

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service, Commodity Credit Corporation  
Alaska State Office

ACTION: NOTICE

Alaska Conservation Innovation Grants Fiscal Year 2012 Announcement for Program Funding  
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.912

SUMMARY: The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Alaska State Office, an agency under the United States Department of Agriculture, is announcing availability of Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies. Applications must be located in Alaska to be eligible for the Alaska State CIG Program. NRCS anticipates that the amount available for support of this program in FY 2012 will be approximately **\$160,000**. Applications are requested from eligible governmental or non-governmental entities or individuals for competitive consideration of grant awards for projects between 1 and 3 years in duration.

Funds will be awarded through a two-phase competitive grants process that will include:

- (1) a pre-proposal process with a deadline of **March 21, 2012**; and
- (2) a full proposal process by invitation only with a deadline of **May 18, 2012**.

The full proposal process will only be open to applicants whose pre-proposal applications are selected through a technical and competitive review process conducted by NRCS.

This notice identifies the objectives, eligibility criteria, and application instructions for CIG projects. Applications will be screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete and non-compliant applications will be eliminated from competition, and notification of elimination will be mailed to the applicant. NRCS will request a full proposal package only from those applicants selected in the pre-proposal phase.

DATES:

- Applications for the pre-proposal phase must be received by (not postmarked by) 4:30 pm Alaska Time on **Wednesday, March 21, 2012**.
- Notification of selected pre-proposal applications will be announced by **April 20, 2012**.
- Selected applicants will then be required to submit a full proposal package to the NRCS Alaska CIG Program Manager by 4:30 pm on **May 18, 2012**.

ADDRESSES: Applications sent via United States Postal Service, hand-delivery, express mail or overnight courier service must be sent to the following address: USDA-NRCS Kenai Service Center, Attn: Karen Dearlove, 110 Trading Bay Suite 160, Kenai, AK 99611-9115. Applications sent electronically must be sent through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or to [karen.dearlove@ak.usda.gov](mailto:karen.dearlove@ak.usda.gov) or by facsimile to: (907) 283-9667.

For more information contact:

Karen Dearlove, Alaska CIG Program Manager  
USDA NRCS Kenai Service Center  
110 Trading Bay, Suite 160  
Kenai, AK 99611-9115  
Phone: (907) 283-8732 x114  
E-mail: [karen.dearlove@ak.usda.gov](mailto:karen.dearlove@ak.usda.gov)

## SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

### I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

#### A. Legislative Authority

The Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program was authorized as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) [16 U.S.C. 3839aa-8] under Section 2509 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-246). The Secretary of Agriculture delegated the authority for administration of EQIP and CIG to the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), as Vice President of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). EQIP is funded and administered by NRCS under the authorities of the CCC.

#### B. Overview

The purpose of CIG is 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. CIG projects are expected to lead to the transfer of conservation technologies, management systems, and innovative approaches into NRCS policy, technical manuals, guides, and references, or to the private sector. CIG does not fund research projects. Projects intended to test hypotheses do not qualify for a CIG grant. CIG is used to apply or demonstrate previously proven technology. It is a vehicle to stimulate development and adoption of conservation approaches or technologies that have been studied sufficiently to indicate a high likelihood of success, and that are a candidate for eventual technology transfer or institutionalization. CIG promotes sharing of skills, knowledge, technologies, and facilities among communities, governments, and other institutions to ensure that scientific and technological developments are accessible to a wider range of users. CIG funds projects targeting innovative on-the-ground conservation, including pilot projects and field demonstrations.

A two-phase evaluation process will be utilized for applications submitted under this notice. The first phase requires the applicant to submit a pre-proposal. Applications will be evaluated by NRCS staff under the bulleted topics identified by the applicant (see section I.D). Applications will be screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete applications will be eliminated from competition, and notification of elimination will be mailed to the applicant.

NRCS will accept applications for single or multi-year projects, not to exceed 3 years, submitted to NRCS from eligible entities including Federally recognized Indian tribes, State and local units of government, and non-governmental organizations and individuals. Applications must be located in Alaska to be eligible for the Alaska State CIG Program.

NRCS will only request a full proposal package from those applicants selected in the pre-proposal process. Complete applications received by applicable deadlines will be evaluated by a technical peer review panel based on the Criteria for Application Evaluation identified in the application instructions in section VI.B.

Full proposal applications, along with their associated technical peer review, will be forwarded to the Grants Review Board. The Grants Review Board will make recommendations for project approval to the NRCS State Conservationist for the final selections.

