps are recommended. If the project is multistate, describe which project elements will take place in each state.
- ix. **EQIP-eligible producer participation:** Estimate the number of EQIP eligible producers that will be involved in the project and describe the extent of their involvement. Describe whether these producers have been identified, and if not yet identified, clearly articulate the process that will be carried out to identify and attract producer participation. If competing in the set aside for historically underserved projects, include an estimate on the number of historically underserved producers scheduled to participate in the project.
- x. **Project action plan and timeline:** Provide a list of critical project activities in a timeframe format, relating the activities to the project deliverables and objectives. Project milestones throughout the project should be highlighted.
- xi. **Project management:** Describe how the project will be organized and managed, including a description of project partner involvement. Include a description of

how communication will be structured within the project team to ensure effective project management.

- xii. **Technology transfer:** Describe how the results will be transferred to producers and stakeholders through communications and outreach activities.
- xiii. **Graphics** (including pictures, charts, graphs, and similar items) count towards the 15-page maximum. An additional three pages of graphics can be added to the end of the proposal if grouped together.

e. References

References, bibliographies, and citations, if included, *do not* count towards the 15-page maximum.

f. Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers (2 Page Maximum)

The CIG program provides special consideration to proposals substantially involving or benefitting historically underserved (HU) producers. For the National CIG Classic component, at least 10 percent of the total funds available are set aside for applications from:

- i. An HU producer at the time of application (see https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/people/outreach/slb_fr/ for definitions);
- ii. A community-based organization comprised of, representing, or exclusively working with HU producers for the life of the project;
- iii. An entity developing an innovative conservation approach or technology specifically targeting HU producers' unique needs and limitations for the life of the project; or
- iv. An 1890 or 1994 land-grant institution (7 U.S.C. 3222 *et seq.*), Hispanic-serving institution (20 U.S.C. 1101a), or other minority-serving institution, such as a historically Black college or university (20 U.S.C. 1061), a tribally controlled college or university (25 U.S.C. 1801), or Asian American and Pacific Islander-serving institution (20 U.S.C. 1059g) at the time of application.

An applicant seeking to apply to the HU set aside must identify as such on the cover page of their application. In addition, applicants must identify which HU category (i - iv) applies to their proposal.

Projects that are applying to the HU set aside are required to include additional project information on the HU component of the project. All projects applying for the HU set aside will be assessed by an additional set of criteria ([Section E.3](#)).

Applicants applying under and qualifying for the for the HU set aside are eligible to reduce their project match to one-third of the total project budget, or 50 percent of the Federal request. For example, an HU-qualifying entity requesting \$500,000 in

Federal CIG funding would need to provide at least \$250,000 in matching funds. Applicants who do not qualify for the HU set aside are responsible for the regular, 1:1 match. See section [D.3.j](#), “Cost Share or Matching Funds,” for more information. Upon request from the applicant, NRCS may waive the cost share requirement entirely for any applicants that qualifies for the HU set aside and provides a justification of why it is unable to provide any matching funds. This waiver request should be included in the applicant’s HU Narrative section of its proposal.

Applicant entities that are not applying to the HU set aside but would like to further describe the participation of HU producers can do so in this section. Otherwise, for projects not applying for the HU set aside, this section is optional.

g. Declaration of Previous CIG

If the applicant has previously received and managed a CIG award (either at the national or state levels), list for each award the CIG agreement number, the project title, award funding amount, and the year of expiration. Give a short summary of the completed project’s results and impact. If the project is ongoing, provide the anticipated results. Indicate if this On-Farm Trials proposal builds on a prior CIG Classic award. For applicants with multiple previous awards, list all awards and describe the most recent awards as space allows.

h. Team Qualifications

Provide a brief description of key technical and administrative personnel qualifications, their experience managing Federal awards, and their anticipated contributions to the project. This does not count towards the 15-page maximum, but each person’s description should be limited to a half page. Do not include a resume or curriculum vitae (CV). If resumes or CVs are included, they will not be considered in the review.

i. Assessment of Environmental Impacts

If the proposal anticipates physical, chemical, or biological impacts on the environment when implemented, describe the impacts and their extent. The description of the potential environmental impacts must address both beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action. The length of the description should be commensurate with the complexity of the project proposed and the natural environmental resources impacted directly, indirectly, or cumulatively. Where possible, information on environmental impacts should be quantified, such as number of acres of wetlands impacted, amount of carbon sequestration estimated, etc. Natural environmental resources include soil, water, air, plants, and animals, as well as other resources protected by law, regulation, executive order, and agency policy. NRCS may choose not to approve funding for projects that have the potential to result in unacceptable adverse environmental impacts.

Every funded CIG project with anticipated physical, chemical, or biological impacts on the environment and/or ground-disturbing activity is subject to the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. See section F.2 of this announcement for more information. NRCS must complete an environmental review of each awarded project before project commencement. Applicants may be required to prepare and pay for preparation of an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS), should the environmental review find that an assessment or impact statement is required.

j. Cost Share

Selected applicants may receive CIG grants of up to 50 percent of their total project cost. CIG recipients must provide a non-Federal funding cost-share amount at least equal to the amount of Federal funding requested. For example, if an applicant requests \$500,000 in CIG funding, at least \$500,000 in non-Federal cost-share must be committed by the applicant.

The match requirement is reduced for applicants applying for the HU set aside. Refer to section [D.3.f](#) of this announcement for more details.

Cost-share may be committed by the applicant, project partners, or both and can be any combination of cash and in-kind contributions. Examples of in-kind contributions include work performed by unpaid volunteers and donations of supplies, facilities, or equipment. In-kind contributions identified in the project budget must be quantifiable, verifiable, and necessary to accomplish program activities.

Cost sharing must be committed at the time of application submission. Cost sharing must meet the criteria stated at [2 CFR 200.306](#) and be valued in accordance with 2 CFR 200.306(d). Additional details about cost sharing is located at [2 CFR 200.306](#).

