Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

February 13, 2014

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1

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2

Funding Opportunity

The fiscal year 2014 Announcement for Program Funding (APF) for CIG was published on February 6, 2014.

The APF is available at:

- ✓ www.grants.gov, and
- ✓ http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/cig/index.html

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3

Authority

CIG was authorized as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) under:

- ✓Food Security Act of 1985,
- ✓Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002,
- ✓Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, and
- ✓Agricultural Act of 2014.

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4

Description

CIG is a *voluntary competitive program:*

- ✓ to stimulate the *development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies*
- ✓ to leverage Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production.

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5

Program Purpose

- ✓The purpose is to demonstrate potentially innovative technology and/or approaches.
- ✓CIG does not fund research.
  - ❑Not for Bench or Basic phases
  - ❑Maybe for Application phase
  - ❑Okay for Commercialization phase

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6

Eligibility Information

Applicant Eligibility

Under CIG, EQIP funds are used to award competitive grants to:

- ✓non-federal governmental
- ✓non-governmental organizations
- ✓federally-recognized Indian tribes
- ✓individuals

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7

Eligibility Information

- State governments
- County governments
- City or township governments
- Special district governments
- Public and State controlled institutions of higher education
- Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)
- Public housing authorities/Indian housing authorities
- Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments)
- Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Private institutions of higher education
- Individuals
- For profit organizations other than small businesses
- Small businesses

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8

Eligibility Information

Applications are accepted from:

- ✓ all 50 States,
- ✓ the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands),
- ✓ the Pacific Islands Area (Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands), and
- ✓ Washington, DC

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9

Eligibility Information

Project Eligibility

- ✓ To be eligible for CIG, projects must involve landowners who meet the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) eligibility requirements.
- ✓ Participating producers are not required to have an EQIP contract.

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10

To participate in EQIP financial assistance, an individual/farmer or agricultural entity must meet the eligibility requirements in 7 C.F.R. 1466.8, which include the following:

Criteria	Potential Verification Documentation*
Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions (7 C.F.R. Part 12)	Documentation of their compliance status can be obtained by the producer at their local USDA Service Center or through the USDA customer service on-line portal
Have an interest in the agricultural operation as defined in 7 C.F.R. Part 1400	Documentation of their farm interest can be obtained by the producer at their local USDA Service Center or through the USDA customer service on-line portal showing that the producer has farm records established
Have control of the land for the term of the proposed contract period	Documentation can be provided in the form of a deed, lease, or other documents which show the producer has adequate control for the term of the proposed contract period
The average adjusted gross income of the individual, joint operation, or legal entity may not exceed $1,000,000, unless not less than 66.66 percent of the average adjusted gross income of the person, joint operation, or legal entity is average adjusted gross farm income (7 C.F.R. Part 1400)	If using FY 2009-2012 CIG funding, documentation of a producer's AGI eligibility status can be obtained by the producer at their local USDA Service Center, or through the USDA customer service on-line portal.

*Many of the verification documents will require that the producer have current records established with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) or require that the producer establish new records.

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11

Eligibility Information

Matching Funds

- Applicants must provide non-Federal funding (matching funds) for at least 50 percent of the project cost (1:1 ratio).
- At least half of the funds used to meet this matching requirement must come from cash resources.

Note: We understand these are preliminary figures at this point. If the application is approved for full submission there may be differences once the full details of the budget are developed.

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12

Eligibility Information

Matching Funds (Example)

Total Project Cost: $200,000

- CIG Contribution: $100,000
- Applicant's Contribution: $100,000
  - ✓Cash: $50,000
  - ✓In-kind: $50,000

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13

Eligibility Information

Matching Funds

Set-aside for Beginning or Limited Farmers or Ranchers, Indian Tribes, or community-based organizations comprised of or representing these entities.

An exception regarding matching funds is made for projects funded out of the *set-aside* of up to 10 percent of the total funds available for CIG. Up to three-fourths of the required matching funds for such projects (up to 37.5 percent of the total project cost) may derive from in-kind contributions.

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14

Eligibility Information

Matching Funds (Example for set-aside)

Total Project Cost: $200,000

- CIG Contribution: $100,000
- Applicant's Contribution: $100,000
  - ✓Cash: $25,000
  - ✓In-kind: $75,000

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15

National Component

In fiscal year 2014, NRCS is making available $15 million to support CIG.

In addition, the maximum award amount for any project will not exceed $1 million. CIG will fund single- and multi-year projects, not to exceed three years.