### C. Innovative Conservation Projects or Activities

For the purposes of CIG, the proposed innovative project or activity must encompass the development, field testing, evaluation, implementation, and monitoring of:

- Conservation adoption approaches or incentive systems; or
- Promising conservation technologies, practices, systems, procedures, or approaches; or
- Environmental soundness with goals of environmental protection and natural resource enhancement.

To be given priority consideration, the innovative project or activity should:

- Make use of a proven technology or a technology that has been studied sufficiently to indicate a high probability for success;
- Demonstrate and verify environmental (soil, water, air, plants, energy, and animal) effectiveness, utility, affordability, and usability of conservation technology in the field;
- Adapt conservation technologies, practices, systems, procedures, approaches, and incentive systems to improve performance and encourage adoption;
- Introduce conservation systems, approaches, and procedures from another geographic area or agricultural sector;
- Adapt conservation technology, management, or incentive systems to improve performance; and
- Demonstrate transferability of knowledge.

### D. Alaska State Component

NRCS Alaska is interested in receiving proposals for any variety of innovative conservation approaches benefitting production and subsistence agriculture in Alaska. Special interest is placed on receiving proposals that address topics identified as “**Priority Need.**”

#### 1. *Energy Conservation*

- **Priority Need:** Evaluate and demonstrate energy efficiency measures (e.g. structure design, heating system, and/or electrical system) and/or renewable energy systems (e.g. hydropower, solar, and/or wood-heat) that reduce and/or displace fossil fuel energy use and meet on-farm energy needs while reducing environmental contaminants (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions).
- **Priority Need:** Develop and/or demonstrate innovative implementation systems to achieve greater use of energy audits that identify on-farm energy efficiency priorities.
- **Priority Need:** Evaluate and demonstrate energy savings through adaptive management cropping systems utilizing crop rotations that include legumes and grasses in long-term, no-till systems that will increase nutrient cycling through enhanced soil biological activity.

#### 2. *Best Management Practices for High Tunnel Production*

- **Priority Need:** Conduct an assessment of high tunnel production in Alaska to:
  1. Identify and recommend those horticultural practices that should be adopted, and
  2. Identify and recommend the associated conservation practice standards that should be incorporated as a set of best management practices covering the elements of high tunnel design, site preparation, crop selection, nutrient management, pest management, ventilation, heating, irrigation, pollination, and overall energy conservation.

## II. FUNDING AVAILABILITY

### A. Alaska State Component

NRCS Alaska anticipates that the amount available for support of this program in FY 2012 will be approximately **\$160 thousand (\$160,000)**.

Alaska CIG will fund single and multi-year projects, not to exceed 3 years (anticipated project start date of **September 30, 2012**). Funds will be awarded through a statewide competitive grants process. The maximum award amount for any project will not exceed **\$75 thousand (\$75,000)**.

## III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

CIG applicants must be a Federally recognized Indian tribe, State or local unit of government, non-governmental organization, or an individual.

### A. Matching Funds

Selected applicants may receive CIG grants of up to 50 percent of their total project cost. CIG recipients must match the USDA funds awarded on dollar-for-dollar basis from non-Federal sources with cash and in-kind contributions. Of the applicant's required match (50%), a minimum of 25 percent of the total project cost must come from cash sources; the remaining 25 percent may come from in-kind contributions.

In-kind costs of equipment, supplies, or project personnel including volunteers cannot exceed 50 percent of the applicant's match (except in the case of projects carried out by either a Beginning Farmer or Rancher, Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher, or Federally recognized Indian tribe or a community-based organization comprised of or representing these entities). The remainder of the match must be provided in cash.

Matching funds must be secured at time of full application. Full applications shall include written verification of commitments of matching support (including both cash and in-kind contributions) from third parties. Additional information about matching funds can be found at the following link: 2 CFR 215.

### B. Beginning or Limited Farmers or Ranchers, or Federally Recognized Indian Tribes

Up to three-fourths of such an applicant's required matching funds (up to 37.5 percent of the total project cost) may be derived from in-kind contributions. This exception is intended to help Beginning Farmers or Ranchers, Limited Resource Farmers or Ranchers, and Federally recognized Indian tribes meet the statutory requirements for receiving a CIG.

