

APPLICATION INFORMATION

A. How to Obtain Application Materials

The announcement for the Maine CIG funding opportunity can be found on the following websites: <http://www.grants.gov> and <http://www.me.nrcs.usda.gov>. All Office of Management and Budget standard forms necessary for CIG submission are posted on the following Web site: [Grants.gov-Forms](http://www.grants.gov). An application checklist is available on the CIG Web site: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/cig/index.html>. State Conservationist's letter of review is not required.

B. Application Content and Format

Applications are required to contain the content, format, and information set forth below in order to receive consideration for funding. 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 five copies of the application in the following format, or apply electronically through Grants.gov.

- Applications should be typewritten or printed on 8½" x 11" white paper. The text of the application should be in a font no smaller than 12-point, single-spaced, single-sided, with one-inch margins.
- Applications that fail to comply with the required content and format will not be considered for funding.

Applications must include all required forms and narrative sections described below. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

1. Project Description: The description must include the following information and is limited to 10 pages in length. Pages in excess of the 10-page limit will be discarded and not evaluated. Bibliography, resumes, and references will be included in the page count for the project page limit.
 - a. Project narrative: The project narrative should provide a clear description of the work to be undertaken and how it will be accomplished. It must be formatted to address each of the merit review criteria listed in Part VI and provide sufficient information for the reviewers to evaluate the application in accordance with these merit review criteria.
 - b. Project background: Describe the history of, and need for, the proposed innovation. Provide evidence that the proposed innovation has been studied sufficiently to indicate a good probability for success of the project.
 - c. Project objectives: Be specific using qualitative and quantitative measures, if possible, to describe the project's purpose and goals. Describe how the project is innovative.
 - d. Project methods: Describe clearly the methodology of the project and the tools or processes that will be used to implement the project.
 - e. Location and size of project or project area: Describe the location of the project and the relative size and scope (e.g., acres, farm types and demographics, etc.) of the project area. Provide a map, if possible.
 - f. Producer participation: Estimate the number of producers involved in the project, and describe the extent of their involvement (all producers involved in the project must be eligible for EQIP).
 - g. Project action plan and timeline: Provide a table listing project actions, timeframes, and associated milestones through project completion.
 - h. Project management: Give a detailed description of how the project will be

organized and 15

managed. Include a list of key project personnel, their relevant education or experience, and their anticipated contributions to the project. Explain the level of participation required in the project by government and non-government entities. Identify who will participate in monitoring and evaluating the project.

i. Benefits or results expected and transferability: Identify the results and benefits to be derived from the proposed project activities, and explain how the results will be measured. Identify project beneficiaries, i.e., agricultural producers by type, region, or sector; rural communities; and municipalities. Explain how these entities will benefit. In addition, describe how results will be communicated to others via outreach activities.

j. Project evaluation: Describe the methodology or procedures to be followed to evaluate the project, determine technical feasibility, and quantify the results of the project for the final report (grant recipients will be required to provide a semiannual report of progress, quarterly financial reports, and a final project report to NRCS. Instructions for submitting quarterly reports will be detailed in the grant agreement).

k. Environmental Information and Assessment of Environmental Impacts: Describe and assess the anticipated environmental effects of the proposed project. The description of the potential environmental and social impacts must address all potential beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action. A full description and assessment of the potential impacts to all potentially impacted environmental resources must be disclosed. One line or short descriptions of environmental impacts are not acceptable. The length of the analysis should be commensurate with the complexity of the project proposed and the environmental impacts impacted either directly, indirectly (later in time), 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. Environmental resources include soil, water, air, plants, and animals, as well as other specific resources protected by law, Executive Order, and agency policy. These resources are outlined in the NRCS Environmental Evaluation Worksheet, form NRCS-ME-CPA-52, which is available at: http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/ME/ME_CPA_52_FY10.pdf The CPA-52 form can be used as a guide for the scope of environmental information that should be prepared for this section of the application. In addition to describing impacts, applicants are required to assess the significance or degree of potential environmental impact of the proposed project on environmental resources. Applicants may consult with Christopher Jones, Maine NRCS Environmental Liaison concerning the scope of what should be addressed in this section of the application.

Note: Please be aware that applications for projects with potentially adverse impacts may need to be modified in order to achieve acceptable and beneficial levels of environmental impact. If projects cannot be modified, then there is a potential during the screening process that the application may not be selected.

2. Budget Information: Applicants must prepare a Standard Form (SF) 424-A Budget Information Non-Construction Programs to document budget needs. The SF-424A is available at: Grants.gov-Forms or can be obtained from a NRCS State office. For standard grant applications, a budget form is required for each

year of requested support. In addition, a cumulative budget is required detailing the requested total support for the overall project period. The budget form may be reproduced as needed by applicants. Funds may be requested under any of the categories listed on the form, provided that the item or service for which support is requested is allowable under the authorizing legislation, the applicable statutes, regulations, Federal cost principles, and NRCS program guidelines and can be justified, as necessary, for the successful conduct of the proposed project. Applicants must also include a budget narrative to justify their budget requests (see number 3 below). If claiming indirect costs, the applicant must provide an indirect cost rate agreement or indirect cost rate proposal as justification for the rate of indirect costs being claimed. Indirect costs is based on total Federal funds awarded and cannot exceed 15 percent. 16

3. Budget Narrative (maximum 9 pages): In addition to the SF-424A, all applicants must provide a detailed narrative in support of the budget for the project, broken down by each project year. All budget categories for which support is requested must be individually listed (with costs) in the same order as the budget and justified on a separate sheet of paper and placed immediately behind the Budget Form (SF-424A). Discuss how the budget specifically supports the proposed activities. Explain how budget items such as personnel, travel, equipment, etc. are essential to achieving project objectives. Justify the project cost effectiveness and include justification for personnel salaries such as resumes. A budget narrative is also required for the matching portion.