All cost-share funds must be identified in the SF-424A, the budget table and budget narrative components of the application (see [Appendix A](#)). Project partners (other than the applicant) must provide commitment letters for all cash and in-kind matching contributions. A separate commitment letter is required for each cash or in-kind match contribution.

Commitment letters must be signed by the authorized organizational representative of the contributing organization and must include: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the project partner; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the contribution is made, (4) the dollar value of the contribution; and (5) a statement that the contributor commits to furnish the contribution during the grant period. A sample commitment letter is included as part of the application package on Grants.gov.

Applications without signed written commitments covering the full value of the matching contribution are deemed incomplete.

The value of applicant contributions to the project is established according to Federal cost principles. Applicants should refer to [2 CFR 200.306](#) for additional guidance on matching funds, in-kind contributions, and allowable costs.

k. Budget Information, (12-page maximum)

The budget portion of the application consists of three parts: a Standard Form SF-424A; a detailed budget narrative, and a budget table. See the following section for details.

- i. **SF-424A**, “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs,” is included as part of the application package posted on Grants.gov. Section B, item 6, column 1 should reflect the agency funds, and column 2 should reflect the applicant’s matching funds. This form is the summary budget for the project. See “Instructions for Completing SF-424A” located in the “Related Documents” tab of this announcement on Grants.gov.
- ii. **Detailed Budget Narrative** (12-page maximum) and Budget Table. Provide a detailed narrative in support of the budget for the project broken down by each project year. A detailed narrative and expanded budget table will show how the totals on the SF-424A were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. Justify the project cost effectiveness and include justification for personnel and consultant salaries with a description of duties. Statement(s) of work for any subcontractors and consultants must be included as part of the application. The budget narrative should include both the Federal funds requested and the applicant’s matching funds.

The budget narrative must be in text format as well as contain a detailed table (further instructions and an example can be found in [Appendix A](#)). It should be readable and on letter-size (8.5 x 11 inch), printable pages. The information needs to be presented in such a way that the reviewers can readily understand what expenses are incurred to support the project each year.

- iii. **Note:** Include \$6,000 in the budget for project travel required by NRCS in the first year. These funds are required and can be part of the Federal portion, the applicant’s matching funds, or a combination of both. Any additional travel required for completion of the project must be considered additional to this \$6,000. Any non-Federal entity (except state and local governments that receive more than \$35 million per year in Federal funding) that does not have a current negotiated rate (including provisional) may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC), which may be used indefinitely.

No documentation is required to justify the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate. As described in [2 CFR 200.403](#), costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. Once elected, this methodology must be used consistently for all Federal awards until a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time.

- iv. MTDCs are defined as all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the performance period of the subawards). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs, and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.
- v. As required in 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F, "Audit Requirements," all states, local governments, Federally recognized Indian tribal governments, and nonprofit organizations expending \$750,000 or more in Federal award funds in a fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System.

I. Grants.gov Lobbying Form, Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

Under Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1352, an applicant or recipient must not use any Federally appropriated funds (whether annually appropriated or continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a grant or cooperative agreement award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is defined as influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress connected with the award. Submitting an application also represents the applicant's certification of the statements in 2 CFR Part 418, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying. If the applicant has made or agrees to make any payment using unappropriated funds for lobbying, the applicant must also complete and submit the SF LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities located at 2 CFR 418, Appendix B. See 2 CFR 418.110 for more information on when this form is required.

m. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), if applicable

If charging indirect costs (including those designated for cost share), upload the NICRA under Other Attachments (listed as an Optional Form) in the Grants.gov Opportunity Application Package. See [Section D.7](#) for information regarding indirect costs.

n. Disclosure of Potential Conflict of Interest

Applicants must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the performance of their employees in the selection, award, and administration of Federal awards. No employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a Federal award if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. A conflict of interest would arise when the employee, officer or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization that employs or is about to employ any of the parties referenced, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from an applicant considered for a Federal award. The standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employees, or agents of the applicant.

If the applicant has a parent, affiliate, or subsidiary organization that is not a state, local government, or Indian tribe, the applicant must also maintain written standards of conduct covering organizational conflicts of interest. An organizational conflict of interest occurs when an applicant is unable or appears to be unable to be impartial in conducting a Federal award action involving a parent company, affiliate, or subsidiary organization, or any entity with whom the applicant has a relationship that may compromise impartiality.

o. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to: (i) be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid UEI in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during an active Federal award or when an application or plan is under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. The agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable UEI and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the agency is ready to make an award, it may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and may use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

Applicants must obtain a UEI and register in SAM prior to registering with Grants.gov. Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply early for their SAM registration.

To register for SAM, go to: <https://www.sam.gov>. The Federal Service Desk is available for registration assistance and can be contacted by accessing the Help tab at the SAM website. Awarding agency staff cannot assist applicants with UEI or SAM issues.

The Government has replaced the D-U-N-S® number with a “new, non-proprietary identifier” requested in, and assigned by SAM.gov. This new identifier is being called the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) or the Entity ID. See [Planned UEI Updates in Grant Application Forms](#) for UEI updates.

4. Submission Dates and Times and Correspondence

Applicants must apply through Grants.gov. Applications must be received by 11:59 pm Eastern Time (EST) on Tuesday October 11, 2022. An application submitted or resubmitted after the deadline will not be reviewed or considered (an application is considered on time at 11:59.59 pm EST, but it is late at 12 am EST).

Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission message in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role who is attempting to submit the application. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process; be patient and give the system time to process the application.

If you have trouble applying through Grants.gov, you should FIRST contact the Grants.gov Help Desk to resolve any issues. Keep a record of any such correspondence. See [Section D.2](#) for Grants.gov contact information.