Below are definitions of Beginning Farmer or Rancher, and Limited Resource Producer. These definitions can also be found at 7 C.F.R. 1466.3:

***Beginning Farmer or Rancher*** - a person or legal entity who:

- Has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years. This requirement applies to all members of an entity who will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch;
- In the case of a contract with an individual, or with the immediate family, material and substantial participation requires that the individual provide substantial day-to-

day labor and management of the farm or ranch consistent with the practices in the county or State where the farm is located; and

- In the case of a contract with an entity or joint operation, all members must materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch. Material and substantial participation requires that each member provide some amount of the management or labor necessary for day-to-day activities, such that if each of the members did not provide these inputs, operation of the farm or ranch would be seriously impaired.

**Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher** - a person or legal entity who:

- Has direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than \$155,200 in each of the previous 2 years (adjusted for inflation using Prices Paid by Farmer Index as compiled by National Agricultural Statistical Service); and
- Has a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous 2 years (to be determined annually using Department of Commerce data).

### **C. EQIP Payment Limitation and Duplicate Payments**

Section 1240G of the Food Security Act of 1985, 16 U.S.C. 3839aa-7, imposes a \$300,000 limitation for all cost-share or incentive payments disbursed to individuals or entities under an EQIP contract between fiscal years 2008 and 2012. The limitation applies to CIG in the following manner:

- CIG funds are awarded through grant agreements. These grant agreements are not EQIP contracts; thus, CIG awards in and of themselves are not limited by the payment limitation.
- Direct or indirect payments made to an individual or entity using funds from a CIG award to carry out structural, vegetative, or management practices count toward each individual's or entity's EQIP payment limitation. Through project progress reports, CIG grantees are responsible for certifying that producers involved in CIG projects do not exceed the payment limitation. Further, all direct and indirect payments made to producers using CIG funds must be reported to the NRCS CIG program manager in the quarterly reports. Direct or indirect payments cannot be made for a practice for which the producer has already received funds, or is contracted to receive funds, through any USDA program (EQIP, Agricultural Management Assistance, Conservation Security Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, etc.) because that would be a duplicate payment.

### **D. Project Eligibility**

To be eligible for CIG, projects must involve landowners who meet the EQIP eligibility requirements as set forth in 16 USC 3839aa-1. Further, all agricultural producers receiving direct or indirect payments through participation in a CIG project must also meet the EQIP eligibility requirements. Additional information regarding EQIP eligibility requirements can be found at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/>. Participating producers are not required to have an EQIP contract.

A person or legal entity will not be eligible to receive any benefit during a crop, fiscal, or program year, as appropriate, if the average adjusted gross non-farm income of the person or legal entity exceeds \$1,000,000, unless not less than 66.66 percent of the average adjusted gross income of the person or legal entity is average adjusted gross farm income (7 CFR Part 1400).

A person who is determined ineligible for USDA program benefits under the Highly Erodible Land Compliance and Wetland Compliance provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985 will not be eligible to receive direct or indirect payments through CIG.

Technologies and approaches that are eligible for funding in a project's geographic area through EQIP are ineligible for CIG funding except where the use of those technologies and approaches demonstrates clear innovation. The burden falls on the applicant to sufficiently describe the innovative features of the proposed technology or approach (applicants should reference the appropriate State's EQIP Eligible Practices List by contacting the NRCS State office).

The grantee is responsible for providing the technical assistance required to successfully implement and complete the project. NRCS will designate a Program Contact, Administrative Contact, and Technical Contact to provide oversight for each project receiving an award.

#### **IV. APPLICATION and SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

##### **A. PRE-PROPOSAL**

###### **1. How to Obtain Materials**

The announcement for this CIG funding opportunity can be found on the following web sites: [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and [http://www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CIG\\_AlaskaStatewide.html](http://www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CIG_AlaskaStatewide.html)

###### **2. Content and Format**

Applications must contain the information set forth below in order to receive consideration for the full proposal phase. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of NRCS as to the relative merits of the project described in their application. If submitting applications for more than one project, submit a separate application for each project. Materials exceeding stated page limits will not be considered.

- 1) Pre-proposal Cover Sheet: Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance  
Applicants must use this document as the cover sheet for each project application. Standard Form 424 can be downloaded from [Grants.gov - Forms Repository](http://www.grants.gov), and is also available at [http://www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CIG\\_AlaskaStatewide.html](http://www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CIG_AlaskaStatewide.html)
- 2) Project Abstract Summary (Not to exceed three (3) pages)  
Applicants may use the form 'Project Abstract Summary' from [Grants.gov - Forms Repository](http://www.grants.gov), or [http://www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CIG\\_AlaskaStatewide.html](http://www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CIG_AlaskaStatewide.html) or may create their own form providing a description that includes the following:
  1. Project title,
  2. Primary conservation issue (refer to Section D, and Priority Needs - page 3),
  3. Project duration (anticipated project start date of **September 30, 2012**),
  4. Project director name and contact information (including e-mail),
  5. Names and affiliations of project collaborators,
  6. Project purpose,
  7. Project area/location,
  8. Project summary,
  9. Project deliverables/products,
  10. Description of EQIP-eligible ag producer involvement.