4. Matching: Applications should include written verification of commitments of matching support (including both cash and in-kind contributions) from third parties.

For any third party cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each donation, signed by the authorized organizational representative of the donor organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the donor, (2) the name of the applicant organization, (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made, (4) the dollar amount of the cash donation, and (5) a statement that the donor will pay the cash contribution during the grant period.

"In-kind" refers to non-cash contributions of goods or services made by third party individuals or organizations to support projects. Examples of in-kind include work done by unpaid volunteers and donations of supplies, facilities, or equipment. In-kind contributions must be necessary to accomplish program activities and are verifiable.

For any third party in-kind contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each contribution, signed by the authorized organizational representatives of the donor organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the donor, (2) the name of the applicant's organization, (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made, (4) a good faith estimate of the current fair market value of the third party in-kind contribution, and (5) a statement that the donor will make the contribution during the grant period.

The sources and amounts of all matching support from outside the applicant institution should be summarized on a separate page and placed in the application immediately following the summary of matching support (matching support means a budget narrative broken down by year).

The value of applicant contributions to the project will be established in accordance with the applicable cost principles. Applicants should refer to OMB Circulars, Cost Principles that apply to their entity for additional guidance, and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

5. Declaration of Beginning Farmer or Rancher, Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher, or Indian Tribe: If an applicant wishes to compete in the 10 percent set-aside funding pool, applicants must make a declaration in writing of their status as a Beginning Farmer or Rancher, Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher, or Indian tribe or a community-based organization comprised of or representing these entities. This declaration is also required in order to be eligible for the in-kind contribution exception. (Refer to Part III B that describes the provision of a set-aside pool of funding for Beginning or Limited Farmers or Ranchers and Indian tribes.)

6. Declaration of EQIP Eligibility: Applicants must include a statement indicating that the proposed project will involve EQIP-eligible producers. Applicants must make a declaration in writing that they, or parties involved in the project, are eligible for EQIP (if EQIP eligible producers are not involved, the proposal will be considered ineligible). The declaration must describe and certify the level of involvement by EQIP eligible producers.

7. Certifications: All applications must include a signed Standard Form (SF) 424B Assurances, Non-construction Programs. The SF-424B may be found at: [Grants.gov-Forms](https://www.grants.gov/Forms) or by contacting the State office. Applicants, by signing and submitting an application, assure and certify that they are in compliance with the following from 7 CFR:

- a. Part 3017, [Government wide Debarment and Suspension \(Non-procurement\)](#)
- b. Part 3018, [New Restrictions on Lobbying](#)
- c. Part 3021, [Government wide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace \(Financial Assistance\)](#)

8. Duns Number:

A Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. A *Federal Register* notice of final policy issuance (68 FR 38402) requires a DUNS number in every application (i.e., hard copy and electronic) for a grant or cooperative agreement (except applications from individuals) submitted on or after October 1, 2003. For information about how to obtain a DUNS number, go to <http://www.grants.gov/RequestaDUNS> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.

9. Required CCR Registration: The Central Contractor Registry (CCR) is a database that serves as the primary Government repository for contractor information required for the conduct of business with the Government. This database is used as a central location for maintaining organizational information for organizations seeking and receiving grants from the Government. CIG applicants must register with the CCR. To register, visit <http://www.ccr.gov>. Allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration.

B. How to Submit a Written Application

Applicants must submit one signed original copy of each project application.

Applicants must submit five copies of the application.

The address for submitting hand-delivered, express mail, or overnight courier service applications is:

Jerry Jacobs, Contracting Officer

Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Maine Conservation Innovation Grants Program ,967 Illinois Avenue, Suite #3, Bangor Maine 04401

The address for applications sent via the United States Postal Service is:

Jerry Jacobs, Contracting Officer

Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Maine Conservation Innovation Grants Program , 967 Illinois Avenue, Suite #3, Bangor Maine 04401

Applications submitted by email or fax will not be considered.

C. How to Submit an Application Electronically

Applicants may submit applications electronically through Grants.gov.

Applications submitted through Grants.gov must contain all of the elements of a complete application and meet the requirements described above. Instructions for electronically submitting the required standard forms, abstract, narrative, and declarations are posted on Grants.gov. Instructions for adding attachments are available on the Web site. Applications submitted electronically are date and time stamped by Grants.gov and must be received by the identified closing date.

NRCS is not responsible for any technical malfunctions 18

or Web site problems related to Grants.gov submissions. Applicants should begin the Grants.gov process in advance of the submission deadline to avoid problems.

D. Application Due Date

Applications must be received at Maine NRCS Headquarters by 4:00 p.m. EST on February 28, 2011. The applicant assumes the risk of any delays in application delivery. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit completed applications via overnight mail or delivery service to ensure timely receipt by NRCS.