For applications successfully transmitted to Grants.gov before the deadline, the applicant with the AOR role who submitted the application will receive:

- an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov, and
- an email with the official Grants.gov date/time stamp (this stamp is used to determine if the application was received prior to the deadline).

When the agency successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov and acknowledges the submission download, Grants.gov will also provide to the applicant an electronic acknowledgment of receipt of the application.

5. Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.”

6. Funding Restrictions

Funds may not be used to pay any of the following costs unless otherwise permitted by law and approved in writing by the agency in advance of incurring such costs:

- a. Costs above the amount of funds authorized for the project.
- b. Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the award, including time spent

- applying for this opportunity.
- c. Costs that lie outside the scope of the approved project and amendments thereto.
 - d. Entertainment costs, regardless of their apparent relationship to project objectives.
 - e. Compensation for injuries to persons, or damage to property arising out of project activities.
 - f. Consulting services performed by a Federal employee during official duty hours when such consulting services result in the payment of additional compensation to the employee.
 - g. Capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land or for improvements to land, buildings, or equipment that materially increases their value or useful life. See 2 CFR 200.439 for additional information.
 - h. Any management fees and/or profit awarded to for-profit entities must be used for reimbursement of award related direct and indirect costs only.
 - i. Meals may be charged to an award only if they are necessary for the performance of the project. For instance, meals (normally only lunches) that are a necessary part of the costs of meetings and conferences (i.e., required attendance and for the continuity of a meeting), the primary purpose of which is the dissemination of information, are allowable, as are costs of transportation, rental of facilities, speakers' fees, and other items incidental to such meetings or conferences. (Note: Meals consumed while in official travel status do not fall in this category; they are considered per diem expenses and should be reimbursed in accordance with the organization's established travel policies, which are subject to statutory limitations or in accordance with Federal travel policies.)
 - j. Costs normally charged as [indirect costs](#) may not be charged as [direct costs](#) without proper justification and agency approval. Proper justification includes documentation that the costs meet the criteria for allowability (see 2 CFR 200.403). Examples of such costs include rent, utilities, depreciation on buildings and equipment, the costs of operating and maintaining facilities, and general administration and general expenses, such as the salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting.
 - k. Salaries that are not commensurate with level of work are unallowable. All costs must be reasonable to be allowable. 2 CFR 200.403 and 2 CFR 200.404 define a cost as reasonable if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost. Salaries determined not to be reasonable compared to the level of work will be unallowable.

This list is not exhaustive. For additional information please refer to 2 CFR Part 200, subpart E, Cost Principals.

7. Indirect costs limitations

- a. To be eligible to recover any indirect cost under a Federal award, recipients must either (1) have a current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA with a

Federal agency that has not expired, or (2) qualify for use of the de minimis rate authorized by 2 CFR 200.414(f). A state, local, or tribal governmental department or agency unit that receives more than \$35 million in direct Federal funding is not eligible for the de minimis rate.

- b.** Applicants not subject to a statutory limitation, which have a current NICRA must calculate indirect costs using the rate and base specified in their NICRA. A recipient may voluntarily reduce or waive recovery of indirect costs at its sole discretion and must not be encouraged or coerced in any way to do so by the agency. A copy of the applicant's current NICRA must be provided with the application. Indirect costs may not be recovered under an expired NICRA. However, if an applicant with a current NICRA is subject to the statutory limitation, indirect costs must be calculated as follows. First, multiply the NICRA rate by the base stated in the NICRA to arrive at Amount A. Next, multiply the statutory limit of 10 percent by the total of all direct costs to arrive at Amount B. The lower of Amount A and B is the amount of indirect cost to include on the budget.
- c.** Recipients are prohibited from shifting unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.
- d.** Applicants who are individuals applying for funds separate from a business or nonprofit organization they operate are not eligible to charge indirect costs to their award. If you are an individual applying for funding, do not include any indirect costs in your proposed budget.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Review and Selection Process

Applications will be screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete or noncompliant applications, such as applications not meeting the formatting criteria, may be eliminated from competition. In that event, the agency will send notification of elimination to the applicant. The agency intends to select and award without conducting any discussions or allowing applicants to correct deficiencies or omissions in their applications. Consequently, applicants must ensure their applications are complete and accurate. However, while the agency intends to select without contacting applicants, it reserves the right to request applicants to revise their applications to correct deficiencies or omissions that it identifies. If this occurs, the agency will conduct discussions with all applicants, identify deficiencies and omissions for all, and give applicants an opportunity to submit a revised application by a common cutoff date. The agency may also contact individual applicants to clarify certain components of their applications.

Proposals that pass the initial screening will then be evaluated using a four-part process:

- Technical peer review panels composed of subject matter experts will evaluate proposals against the CIG Technical Criteria (see [Section E.2](#)).

- NRCS state conservationists evaluate the relevant applications for ethical concerns and potential duplication of effort and provide review comments.
- The CIG Grants Review Board certifies the peer panel evaluations and makes award recommendations to the Chief. The Grants Review Board may also consider factors such as geographic and partner diversity when making funding recommendations to the NRCS Chief. The CIG Grants Review Board consists of members of NRCS leadership.²
- The NRCS Chief makes the final award selections.

Risk reviews will be conducted by the FPAC Business Center, Grants and Agreements Division. The approving official will make the final award decisions. The approving official for this opportunity is the NRCS Chief.

2. Merit Criteria

The technical peer review panels use the criteria laid out in this section (E.2), using a 100-point scale, to evaluate applications. These criteria will be applied to the whole project, including Federally and non-Federally funded parts.

a. Purpose, Approach, and Goals (25 points)

- The purpose of the project is clearly explained, the goals and objectives are clearly stated, and the rationale is explicit for why the innovative approach or technology is needed.
- The design and implementation of the project is based on sound methodology and demonstrated technology.
- The project outcomes are stated, measurable, and likely to be achieved.
- Both beneficial and adverse impacts are considered, and a significant level of improvement will be achieved.

b. Innovative Technology or Approach (25 points)

- An innovation is clearly identified and explained, so there is no question as to what the innovation is.
- The project is nationally, regionally, or locally innovative according to the criteria for innovation (see [Section A.2](#)).
- The application describes a compelling need for the innovative technology or approach.