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

1. 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. If your cost share is from multiple sources you may show that in the remaining columns of Item 6. Applicants must prepare this document to identify budget needs. The SF-424A is available at: [Grants.gov - Forms Repository](http://Grants.gov - Forms Repository)
2. A one page narrative describing the budget needs and justifying why the budget is appropriate should also be included. This is limited to a 1-page maximum.

**Note:** Please note that we understand these are preliminary budget figures at this point and there may be differences once the full details of the budget are developed.

4) **How to Submit an Application**

Applicants may submit applications electronically through Grants.gov or to the e-mail address listed below, or by facsimile number listed below. Alternatively, applications may be submitted in person or via express mail, overnight courier service, or U.S. Postal Service to the address listed below. Applications submitted must contain all of the elements of a complete package and meet the requirements described above. Instructions for electronically submitting the required standard forms, and instructions for adding attachments, are posted on Grants.gov.

- Applications submitted electronically are date and time stamped by Grants.gov and must be received by the identified closing date of **March 21, 2012**.
- Applications by any other method must be received on or before (not postmarked by) the submission deadline of **4:30pm, Wednesday, March 21, 2012**.

**Note:** NRCS is not responsible for any technical malfunctions or web site problems related to Grants.gov or e-mailed or faxed submissions. Applicants should send their application in advance of the submission deadline to avoid technical problems.

Applications may be submitted via email to [karen.dearlove@ak.usda.gov](mailto:karen.dearlove@ak.usda.gov), via [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov), by facsimile to (907) 283-9667, or by mail to:

Karen Dearlove, CIG Program Contact  
USDA NRCS Kenai Service Center  
110 Trading Bay, Suite 160  
Kenai, AK 99611-9115  
Email: [karen.dearlove@ak.usda.gov](mailto:karen.dearlove@ak.usda.gov)  
Phone: 907-283-8732 x114  
Fax: 907-283-9667

5) **Acknowledgement of Submission**

NRCS will acknowledge receipt of timely applications via e-mail or by phone if no e-mail is viable. An applicant who does not receive such an acknowledgement within 30 days of their submission but believes he/she submitted a timely application must contact the NRCS program contact below within 30 days. Failure to do so will result in the application not being considered for the second phase of the application process.

## **6) Withdrawal**

Applications may be withdrawn by written notice at any time before selections are made. Applications may be withdrawn by the applicant, or by an authorized representative.

## **7) Review**

Each application will be screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice, including EQIP payment limitations and previous or current CIG grantee agreement terms and conditions. Incomplete applications will be eliminated from competition and notification of elimination will be mailed to the applicant. Applications will be evaluated by the technology proposed, as well as evaluated for innovation and greatest potential benefit for ag producers and NRCS.

- First-time applicants will receive priority consideration over previous grantees.
- Previous or current grantees that apply for FY2012 CIG funding must have all financial, project progress, and/or final reporting done in compliance with their cooperative agreement to pass threshold eligibility for further technical review. Any such CIG grantee that is not in compliance with terms in their existing or previous cooperative agreements will be eliminated from competition and notification of elimination will be mailed to the applicant.

## **8) Anticipated Notification**

Applicants will be notified via mail by **April 20, 2012**. Applicants selected for full proposals will be required to submit a full proposal package by **May 18, 2012**.

- V. **INFORMATION FOR FULL PROPOSALS** (only for those applicants notified at the end of the pre-proposal review process that their application has been identified for further evaluation).

### **A. FULL PROPOSAL**

All Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standard forms necessary for CIG submission are posted on the following web site: [Grants.gov - Forms Repository](http://www.grants.gov). An application checklist and the required forms will also be available on the Alaska CIG Web site: [http://www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CIG\\_AlaskaStatewide.html](http://www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CIG_AlaskaStatewide.html)

#### **1. 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 as to the relative merits of the project described in the application. Applicants must submit one original copy of the application in the following format for their project narrative:

- 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 and page numbered.
- 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.