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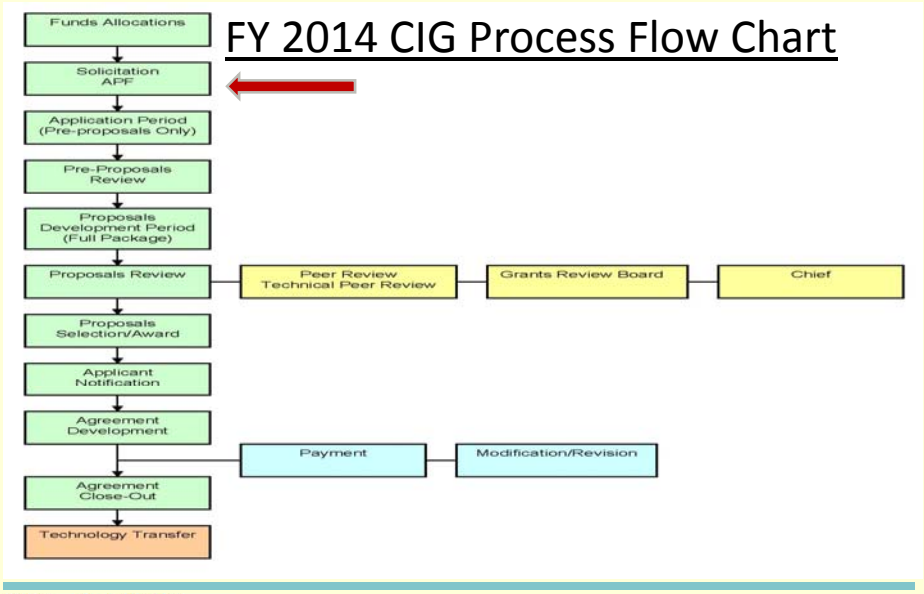
16



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17

Deadlines

- ✓ Pre-Proposal Deadline
  - March 7, 2014
- ✓ Pre-Proposal Determination Notification
  - April 7, 2014
- ✓ Full-Proposal Deadline (for invited applicants)
  - May 5, 2014

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18

Pre-Proposal Items

1) **Application Form:** (Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance)

   Applicants must use this document as the cover sheet for each project application.

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19

Pre-Proposal Items

2) **Project Summary:** (Two to three pages, with a three-(3) page maximum) Applicants must submit a description including the information below.
   a) Project title;
   b) Primary area for consideration (refer to page 3) and why;
   c) Project duration (anticipated project start date of September 1, 2014, not to exceed three years);
   d) Project director name, and contact information (including e-mail);
   e) Names and affiliations of project collaborators;
   f) Project background (describe the issue or problem and how the project addresses it innovatively as defined in Section I.C. - one paragraph)
   g) Project objectives (purpose and goals);
   h) Project methods (methodology, tools, and processes)
   i) Project area/location;
   j) Project deliverables/products; and
   k) Description of EQIP eligible producer involvement. Applicants must include a statement indicating that the proposed project will involve EQIP eligible producers and describe and certify their level of involvement in the project. Projects that do not involve EQIP eligible producers are ineligible for a CIG award.

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20

Pre-Proposal Items

3) **Budget Information:** (Standard Form 424A Budget Information Non-Construction Programs).

a) Fill in all spaces as appropriate. Section B, Item 6, column 1 should reflect the NRCS funds and Column 2 should reflect the cost share. Applicants must prepare this document to identify budget needs.

b) A one page narrative describing the budget needs and justifying why the budget is appropriate should also be included. This is limited to a one-page maximum.

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21

How to Submit

- Electronically
  - ✓ www.grants.gov
  - ✓ nrcscig@wdc.usda.gov*
- Hardcopy
  - ✓ Hand-deliver
  - ✓ Mail

*Preferred method

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22

Key Points

See NRCS as your customer

- Innovative Technology or Approach
- Transferability
- Benefits Agricultural Producers who Partner with NRCS

Start early, plan to submit early

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23

Application Summary

- Review APF
- Complete and sign form SF-424.
- Determine applicant eligibility: Federally recognized Indian Tribe, State, or local unit of government, non-governmental organization, or individual.
- Determine project location eligibility: 50 States, the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands), and the Pacific Islands Area (Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands), and Washington, DC.
- Describe the involvement of landowners who meet the EQIP eligibility requirements in the project.

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24

Application Summary

- Establish connection between the project and the APF topical areas.
- Establish project length (1-3 years, starting on Sept 1, 2014)
- Complete project budget information (SF-424A) as required in the APF pre-proposal section.
- Establish federal funds request (up to $1 million). There is a 50% matching funds requirement.
- Submit application by deadline.