² The Grants Review Board consists of the Deputy Chief for Programs (Chair), the Deputy Chief for Soil Science and Resource Assessment, the Deputy Chief for Science and Technology, the Deputy Chief for Strategic Planning and Accountability, one Regional Conservationist, one State Conservationist, and the Director of the Outreach and Partnerships Division.

c. Project Management (25 points)

- i. The project has a clear management plan for how project activities will get accomplished.
- ii. The timeline and milestones are clear and reasonable for accomplishing the objectives of the project.
- iii. Project is adequately staffed, and the team has the necessary technical and administrative expertise.
- iv. The budget is adequately explained and justified, and expenses are allowable, allocable, and reasonable.
- v. Proposal includes robust partnership(s) with entities that can substantially assist with delivery of project outcomes and includes an explanation of how the partnership aligns with the project and how it will be managed.

d. Benefits and Transferability (25 points)

- i. There is strong potential for results that lead to a positive impact on private lands conservation and the environment.
- ii. An evaluation plan is documented that clearly explains how project work will be assessed and the results transferred.
- iii. A technology transfer plan is documented that clearly outlines the transfer of new knowledge or technology to a broader audience or to other geographic areas or agricultural sectors and includes useful materials such as technical standards, technical notes, handbooks, technology tools, etc.
- iv. There is potential for producers and landowners to learn about, use, or participate in the innovative technology(s) or approach(s).
- v. The project meaningfully includes the participation of historically underserved (HU) producers and will benefit HU producers and landowners.

Partner cost-share contributions are considered an eligibility criterion as described in Section [C.3](#) and Section [D.3.i](#) of this notice and therefore are not listed in the merit criteria.

3. Historically Underserved (HU) Criteria

Proposals competing for the HU set aside are evaluated against additional criteria to assess the extent to which such proposals will successfully engage and benefit HU producers. The HU criteria are:

- a. Description. The HU community served by the project is identified and the proposal includes a clear explanation of how the project will address any existing or historical barrier(s) that has impacted the participation or success of the HU community in question.
- b. Commitment. The applicant and partner organizations demonstrate a strong commitment to serving HU producers. The organization or its members or partners

- have a history of working with HU producers or have explained why the team is well-suited to working with HU producers.
- c. Capacity Building. The project is designed to impart lasting benefits on the HU community in question.
 - d. Community Involvement. The designated HU community is involved in project processes or decision making.
 - e. Measurement. Indicators and metrics of success are included that specifically measure the project's benefits to HU producers.

4. Administrative and Risk Criteria

Notice of selection after merit and technical evaluation does not guarantee that an applicant will receive an award. Following notification of selection for funding (see [Section F](#)), staff from the FPAC Business Center, Grants and Agreements Division, conduct a final administrative and risk review of selected applications. The administrative review includes, but is not limited to, a check to ensure that NFO requirements were met (e.g., applicant meets eligibility criteria, application was submitted through Grants.gov by the established deadline, etc.), and proposed costs are allowable, allocable, and necessary. During this process, it may be necessary to request further documentation from the applicant (e.g., organizational information as part of the risk assessment, more detail regarding proposed costs, etc.).

In addition, to comply with the requirements at 2 CFR 200.206, the agency will follow this risk review process, at a minimum (additional steps may be taken). The awarding agency will check SAM to ensure that the applicant is not suspended or debarred, which would preclude receiving an award. In addition, prior to making a Federal award with a total Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold (\$250,000), the agency must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through the Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System (FAPIS) in SAM (see 41 U.S.C. 2313 and 2 CFR 200.206(a)).

An applicant must meet the following standards to be considered for award:

a. Financial Stability

The applicant maintains adequate financial resources or cash flow to meet its financial obligations on a routine basis in order to successfully complete any agreement it may be awarded.

b. Quality of Management Systems and Ability to meet Management Standards prescribed in 2 CFR Part 200

The applicant has a financial management system that is adequate to segregate and track Federal funds and has adequate systems in place for: (1) proper agreement

administration; (2) compliance with the standards outlined in 2 CFR Part 200 Section D for procurement, property, and records management; and (3) required financial and performance reporting.

c. History of Performance

The awarding agency will take under consideration: whether the applicant has previously obtained Federal financial assistance; has ever failed to materially comply with Federal award terms and conditions; and whether an award has ever been terminated on that basis.

Submission of an application constitutes certification that an applicant meets these standards (items E.4.a-c). The agency may request documentation to substantiate the certification. Based on risk assessment, the agency may impose specific award conditions in accordance with 2 CFR 200.208.

5. Awards Over the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (if applicable)

- a. Prior to making a Federal award with a total Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold (\$250,000), the agency must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM, the Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System, FAPIIS. FAPIIS is a Federal database intended to serve as a Governmentwide source of information about the prior performance and compliance of Federal procurement contractors, grantees, and cooperative agreement holders (see 41 U.S.C. 2313 and 2 CFR 200.206(a)).
- b. An applicant may review information in FAPIIS and comment on any information that a Federal awarding agency previously entered.
- c. The agency will consider any comments provided by the applicant in addition to the other information in FAPIIS when making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR 200.206, "Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants."

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

The agency will provide notice that an application has been selected before it actually makes the Federal award. As such, the selection notification is not an authorization to begin work. Any pre-award costs incurred by the awardee will not be reimbursed. The Notice of Grant and Agreement Award (ADS-093) signed by the authorized agency official is the only authorizing document and will be provided electronically to the awardee's authorized official for signature.

Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email and will receive feedback from the technical peer panel. This feedback will be emailed to the applicant within 90 days of the award announcement.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All project funds will be used in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200 and the General Terms and Conditions, which are available at the following website:

<https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/about/grants-and-agreements/award-terms-and-conditions/index.html>.

Projects performed pursuant to this opportunity may be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act. If applicable, NRCS must work with awardees to complete an environmental review of each awarded project before project commencement. In addition, prior to any ground-disturbing activities related to NRCS funding, the awardee must work with NRCS staff to complete an environmental evaluation related to those activities. Awardees may be required to prepare or pay for preparation of an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement, should any environmental review find that an assessment or impact statement is required.

In addition, a NHPA Section 106 review and consultation by an NRCS state or area office with consulting parties (such as the pertinent State Historic Preservation Officer and Federally recognized Indian tribes) may be required prior to the implementation of project activities that have the potential to impact cultural resources. NHPA Section 106, its implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800), and other related authorities require Federal agencies to determine if a project has the potential to cause an effect to historic properties and, if so, how any negative impact might be addressed. The NHPA review and compliance, in accordance with Section 106 of NHPA and implementing regulations at 36 CFR Part 800, must be completed by NRCS and applicants may be required to pay for any cultural resource surveys needed for NRCS to assess the project effects. More information on the applicant's role in the NHPA Section 106 process can be found on the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation website at <https://www.achp.gov/digital-library-section-106-landing/section-106-applicant-toolkit>.

Consultation with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service under the Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is also required for projects that may affect listed or proposed species or destroy or modify critical habitat. The ESA consultation, in accordance with Section 7 of the ESA and implementing regulations at 50 CFR Part 402, must be completed by NRCS before implementing project activities that have the potential to impact species or habitat protected under the ESA. More information on the Section 7 consultation process can be found at <https://www.fws.gov/service/esa-section-7-consultation>.

3. Patents, Inventions, and Copyrights

Allocation of rights to patents, inventions, and copyrights shall be in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200. This regulation provides that small businesses normally may retain the principal worldwide patent rights to any invention developed with USDA support. In accordance with 2 CFR Part 200, this provision will also apply to commercial organizations for the purposes of CIG. USDA receives a royalty-free license for Federal use, reserves the right to require the patentee to license others in certain circumstances, and requires that anyone exclusively licensed to sell the invention in the United States must normally manufacture it domestically. With regard to copyright, the grant recipient may copyright any work that is subject to copyright and was developed or acquired under an award. USDA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work for Federal purposes and to authorize others to do so.

All tools produced must meet the accessibility of Electronic and Information Technology (EIT) requirements as specified in Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794d) as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-220). Specifically, paragraph 508(a)(1) requires that when the Federal Government procures EIT, it must allow Federal employees and individuals of the public with disabilities comparable access to use information and data that is provided to Federal employees and individuals of the public without disabilities. All EIT that is subject to the 36 CFR 1194 standards will have a Section 508 acceptance test and will be validated upon acceptance. All maintenance for EIT that requires upgrades, modifications, installations, and purchases will adhere to the Section 508 standards and 36 CFR 1194. Get in touch with the [agency contact](#) of this NFO with specific questions regarding the applicability of this section.

4. Reporting

Reporting will follow the guidelines included in the agency's General Terms and Conditions, which are available at the following website:

<https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/about/grants-and-agreements/award-terms-and-conditions/index.html>

If the Federal share of any agreement awarded under this opportunity notice may include more than \$500,000 over the period of performance, recipients must also comply with the post award reporting requirements reflected in Appendix XII of 2 CFR Part 200, "Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters."

Applicants that receive awards pursuant to this opportunity, as well as any subawardees, must comply with the reporting requirements described at 2 CFR Part 170 unless an exception applies. Applicants must ensure they have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with those requirements. A list of exceptions can be found at 2 CFR 170.110(b).

Reporting details are included in the fully executed grant agreement. Reporting will generally include electronic submission of semiannual progress reports, annual financial status reports, and final reports

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT

Potential applicants may contact NRCS with questions at:

Name: CIG Staff

Email: nrcscig@usda.gov

with a copy to FPAC.BC.GAD@USDA.GOV

H. OTHER INFORMATION

1. Questions regarding this opportunity must be submitted by email to the Federal Awarding Agency Contact identified in Section G. Please include the NFO number in the subject line.
2. For technical issues with Grants.gov, please contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts.

3. Freedom of Information Act

Applications are considered confidential information. Applications are not shared with individuals or entities seeking public disclosure through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) without the consent of the applicant. More specifically, Executive Order 12600 and USDA FOIA regulation 7 CFR Part 1, Subpart A, requires the awarding agency to provide notice to applicants that a third party has requested copies of their business information and requires the awarding agency to consult with applicants regarding releasing their records.

4. Government Obligation

The Federal Government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of this opportunity. Only authorized Federal officials can bind the Federal Government to the expenditure of funds.

Any award made pursuant to this NFO may be executed in any number of counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

6. USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. In addition, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/filing-program-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer> or at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA providing all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA at:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

fax: (202) 690-7442
email: program.intake@usda.gov

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGI	Adjusted Gross Income
AOR	Authorized Organizational Representative
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CIG	Conservation Innovation Grants
DUNS	Data Universal Numbering System
EBiz	Electronic Business
EIT	Electronic and Information Technology
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FAPIS	Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FY	Fiscal Year
HU	Historically Underserved
MTDC	modified total direct costs
NFO	Notice of Funding Opportunity
NICRA	Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
POC	Point of Contact
SAM	System for Award Management
SF	Standard Form
UEI	Unique Entity Identifier
U.S.C.	United States Code
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

APPENDIX A: CREATING A BUDGET

This appendix includes tips and a sample budget table and budget narrative. To ensure consistency in proposals and proposal reviews, applicants are required to use this budget table and narrative format in their proposals. An Excel spreadsheet and editable document version of these files are attached to this announcement. In addition, another version is located at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/programs/financial/cig/?cid=stelprdb1046235>.