- a. **Proposal Cover Sheet:** (Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance)  
Applicants must use this document as the cover sheet for each project application. Standard Form 424 can be downloaded from [Grants.gov - Forms Repository](http://www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CIG_AlaskaStatewide.html) or [http://www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CIG\\_AlaskaStatewide.html](http://www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CIG_AlaskaStatewide.html)
- b. **Project Description:** The description must include the following information and is limited to 12 pages in length.
  1. **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.
  2. **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.
  3. **Project methods:** Describe clearly the methodology of the project and the tools or processes that will be used to implement the project.
  4. **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.
  5. **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).
  6. **Project action plan and timeline:** Provide a table listing project actions, timeframes, and associated milestones through project completion. Anticipated project start date of **September 30, 2012**.
  7. **Project management:** Give a detailed description of how the project will be organized and 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.
  8. **Project deliverables/products:** Provide a list of specific deliverables and products that will allow NRCS to monitor project progress and payment. In addition to specific deliverable, applications must include the following activities as deliverables:
    - a. Quarterly project progress reports and Federal Financial Reports;
    - b. Supplemental narratives including invoices and/or receipts to explain and support payment requests;
    - c. Final project report (within 90 days of project completion);
    - d. Performance items specific to the project that indicate progress;
    - e. New technology and innovative approach fact sheet;
    - f. Participation in at least one peer-based conference, seminar, field day or similar event during the period of the grant to present outcomes.
  9. **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.
  10. **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 quarterly progress report, quarterly financial reports, and a final project report to NRCS.

Instructions for submitting reports will be detailed in the grant agreement.

- c. **Additional Information:** Bibliographies and/or resumes (not to exceed two pages per person), and references.
- a. **Assessment of Environmental and Social 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 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 resources 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-CPA-52, which is available at: [NRCS-CPA-52](#). The NRCS-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 the NRCS District Conservationist in their general region concerning the scope of what should be addressed in this section of the application. A list of the NRCS Alaska District Conservationists can be found on the following web site: <http://www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/fieldoffices.html>

*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, there is potential that during the screening process the application may not be selected.*

- b. **Budget Information:** The budget portion of the application consists of three parts described below.
1. **Standard Form (SF) 424A Budget Information- Non-Construction Programs:** 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 funds. If your cost share is from multiple sources you may show that in the remaining columns of Item 6. This form is the summary budget for the project.
  2. **Detailed Budget Description:** Specific item by item breakdown of the totals provided in Item 6 of the SF-424A should be provided. This detail should show what individual costs were added together to arrive at the totals presented in each of Object Class Categories on the SF-424. The format of this information should be readable in 8.5 by 11 printable pages. It may be in a chart, spreadsheet, table, etc. The information needs to be presented in such a way that the evaluators and NRCS can readily understand what expenses will be incurred to support the project. The breakdown of the federal share and the cost share should be shown separately as in the SF-424A, not combined. This may be on separate documents

or on different sections of the same presentation. Listed below are some suggested items that should be shown in the budget details. These are suggested details and are not inclusive:

- 6a. Personnel; A list of personnel, their salary, hourly rate, hours, % time
- 6b. Fringe Benefits: % of salary, differing rates for different staff
- 6c. Travel: basis for airfare, mileage rate (NTE Federal govt. rate), per diem, hotel, car rental, how many trips, how many days, number of staff
- 6d. Equipment: type of equipment, cost per item, per batch, per load, quantity
- 6e. Supplies: type of supplies, cost per item, per batch, per load, quantity (a general statement such as “office supplies \$3,000” is not acceptable)
- 6f. Contractual; Cost of each subcontract – the total of all subcontracts should be shown on the SF-424, but an itemized budget should be provided for each potential subcontract. The budgets for the subcontracts should follow this same format and be submitted with your proposal.
- 6g. Construction: N/A
- 6h. Other: Cost per item, per batch, per load, quantity

- 3. **Budget Narrative:** Provide a detailed narrative in support of the budget for the project, broken down by each project year. Discuss how the budget specifically supports the proposed activities. Explain how budget items are essential to achieving project objectives. Justify the project cost effectiveness and include justification for personnel and consultant salaries with a description of duties. In addition to the information above, the subcontractors and consultants must also submit a statement of work. The budget narrative should support the federal funds requested and the cost share.

**c. Indirect Costs**

If you have a current Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement you must:

- a. Submit a copy of the agreement with your application,
- b. Calculate indirect costs based on the total Federal Funds awarded and cannot exceed 15 percent,
- c. Requesting unrecovered indirect costs in the matching funds is not approved.