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25

You are Here: Home / Programs / Financial Assistance / Conservation Innovation Grants

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Programs

- Farm Bill
  - Landscape Initiatives
- Financial Assistance
  - Agricultural Management Assistance
  - Agricultural Water Enhancement Program
  - Air Quality Initiative
  - Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative
  - Conservation Innovation Grants
  - Conservation Stewardship Program
  - Environmental Quality Incentives Program
  - Emergency Watershed Protection Program
  - Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program
- Technical Assistance
- Easements
- Landscape Planning
- Alphabetical Listing & Archive

Highlights

- For Applicants
- For Grantees
- Final Reports
- Greenhouse Gas Efforts

Conservation Innovation Grants

NRCS provides funding opportunities for agriculturalists and others through various programs. Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) is a voluntary program intended to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production. Under CIG, Environmental Quality Incentives Program funds are used to award competitive grants to non-Federal governmental or nongovernmental organizations, Tribes, or individuals.

CIG enables NRCS to work with other public and private entities to accelerate technology transfer and adoption of promising technologies and approaches to address some of the Nation's most pressing natural resource concerns. CIG will benefit agricultural producers by providing more options for environmental enhancement and compliance with Federal, State, and local regulations. NRCS administers CIG.

Funding Opportunity

National Competition

NRCS is offering a funding opportunity to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies, while leveraging the Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection in conjunction with agricultural production. The funding opportunity is now available. The application period will close on March 7, 2014.

The document below requires Adobe Acrobat Reader:

FY 2014 CIG Announcement for Program Funding (PDF, 242 KB)

Additional materials for potential applicants.

A webinar for potential applicants will be hosted on Thursday, February 13th at 1 pm EST.

https://www.connectmeeting.att.com

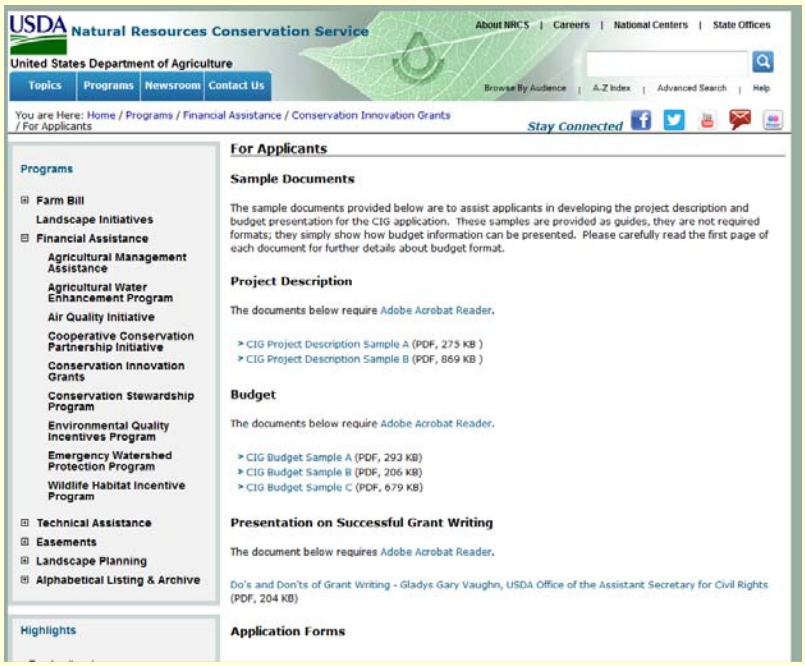
Meeting Number - 8888449904

Access Code: 8496135

Call in to 1-888-844-9904 and use access code 8496135

26

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/cig/index.html



27

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/programs/financial/cig/?cid=stelprdb1046235

Program Summary

- Program is administered by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- CIG was authorized as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- A competitive grant program
- The purpose is to demonstrate potentially innovative technology and/or approaches
- Does not fund research
- Eligible applicants: non-governmental organizations, federally-recognized Indian tribes, non-federal governmental and individuals
- Eligible locations: all 50 States, the Caribbean Area, the Pacific Islands Area, and Washington, DC

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28

Program Summary

- To be eligible for CIG, projects must involve landowners who meet the EQIP eligibility requirements
- Applicants must provide non-Federal funding (matching funds) for at least 50 percent of the project cost (1:1 ratio)
- CIG funds are awarded through a nationwide grants competition for single- or multi-year projects, not to exceed three years.
- Funding notices announcing the availability of funds are published annually on the NRCS website http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ and on the Federal government's eGrants portal, www.grants.gov.
- Qualified applications will be evaluated by a technical peer review panel against criteria identified in the funding notice.
- Contact information: Gregorio Cruz, National CIG Program Manager, (202) 720-8644, gregorio.cruz@wdc.usda.gov or Stacy Swartwood, Program Analyst, (202) 720-1895, stacy.swartwood@wdc.usda.gov

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29

Questions?

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30

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31