Creating a Budget Narrative

A CIG budget narrative has two parts:

- A written narrative that provides descriptive details on the items listed in the table for both the Federal and non-Federal portion of the table. This narrative should align with the budget table, described next.
- A table totaling all major and minor budget line items (the major line items should align with those on the SF-424A: salary, fringe benefits, travel, supplies, equipment, contractual, construction, other, and indirect costs) by year. The table includes subcategories listed below each line item, giving a clear breakdown of project costs. The table should contain both Federal and non-Federal portions of the project budget.

Note: Each written narrative should align with its budget table. The written portion will provide descriptive details for the items listed in the table.

1. Level of Detail:

A budget narrative outlines project details sufficient to allow reviewers to evaluate the integrity of the proposed spending and clarifies project intent. The level of detail for each line item may vary, but consider the following when determining what information to include:

- **Personnel.** Only employees of the applicant organization should be listed in this section. If a project contributor has not yet been hired, the position title can be provided in lieu of a name.
 - Budget Narrative. Include the general function or major tasks of each major team member, their time commitment to the project, and their rate of pay, so that the amount requested can be easily verified. Cost can also be displayed as Full Time Equivalents.
 - Budget Table. List each individual's name and team member position.
- **Fringe Benefits.** List this item separately from Personnel in the budget. Fringe benefits include the costs of leave (e.g., vacation, family-related, sick, or military), employee

insurance, pensions, and unemployment benefit plans. If all individuals will receive the same fringe benefit rate, you can list them all as one item. If they have different fringe benefit rates, list each individual separately.

- Budget Narrative. List what was included in the rate and the percent of salary that is charged to attain the rate.
- Budget Table. List each individual or team member position and the rate for them.
- **Travel**. Travel policy for per diem, transportation, and mileage rates needs to be clarified. If you are using Federal GSA rates, state that. If you are using an organization or state policy, state that as well and provide the link to that policy in the budget narrative.
 - Budget Narrative. Outline each trip separately and include the reason for the travel, the length of the trip, the team members expected to travel, and the major costs associated with each trip (e.g., transportation, lodging, meals, per diem, etc.). Provide the derivation of cost estimates so all amounts add up.
 - Budget Table. List each trip separately.
- **Supplies**. List the general supply categories that will be charged. For instance, if the team will be doing soil health monitoring, include items such as soil sampling supplies and instruments for measuring samples that should be included. Smaller supplies (e.g., workshop printouts and markers) need not be broken down by individual units, but for larger supplies, include a description with the unit cost and intended use.
- **Equipment**. This includes only tangible personal property over \$5,000 per unit with an expected lifetime of over 1 year.
 - Budget Narrative. Within this narrative, explain the reason this equipment needs to be purchased, a description of the type of equipment and supplier, what it will be used for, who will be allowed to use it, why it is needed, and how long it will be used. Equipment is considered the property of the Federal Government and a disposition schedule will be required at the end of the project.
 - Budget Table. List the equipment name.

Note: Rental equipment should be listed in the Contractual category and equipment under \$5,000 should be listed in the Supply category.

- **Contractual**.

- Budget Narrative. If contractors will be doing multiple tasks for the award, use separate line items. However, a simple description of the contracted work is sufficient if a contractor will just be serving one project function, is not considered part of the project team, and will not require a subcontract. Be sure to identify the name of the contractor, the method of procurement, and the scope of work for the services if not included in the proposal narrative. Be aware that contractors do not charge indirect costs. If a partner will be charging indirect costs, those costs will need to be considered a subaward, which should be described in the “Other” category.
- Budget Table. List each contractor separately.
- Other. This is a general line item that covers any expenditure that does not fit in another category, such as subawards, laboratory analysis, and tuition. Be sure to identify the individual costs and provide sufficient description to justify the costs. If a subaward is greater than \$25,000, be sure to include major line-item breakdowns.
- Indirect. Identify the NICRA or *de minimis* rate as applicable.
- Program Income. If the awardee plans to accrue income from grant-supported activities (e.g., workshop registration fees), this program income must be estimated and added to the budget. Other examples of program income include fees for services performed and the sale of commodities or items fabricated under an award.

2. Additional Guidance:

- Sub-budgets for contractors or subawardees should be listed as individual line items. For instance, if personnel and indirect are charges for a University subaward, they should fill two lines in the budget table in the Other section. Be sure to identify and include separate NICRA paperwork and percentages when a subaward rate differs from the awardee’s rate.
- Budget narratives may reference information included in other parts of the proposal; do not repeat the information as part of the budget narrative, but direct the reader to the project narrative section. Be sure all of the budget narrative refers to specific costs, and do not describe general aspects of the project.
- While drafting the budget, keep in mind that an agreement amendment is not required for post-agreement budget changes of 10 percent or less of the total project budget (Federal and non-Federal portions). Therefore, it is understood that the numbers are estimates, and it is acceptable to see a small amount of change to the budget numbers if awarded. However, all budget changes do require notice to NRCS contacts and may require submittal of updated budget documents..
- All costs in the budget must be rounded to the nearest dollar.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE BUDGET NARRATIVE

Name of Awardee
Project Title

Project Total: \$772,456
Federal Portion: \$384,654
Non-Federal Contribution: \$387,802

FEDERAL BUDGET:

1. Personnel

Note, a 3% annual salary increase has been included for all personnel.

Tom Smith, Project Director, full time, annual salary \$89,000, 70% paid by Federal funds, will advise the project team, assist with demonstration plot establishment, data collection and analysis, and participate in project field days.

Year 1: \$62,300	Year 2: \$64,169	Year 3: \$66,094
------------------	------------------	------------------

Mary Johnson, research technician, 20% time, \$55,000 annual salary, 50% paid by Federal funds. Establish the field and demonstration plots, function as the project manager, coordinate sub-award work, draft reports and publications, and participate in all project field days.