If you do **not** have a current Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement you may not claim indirect costs in this application.

- d. Matching:** Applications must include written verification of commitments of matching support (including both cash and in-kind contributions) from non-federal third parties.

**Cash Match:** For any third party cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement is required 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 Match:** "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, use of facilities, or

use of equipment. In-kind contributions must be necessary to accomplish program activities, must be documented in detail, and must be verifiable.

For any third party in-kind contributions, a separate pledge agreement is required 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 must 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.

- e. **Declaration of Previous CIG Projects Involvement:** Identify any previously awarded CIG projects involvement related to this proposal and any of its principal investigators. Detail the purpose, outcomes to date, and how this new proposal relates to the previous award.
- f. **Declaration of Beginning Farmer or Rancher, Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher, or Federally Recognized Indian Tribe:** If an applicant wishes to be eligible for the in-kind contribution exception (higher in-kind level), applicants must make a declaration in writing of their status as a Beginning Farmer or Rancher, Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher, or Federally recognized Indian tribe or a community-based organization comprised of or representing these entities. (Refer to Part III B that describes the provision of a set-aside pool of funding for Beginning or Limited Farmers or Ranchers and Federally recognized Indian tribes.)
- g. **Certifications: Standard Form (SF) 424B - Assurances, Non-construction Programs.** All applications must include this document. The SF-424B may be found at: [Grants.gov - Forms Repository](http://www.grants.gov) or [http://www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CIG\\_AlaskaStatewide.html](http://www.ak.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CIG_AlaskaStatewide.html)  
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).
- h. **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. CIG applicants must have a DUNS Number by full application deadline of April 20th. Information on how to obtain a DUNS number can be found at: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or by calling 1-866-705-5711. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.
- i. **Central Contractor Registry (CCR) Registration:** The 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 also used as a central location for maintaining organizational information for organizations seeking and receiving grants from the government. CIG applicants must be registered with the CCR by full application deadline of May 18, 2012. To register, go to: <http://www.ccr.gov> Allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration.

## **2. How to Submit an Application**

Applicants may submit applications electronically through Grants.gov, or to the e-mail address listed below. Alternatively, applications may be submitted in person or via express mail, overnight courier service, or U.S. Postal Service to the addresses listed below. Facsimile transmissions will not be accepted for full application submissions due to the length of documentation necessary. Applications submitted through Grants.gov or e-mail must contain all of the elements of a complete package and meet the requirements described above. Instructions for electronically submitting the required standard forms, and instructions for adding attachments are posted on Grants.gov. Applications submitted electronically are date and time stamped by Grants.gov and must be received by the closing date of **May 18, 2012**. All other modes of submission for applications require that they must be received (not postmarked) on or before the submission deadline of **4:30pm, Friday, May 18, 2012**.

Note: NRCS is not responsible for any technical malfunctions or web site problems related to Grants.gov or e-mailed submissions. Applicants should begin the Grants.gov process or send their e-mail in advance of the submission deadline to avoid problems.

Applications sent via United States Postal Service, hand-delivery, express mail or overnight courier service must be sent to the following address:

**USDA-NRCS Kenai Service Center**  
**Attn: Karen Dearlove**  
**110 Trading Bay Suite 160**  
**Kenai, AK 99611-9115**

Applications sent electronically must be sent through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) or to [karen.dearlove@ak.usda.gov](mailto:karen.dearlove@ak.usda.gov) . For more information contact:

Karen Dearlove, Alaska CIG Program Manager  
USDA-NRCS Kenai Service Center  
110 Trading Bay, Suite 160  
Kenai, AK 99611-9115  
Phone: (907) 283-8732 x114  
E-mail: [karen.dearlove@ak.usda.gov](mailto:karen.dearlove@ak.usda.gov)

Note: Applicants must submit one signed original copy of each project application. Applications submitted by fax will not be considered.

## **3. Acknowledgement of Submission**

NRCS will acknowledge receipt of timely applications via e-mail. An applicant who does not receive such an e-mail acknowledgement within 30 days of their submission but believes he/she submitted a timely application must contact the NRCS program contact

below within 30 days. Failure to do so will result in the application not being considered for the second phase of the application process.

Alaska CIG Program Contact:

Karen Dearlove  
USDA-NRCS Kenai Service Center  
110 Trading Bay, Suite 160  
Kenai, AK 99611-9115  
Phone: (907) 283-8732 x114  
E-mail: [karen.dearlove@ak.usda.gov](mailto:karen.dearlove@ak.usda.gov)

#### **4. Withdrawal**

Applications may be withdrawn by written notice at any time before selections are made. Applications may be withdrawn by the applicant, or by an authorized representative.