Year 1: \$5,500	Year 2: \$5,665	Year 3: \$5,835
-----------------	-----------------	-----------------

<i>Total Personnel</i>	Year 1: \$67,800	Year 2: \$69,834	Year 3: \$71,929
------------------------	------------------	------------------	------------------

2. Fringe benefits

67% fringe benefits paid by Federal funds. Fringe benefits rates are 35% for faculty and 45% for permanent staff.

Tom Smith – Faculty rate of 35%:

Year 1: \$20,871	Year 2: \$21,497	Year 3: \$22,142
------------------	------------------	------------------

Mary Johnson – Staff rate of 45%:

Year 1: \$3,317	Year 2: \$3,416	Year 3: \$3,519
-----------------	-----------------	-----------------

<i>Total Fringe Benefits:</i>	Year 1: \$24,188	Year 2: \$24,913	Year 3: \$25,661
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3. Travel

Per diem and transportation rates used are from XXX Universities Travel Policy, which can be found here:

[Add website or share copy of travel document unless using Federal GSA rates]

Funds are requested to support travel for plot preparation and data collection trips, and travel to four field days within the States of New York and Pennsylvania. Estimated 5,000 miles per year at a rate of \$0.60/mi.

Year 1: \$3,000	Year 2: \$3,000	Year 3: \$3,000
-----------------	-----------------	-----------------

Funds are requested for overnight hotel stays at demonstration plot locations at the State hotel rate of \$90 per night, 4 times per year (\$360/year).

Year 1: \$360	Year 2: \$360	Year 3: \$360
---------------	---------------	---------------

Funds are requested in the second and third year for three individual trips each year to scientific conferences based on the following estimates: Lodging - 3 nights × \$150 per night (\$450); Per-diem \$50/day × 4 days (\$200); Transportation: Airline travel to conference location - \$400/flight + ground transportation - \$50 + parking at airport - \$30 (\$480).

Unknown	Year 2: \$3390	Year 3: \$3390
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<i>Total Travel:</i>	Year 1: \$3,360	Year 2: \$6,750	Year 3: \$6,750
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4. Equipment – none

5. Supplies

Field and lab supplies: Funds are requested for the purchase of soil temperature and moisture probes and data logging systems (\$2,000). Funds are also requested to purchase weed suppression technologies, seeds, and irrigation supplies for field plots (\$6,000). Funds are also requested for various lab supplies and sampling equipment (\$3,000).

<i>Total Supplies:</i>	Year 1: \$4,000	Year 2: \$4,000	Year 3: \$3,000
------------------------	-----------------	-----------------	-----------------

6. Contractual

Two separate contractors:

- Contract with Amazing Graphics and Marketing (\$12,000)
Marketing team will use innovative digital marketing tools to reach producers and help gain interest. Team will develop graphics and video production to support program recruitment and teaching tools.

- Contract with Innovative Technology (\$18,000)
Contractor will help develop online tools to assist producers with conservation practices.

Total Contractual: Year 1: \$10,000 Year 2: \$10,000 Year 3: \$10,000

7. Construction – None requested

8. Other

Land rental – demonstration plots on farmer land will have a rental cost of \$50/acre/year totaling \$1,500 annually.

Publication Costs: Funds are requested for the development and publication of various materials including extension publications, costs associated with peer reviewed journals, in addition to costs associated with copies of brochures made in house. (\$1,000/year)

Total Other Costs: Year 1: \$2,500 Year 2: \$2,500 Year 21: \$2,500

9. Indirect Costs –

Team is applying the 10% De Minimus rate.

Year 1: \$11,185 Year 2: \$11,800 Year 21: \$11,984

NON-FEDERAL BUDGET:

1. Personnel

Note, a 3% annual salary increase has been included for all personnel.

Tom Smith, Project Director, full time, annual salary \$89,000, 30% paid by non-Federal funds, will advise the project team, assist with demonstration plot establishment, data collection and analysis, and participate in project field days.

Year 1: \$26,700 Year 2: \$27,501 Year 3: \$28,326

Mary Johnson, research technician, 20% time, \$55,000 annual salary, 50% paid by non-Federal funds. Establish the field and demonstration plots, function as the project manager, coordinate sub-award work, draft reports and publications, and participate in all project field days.

Year 1: \$5,500 Year 2: \$5,665 Year 3: \$5,835

Total Personnel: Year 1: \$32,200 Year 2: \$33,166 Year 3: \$34,161

2. Fringe benefits

33% fringe benefits paid by non-Federal funds. Fringe benefits rates are 35% for faculty and 45% for permanent staff.

Tom Smith – Faculty rate of 35%:

Year 1: \$10,280	Year 2: \$10,588	Year 3: \$10,906
------------------	------------------	------------------

Mary Johnson – Staff rate of 45%:

Year 1: \$8,168	Year 2: \$8,413	Year 3: \$8,665
-----------------	-----------------	-----------------

<i>Total Fringe Benefits:</i>	Year 1: \$18,448	Year 2: \$19,001	Year 3: \$19,571
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3. Equipment - None

4. Supplies – none

5. Contractual

- Contract with Super Non-Profits (\$61,000)

Elizabeth Smith will oversee the outreach to farmers. She will devote 20% of her time all 3 years of the project. 100% of her time will be non-Federal. She will oversee all elements of this part of the project, including contacting and recruiting farmers, organizing outreach events such as field days, and on-farm assistance.

Temporary half-time admin support to help support program facilitation.

Workshop rental space will be donated by contactor, with an estimated value of \$100 per day.

Year 1: \$18,000	Year 2: \$20,000	Year 3: \$23,000.
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- Soil Conservation District

The local soil and water conservation district will support the project by helping to build partner relationships with local producers.