#### **5. Funding Restrictions**

Awardees may not use unrecovered indirect costs as part of their matching funds.

CIG funds may not be used to pay any of the following costs unless otherwise permitted by law, or approved in writing by the Authorized Departmental Officer 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 grant;
- c. Costs which lie outside the scope of the approved project and any 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. Costs for the purchase of traditional farm equipment for basic farming operations, e.g. tractors, front-end loaders, etc., and,
- h. Renovation or refurbishment of research or related spaces; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such spaces; and the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

This list is not exhaustive. Questions regarding the allowances of particular items of cost should be directed to the administrative contact person.

#### **6. Review**

Applications will be screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete and non-compliant applications will be eliminated from competition, and notification of elimination will be mailed to the applicant. Complete applications will be evaluated by a technical peer review panel based on the Criteria for Application Evaluation identified in the application instructions in section V.B.

Applications with technically-based recommendations from the peer review groups will be forwarded to the Grants Review Board. The Grants Review Board will make

recommendations for project approvals to the NRCS Alaska State Conservationist who will make the final selections.

### **7. Patents and Inventions**

Allocation of rights to patents and inventions shall be in accordance with USDA regulation 7 CFR §3019.36 and 7 CFR §3019.2. USDA receives a royalty-free license for Federal Government 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.

### **8. Environmental Review Requirements**

The Council on Environmental Quality's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations at 40 CFR parts 1500-1508 and the NRCS regulation that implements NEPA at 7 CFR part 650 require that an environmental review be prepared for actions where the agency has discretion and control. Accordingly, NRCS financial assistance under the CIG program requires compliance with these regulations. As part of the application packet, applicants are required to provide environmental information pertaining to their project to help NRCS determine the appropriate documentation required to comply with NEPA and NRCS regulations. If the application is selected for funding, the NRCS Program Contact and NRCS District Conservationist will coordinate with the selected applicant concerning documentation for compliance with NEPA. The selected applicant will be required to prepare and pay for the preparation of the appropriate NEPA document (e.g., Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement if required for NEPA compliance). Grant funding cannot be approved until the environmental review requirements demonstrating compliance with NEPA are met.

## **VI. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

### **A. Review and Selection Process**

There are three steps in evaluating full CIG proposals. Proposals will be divided among technical peer review groups and will be reviewed by a Technical Peer Review Panel. The Technical Peer Review Panel consists of NRCS technical specialists. Applications will be reviewed based on the CIG Technical Evaluation Criteria listed in Part VI.B below.

The Technical Peer Review Panel will forward their recommendations and the proposals to a Grants Review Board, which will certify the peer review panels' recommendations and ensure that the application evaluations are consistent with program objectives. The CIG Grants Review Board consists of members of NRCS Alaska leadership, the CIG Program Contact, the Public Affairs Specialist, and other USDA and agriculture public service officials. The Grants Review Board is chaired by the Alaska CIG Program Contact.

The Grants Review Board will forward recommendations to the NRCS Alaska State Conservationist for final review and selection.

### **B. Criteria for Application Evaluation**

Peer review panels will use the following criteria to evaluate project proposals:

#### Purpose, Approach, and Goals

- Design and implementation of project based on sound methodology and demonstrated technology.

- Promotes environmental enhancement and protection in conjunction with agricultural production.
- Project outcome is clearly measurable.
- Potential for successful completion.
- Both beneficial and adverse impacts are considered and an acceptably significant level of improvement will be achieved.

#### Innovative Technology or Approach

- Project is innovative (national, regionally, and local in nature).
- Project conforms to description of innovative projects or activities in proposal request announcement.

#### Project Management

- Timeline and milestones are clear and reasonable.
- Project staff has technical expertise needed.
- Budget is adequately explained and justified.
- Experience and capacity to partner with and gain the support of other organizations, institutions and agencies.

#### Transferability

- Potential for producers and landowners to use the innovative technologies or approaches.
- Potential to transfer the approach or technology regionally or statewide or to a broader audience or other geographic or socio-economic areas, including limited resource, socially disadvantaged and other traditionally underserved producers and communities.
- Potential for NRCS to successfully use the innovative approach or methods within policy, guidelines, and/or conservation practice standards.
- Project will result in the development of technical or related technology transfer materials (technical standards, technical notes, guide sheets, handbooks, etc.).

### **C. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates**

CIG selections are anticipated to be announced by **August 10, 2012**; all agreements are expected to be awarded by **September 30, 2012**. Funds are not awarded and work may not start until an agreement is signed by both NRCS and the grantee. Applicants should plan their projects based on a project start date of **September 30, 2012**.

## **VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

### **A. Award Notification**

Applicants who have been selected for funding will receive a letter of official notification. However, all selections are contingent upon successful completion of the environmental review process and financial review. NRCS reserves the right to have grant award(s) administered by a third party. In the event that a third party administers the grant award(s), the applicant/recipient will be notified in writing.

### **B. Environmental Review Requirements**

Upon notification of selection, the applicant must contact the NRCS CIG Program Contact to determine the scope and level of NEPA documentation required for the project. The environmental documentation prepared to meet NEPA requirements must be prepared prior to award of grant funds.

Selected applicants may be required to prepare and pay for the preparation of the appropriate NEPA document(s) if an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement is needed. Grant funds cannot be awarded until the environmental review requirements demonstrating compliance with NEPA are met.

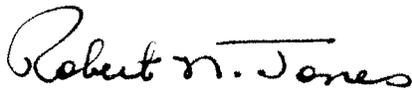
#### VIII. AGENCY CONTACTS

Alaska CIG Program Contact:

Karen Dearlove  
USDA-NRCS Kenai Service Center  
110 Trading Bay, Suite 160  
Kenai, AK 99611-9115  
Phone: (907) 283-8732 x114  
E-mail: [karen.dearlove@ak.usda.gov](mailto:karen.dearlove@ak.usda.gov)  
FAX: 907-283-9667

Additional information about CIG, including fact sheets and frequently asked questions, is available on the National CIG web page at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/cig/index.html>.

Signed this 17<sup>th</sup> day of February 2012 in Palmer, Alaska.



ROBERT N. JONES  
State Conservationist  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Alaska State Office

## IX. OTHER INFORMATION

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

### ALASKA CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS FISCAL YEAR 2012 PRE-PROPOSAL PACKAGE CHECK LIST

- A. Pre-proposal Cover Sheet:** Submit Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance
  
- B. Project Description:** Submit a description including the information below (Three (3) pages maximum in length).
  1. Project title
  2. Primary area for consideration (refer to page 4)
  3. Project duration
  4. Project director name, and contact information (including e-mail)
  5. Names and affiliations of project collaborators
  6. Project purpose
  7. Project area/location
  8. Project summary
  9. Project deliverables/products
  10. Description of EQIP eligible producer involvement
  
- C. Budget Information:** Submit Standard Form 424A Budget Information Non-Construction Programs.
  1. Complete SF-424A
  2. One page narrative
  
- D. Certifications:** Complete Standard Form 424B Assurances-Non-Construction Programs.

**ALASKA CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS  
FISCAL YEAR 2012 FULL APPLICATION PACKAGE CHECK LIST**

- A. Proposal Cover Sheet:** Submit Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance
- B. Project Description:** (12 pages maximum, single-spaced, single-sided, 12 point font)
  - 1. Project background
  - 2. Project objectives
  - 3. Project methods
  - 4. Location and size of project area (include a map if possible)
  - 5. Producer participation
  - 6. Project action plan and timeline
  - 7. Project management
  - 8. Project deliverables/products
  - 9. Benefits or results expected and transferability
  - 10. Project evaluation
- C. Additional Information:** Bibliography, resumes, and/or references
- D. Assessment of Environmental and Social Impacts**
- E. Budget Information:** Submit a completed Standard Form 424A (SF-424A) Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs.
  - 1. Complete SF-424A
  - 2. Detailed budget description
  - 3. Budget narrative
- F. Indirect Cost**
- G. Matching Information**
- H. Declaration of Previous CIG Projects Involvement.**
- I. Declaration of Beginning Farmer or Rancher, Limited Farmer or Rancher, or Federally Recognized Indian tribe (Special Provisions):** If applicable, include a statement declaring your status as a Beginning Farmer or Rancher, Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher, or Federally recognized Indian tribe, or community-based organization representing these entities.
- K. Certifications:** Complete Standard Form 424B (SF-424B) Assurances-Non-Construction Programs.
- L. DUNS Number:** For information about how to obtain a DUNS number, go to <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.
- M. Central Contractor Registry (CCR):** To register, visit [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov). Allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration.

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 9410, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call toll-free at (866) 632-9992 (English) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (English Federal-relay) or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Federal-relay).

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