Year 1: \$10,000	Year 2: \$10,000	Year 3: \$10,000
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<i>Total Contractual:</i>	Year 1: \$28,000	Year 2: \$30,000	Year 3: \$33,000
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6. Construction – None requested

7. Other Costs:

General services (web development, printing, accounting, administrative, and project management) estimated \$5,000 annually.

Sample Testing & Analysis: Basic nutrient testing and soil health testing will be done annually for all plots. Roughly 50 samples a year at \$500/sample (\$25,000/year).

Legal Fees: Community support groups will pay all legal fees regarding the research of any legal implications on the project. \$5,000 annually.

Total Other: Year 1: \$35,000 Year 2: \$35,000 Year 3: \$35,000

8. Indirect Costs

Note: If NICRA negotiated or if it is the 10% De Minimis rate

10% De Minimis Rate is applied

Total Indirect Costs: Year 1: \$11,365 Year 2: \$11,717 Year 3: \$12,173

FEDERAL BUDGET				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Personnel	\$67,800	\$69,834	\$71,929	\$209,563
Tom Smith	\$62,300	64,169	66,094	\$192,563
Mary Johnson	\$5,500	\$5,665	\$5,835	\$17,000
Fringe	\$24,188	\$24,913	\$25,661	\$74,762
Faculty	\$20,871	\$21,497	\$22,142	\$64,510
Staff	\$3,317	\$3,416	\$3,519	\$10,252
Travel	\$3,360	\$6,750	\$6,750	\$16,860
Plot prep/data collection	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$9,000
Demo plot overnight trips	\$360	\$360	\$360	\$1,080
Conference trips	\$0	\$3,390	\$3,390	\$6,780
Supplies	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$3,000	\$11,000
Field Supplies	\$1,000	\$1,000		\$2,000
Farm Supplies	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$6,000
Lab Supplies	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$3,000
Contractual	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$30,000
Amazing Graphics	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$12,000
Innovative Technology	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$18,000
Other	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$7,500
Publication and copying	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$3,000
Land rental	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$4,500
Indirect	\$11,185	\$11,800	\$11,984	\$34,969
De Minimis (10 percent)	\$11,185	\$11,800	\$11,984	\$34,969

NON-FEDERAL BUDGET

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Personnel	\$32,200	\$33,166	\$34,161	\$99,527
Tom Smith	\$26,700	\$27,501	\$28,326	\$82,527
Mary Johnson	\$5,500	\$5,665	\$5,835	\$17,000
Fringe	\$18,448	\$19,001	\$19,571	\$57,020
Faculty	\$10,280	\$10,588	\$10,906	\$31,774
Staff	\$8,168	\$8,413	\$8,665	\$25,246
Contractual	\$28,000	\$30,000	\$33,000	\$91,000
Super Non-Profits	\$18,000	\$20,000	\$23,000	\$61,000
Soil Conservation District	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$30,000
Other	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$105,000
General services	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$15,000
Testing and analysis	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$75,000
Legal Fees	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$15,000
Indirect	\$11,365	\$11,717	\$12,173	\$35,255
De Minimis (10 percent)	\$11,365	\$11,717	\$12,173	\$35,255
TOTAL	\$125,013	\$128,884	\$133,905	\$387,802

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE PLEDGE AGREEMENT

Applicant Cash/In-kind Contribution Commitment

Donor Organization: Name
Address
City, State, Zip code

Applicant Organization: Name of applicant

Project Title: Name of project title
Attn: CIG Program Staff

Description of cash contribution: [Add clear statement of what the organization is committing, such as the following example.]

The X Trust is committing \$182,000 in cash and in-kind support to this project from general fundraising support (corporate giving, foundations, fundraising events, etc.). Funds will be used to support five farmers, attend state meetings, and support contractor work on website and app development.” The funding breaks down into the following budget line items:

- Travel: \$2,000 in-kind
- Contractual: \$180,000 cash

Pledge Statement: The [add name of organization] pledges to make this contribution over the USDA NRCS 2021 Conservation Innovation Grants funding period as cash/in-kind cost-share to USDA NRCS Conservation Innovation Grants funds awarded to [name of applicant] for Innovative Conservation project [*project title*].

Signature of Donor Organization
Authorized Representative:

APPENDIX C: APPLICATION PACKAGE CHECKLIST

Important: Proposals Missing Any of These Required Items Will Not Be Considered

- UEI Registration – should register at least 3 weeks before the application due date.

PROPOSAL

- 1. Standard Form (SF) 424, “Application for Federal Assistance”
- 2. Cover Page (see page 17 for all details that should be in this document)
- 3. Project Abstract: (one page maximum)
- 4. Project Narrative: (15 pages maximum)
 - a. Project goal
 - b. Project objectives
 - c. Project background
 - d. Project evaluation
 - e. Project design and methods
 - f. Project deliverables/products
 - g. Project outcomes and benefits
 - h. Geographic location and size of project area (include a map if possible)
 - i. EQIP-eligible producer participation
 - j. Project action plan and timeline
 - k. Project management
 - l. Technology transfer plan
 - m. Graphics
- 5. References/citations (if applicable)
- 6. Team Qualifications
- 7. Declaration of Previous CIG Awards (if applicable)
- 8. Historically Underserved Narrative (if applicable)
- 9. Assessment of Environmental Impacts

BUDGET INFORMATION

- 10. Completed SF-424A, “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs”
- 11. Detailed Budget Narrative (see template in Appendix A); Maximum 12 pages
- 12. Detailed Budget Table (see Appendix A)
- 13. Indirect Costs: Submit documentation of a Federally approved indirect cost rate (NICRA), a previous de minimis rate agreement, or a request to establish a de minimis rate agreement ([section D.3.l](#)).
- 14. Non-Federal Commitment Letters (see template in Appendix B): (required for projects with cost-share funds coming from a third party). Each letter needs to be signed and give a clear amount of commitment.
- 15. Support Letters: Be sure to include any letters of support that lend credibility to your project idea.
- 16. Grants.gov Lobbying Form, Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities