



RCPP Partner Proposal Guide

*For RCPP Classic,
Alternative Funding
Arrangements and RCPP
Renewal Requests*

VERSION 3.0
ISSUED 12/20/2021

Natural Resource Conservation Service



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

NOTE: Partners should use this guide alongside the latest RCPP funding announcement, which includes critical information about the program.

Version History

Version	Date	Changes
1.0	9/4/2019	
2.0	9/25/2019	Updated most fields and replaced mockups with RCPP portal screenshots
2.1	10/24/2019	Updated narrative questions and added note to demarcate which narrative questions apply to renewal submissions.
2.2	11/21/19	Added note and step 21 to section 4.2.5.
2.3	5/21/20	Updated narrative questions section to distinguish between RCPP Classic & Renewals
3.0	12/20/21	Merged RCPP Classic and AFA Guides. Appendix A has been updated. Appendix B has been entirely rewritten. Appendix C has been updated to include all proposal type narrative questions.

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1. Overview of RCPP

This user guide is meant for partners applying under an RCPP Classic National Funding Opportunity or for partner's requesting to renew an existing RCPP agreement.

1.1. RCPP Vision and Goals

RCPP is an innovative program that has as its critical feature a co-investment approach through which NRCS and partners collaborate to implement natural resource conservation activities. Following are four key principles of RCPP:

1. **Impact**—RCPP applications must propose effective and compelling solutions that address one or more natural resource priorities to help solve natural resource challenges. Partners are responsible for evaluating a project's impact and results.
2. **Partner Contributions**—Partners are responsible for identifying any combination of cash and in-kind value-added contributions to leverage NRCS's RCPP investments. It is NRCS's goal that partner contributions at least equal the NRCS investment in an RCPP project. Substantive and sizable partner contributions are given priority consideration as part of the RCPP application evaluation criteria.
3. **Innovation**—NRCS seeks projects that integrate multiple conservation approaches, implement innovative conservation approaches or technologies, build new partnerships, or effectively take advantage of program flexibilities to deliver conservation solutions.
4. **Partnerships and Management**—Partners must have experience, expertise, and capacity to manage the partnership and project, provide outreach to producers, and quantify the environmental (and when possible, economic and social) outcomes of an RCPP project. RCPP ranking criteria give preference to applicants that meaningfully engage historically underserved farmers and ranchers.

Successful RCPP applicants bring an array of financial and technical capabilities to projects, demonstrate experience working effectively and collaboratively with agricultural producers, including land owners eligible for specific types of RCPP assistance including conservation easements, across the landscape, and propose innovative, sustainable, and measurable approaches to achieving compelling conservation goals.

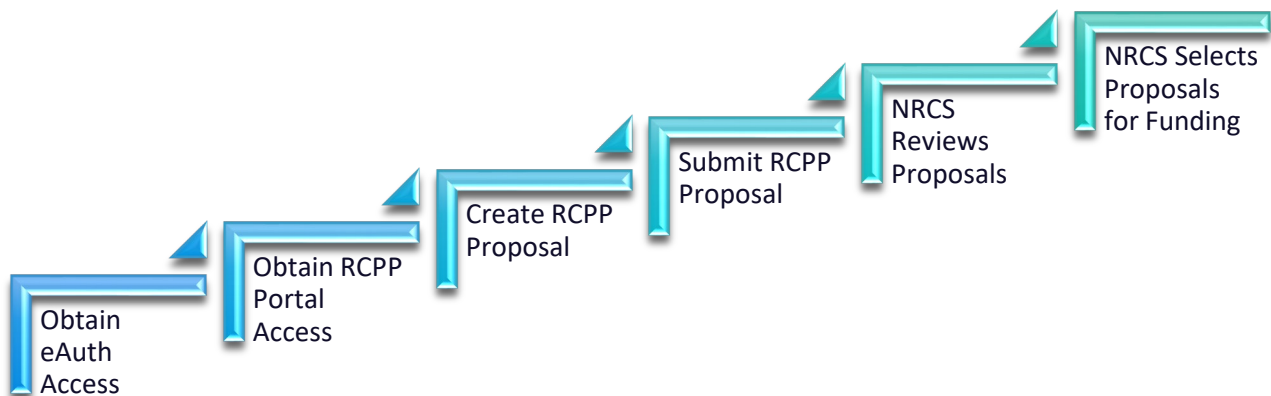
2. RCPP Portal Roles and Workflow

2.1. RCPP Portal Roles

The RCPP Portal provides partners with the ability to perform the following functions, for proposals and/or projects for which they are the lead partner:

- create and submit (or withdraw) proposals
- add and concur on project deliverables
- upload files to satisfy reporting requirements
- submit amendment requests
- concur on amendment requests submitted by state POCs
- edit their partner information as needed
- submit annual reporting questionnaires
- submit inquiries
- submit Project Completion Questionnaire
- identify and place map pin for project location
- view adjusted gross income and adjustment of terms requests

2.2. RCPP Proposal Workflow for Partners



3. Accessing the RCPP Portal

3.1. Obtaining eAuthentication Access

- Partners must identify at least one system user for your organization. The system does not allow for entity-wide eAuthentication accounts, so individuals with an eAuthentication account will be able to create and submit a RCPP proposal.
- This user must establish a USDA Level 2 e-Auth Account at this website - <https://www.eauth.usda.gov/mainPages/index.aspx>.

Please note: The USDA e-Auth process is a Department-wide authentication process and NRCS is unable to assist in the creation of an e-Auth Account.

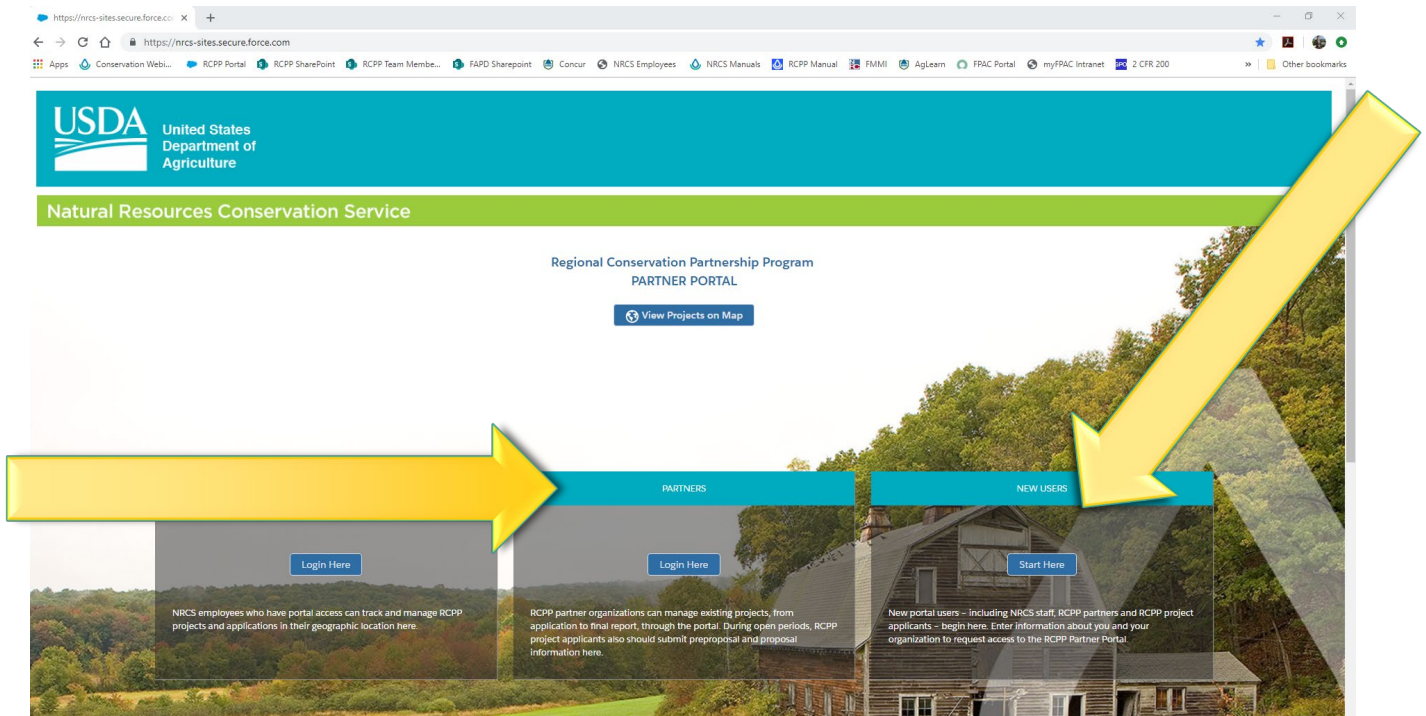
Current eAuthentication Homepage



3.2. Creating a User Account within the RCPP Portal

5. Go to the RCPP portal login page - <https://nrcc-sites.secure.force.com>

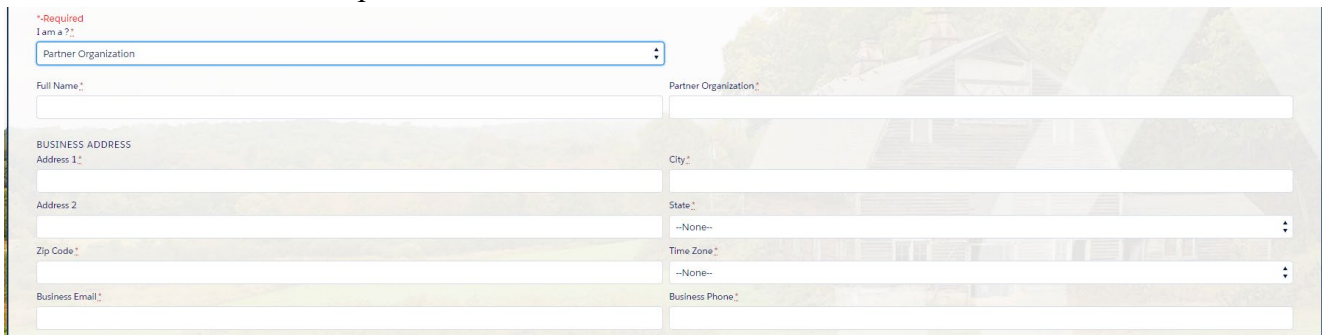
6. Click on the “start here” button for new users as shown below.



7. Under the dropdown below “I am a ?...” select “Partner Organization”.

A screenshot of the 'Request Access Form' on the RCPP Partner Portal. The form contains instructions for users and a dropdown menu labeled 'I am a ?...'. The dropdown menu is open, showing three options: 'Partner Organization', '--None--', and 'NRCs Staff Member'. The 'Partner Organization' option is highlighted in blue. Below the dropdown, there is a text input field for 'Partner Organization*'. The form also includes fields for 'BUSINESS ADDRESS' and 'City*'. The background of the form features a blurred image of a house and trees.

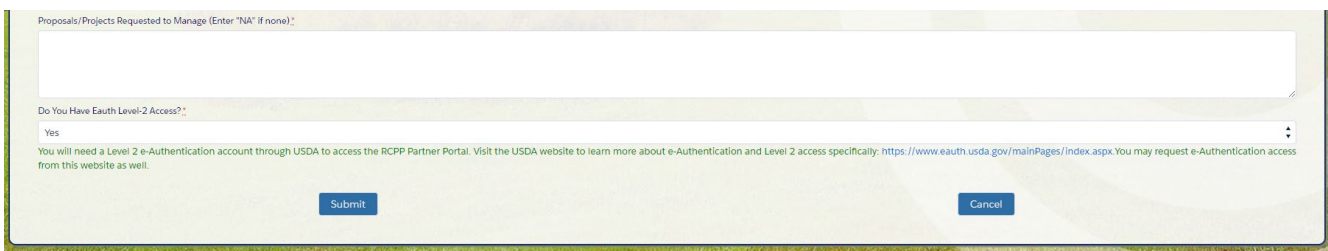
8. Enter the full name of the designated user.
9. Enter the partner organization name, business address, city, state, zipcode, timezone, business email, and business phone.



The screenshot shows a registration form with the following fields:

- I am a ?:** A dropdown menu with "Partner Organization" selected.
- Full Name:** A text input field.
- Partner Organization:** A text input field.
- BUSINESS ADDRESS:** A section containing:
 - Address 1:** A text input field.
 - Address 2:** A text input field.
 - City:** A text input field.
 - State:** A dropdown menu with "--None--" selected.
 - Zip Code:** A text input field.
 - Time Zone:** A dropdown menu with "--None--" selected.
 - Business Email:** A text input field.
 - Business Phone:** A text input field.

10. If the designated user is taking over management of previously created proposals/projects, enter them in to the correct field.
12. Click the blue "submit" button at the bottom of the page.



The screenshot shows the bottom section of the registration form with the following elements:

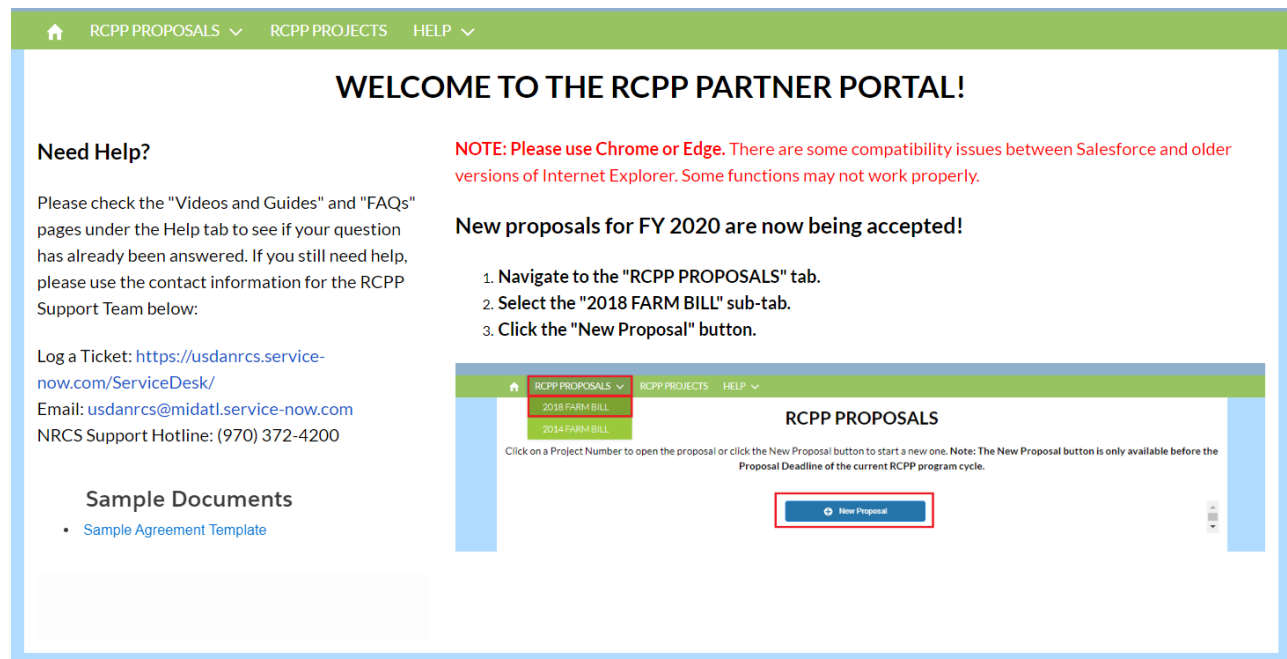
- Proposals/Projects Requested to Manage (Enter "NA" if none):** A large text input field.
- Do You Have Eauth Level-2 Access?:** A dropdown menu with "Yes" selected.
- Submit:** A blue button.
- Cancel:** A blue button.

Below the "Do You Have Eauth Level-2 Access?" dropdown, there is a small text block: "You will need a Level 2 e-Authentication account through USDA to access the RCPP Partner Portal. Visit the USDA website to learn more about e-Authentication and Level 2 access specifically: <https://www.eauth.usda.gov/mainPages/index.aspx>. You may request e-Authentication access from this website as well."

4. Proposal Process for Partners

4.1. Home Screen

After logging in to the RCPP portal with your eAuth level 2 account, you will see the following home screen. Returning users can select the 2014 Farm Bill tab to view any proposals that were previously submitted. To submit a new proposal, select that 2018 Farm Bill tab as shown below.



The screenshot shows the RCPP Partner Portal home screen. At the top is a green navigation bar with a home icon, 'RCPP PROPOSALS', 'RCPP PROJECTS', and 'HELP'. The main heading is 'WELCOME TO THE RCPP PARTNER PORTAL!'. On the left, under 'Need Help?', there is contact information for the RCPP Support Team, including a ServiceNow link, email, and phone number. Below this is a 'Sample Documents' section with a link to a 'Sample Agreement Template'. On the right, a red note states: 'NOTE: Please use Chrome or Edge. There are some compatibility issues between Salesforce and older versions of Internet Explorer. Some functions may not work properly.' Below the note, a section titled 'New proposals for FY 2020 are now being accepted!' lists three steps: 1. Navigate to the 'RCPP PROPOSALS' tab. 2. Select the '2018 FARM BILL' sub-tab. 3. Click the 'New Proposal' button. An inset image shows the 'RCPP PROPOSALS' sub-tab selected in the navigation bar, with the 'New Proposal' button highlighted in a red box.

Need Help?

Please check the "Videos and Guides" and "FAQs" pages under the Help tab to see if your question has already been answered. If you still need help, please use the contact information for the RCPP Support Team below:

Log a Ticket: <https://usdanrcs.service-now.com/ServiceDesk/>
Email: usdanrcs@midatl.service-now.com
NRCS Support Hotline: (970) 372-4200

Sample Documents

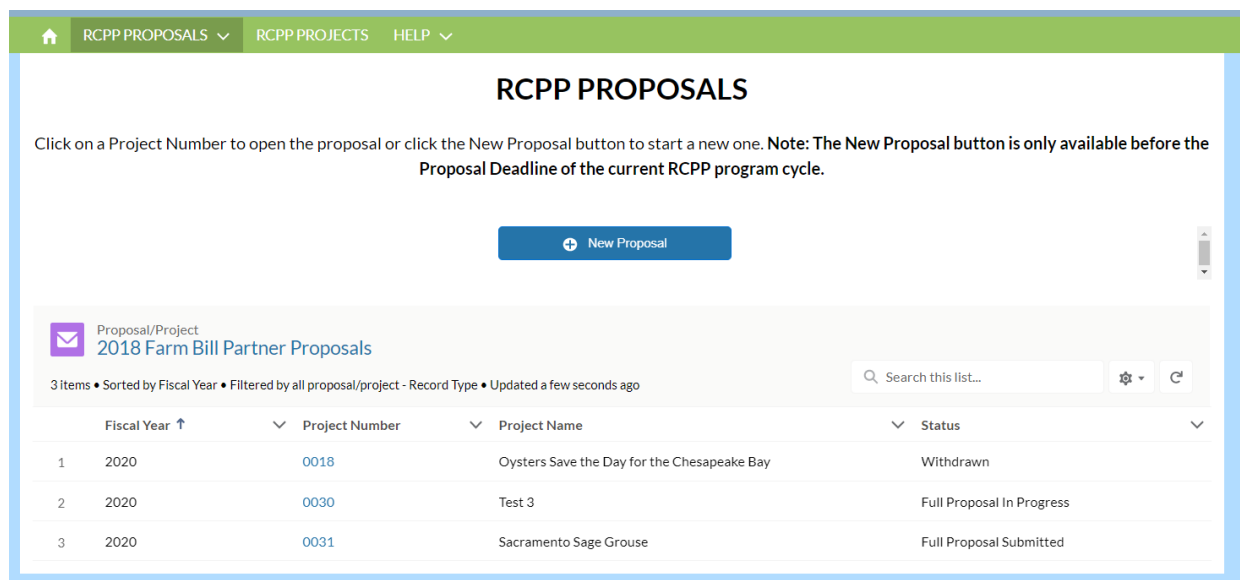
- [Sample Agreement Template](#)

NOTE: Please use Chrome or Edge. There are some compatibility issues between Salesforce and older versions of Internet Explorer. Some functions may not work properly.

New proposals for FY 2020 are now being accepted!

1. Navigate to the "RCPP PROPOSALS" tab.
2. Select the "2018 FARM BILL" sub-tab.
3. Click the "New Proposal" button.

Once you select the 2018 Farm Bill tab users can view, create, and submit Proposals before the Proposal deadline set by the RCPP Team.



The screenshot shows the 'RCPP PROPOSALS' page. At the top is a green navigation bar with a home icon, 'RCPP PROPOSALS', 'RCPP PROJECTS', and 'HELP'. The main heading is 'RCPP PROPOSALS'. Below the heading, a note states: 'Click on a Project Number to open the proposal or click the New Proposal button to start a new one. Note: The New Proposal button is only available before the Proposal Deadline of the current RCPP program cycle.' A blue button with a plus icon and the text 'New Proposal' is centered. Below this is a section titled 'Proposal/Project 2018 Farm Bill Partner Proposals' with a sub-header '3 Items • Sorted by Fiscal Year • Filtered by all proposal/project - Record Type • Updated a few seconds ago'. A search bar and icons for settings and refresh are on the right. Below is a table with columns: Fiscal Year, Project Number, Project Name, and Status.

	Fiscal Year ↑	Project Number	Project Name	Status
1	2020	0018	Oysters Save the Day for the Chesapeake Bay	Withdrawn
2	2020	0030	Test 3	Full Proposal In Progress
3	2020	0031	Sacramento Sage Grouse	Full Proposal Submitted

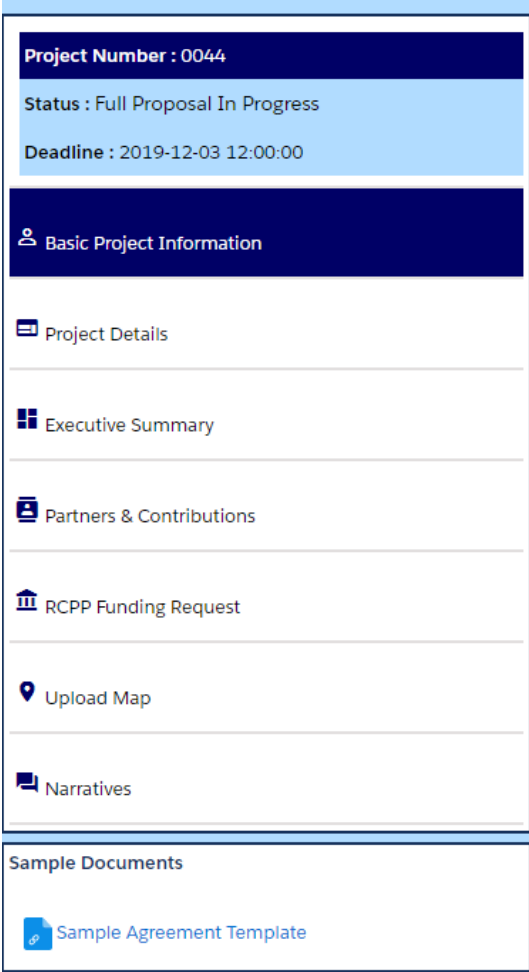
4.2. Creating a Proposal

4.2.1. Starting a New Proposal

1. Click the  button.

Please note: If the Proposal deadline has passed, the **New Proposal** button will not be available. The status and the Proposal deadline will be displayed on the left side panel.

2. The **Basic Project Information** screen is displayed. On the left side of the screen is a menu that allows users to navigate between the various sections of an RCPP proposal. This will also display the status of the proposal as well as the deadline for submitting proposals.



The screenshot shows a web interface for a project proposal. At the top, there is a dark blue header bar with the text "Project Number : 0044". Below this, a light blue box contains the text "Status : Full Proposal In Progress" and "Deadline : 2019-12-03 12:00:00". The main content area is divided into two sections. The top section, titled "Basic Project Information" in a dark blue bar, contains a list of menu items: "Project Details", "Executive Summary", "Partners & Contributions", "RCPP Funding Request", "Upload Map", and "Narratives". The bottom section, titled "Sample Documents", contains a link to "Sample Agreement Template".

4.2.2. Basic Project Information

3. Fill out the Basic Project Information. All fields with a red asterisk are required.

Basic Project Information

*Information is specific to proposal, not to partner profile.

Project Name*

Lead Partner Account*

Funding pool*

CCA Applicable List*

Project Type*

Do you have an active SAM.gov Registration?*

Project Director Name*

Project Director Email*

Project Director Phone Number*

DUNS*

Alternative Contact Name

Alternative Contact Phone

Alternative Contact Email

Save as Draft

Save & Continue

- a. *Project Name* - Enter a concise title for your proposed RCPP project. Please avoid acronyms that are not widely known.
- c. *Funding Pool* - Select either the State/Multi-state or CCA funding pool.
- d. *Critical Conservation Areas (CCA)* – If the funding pool is set to the CCA funding pool, the *CCA Applicable List* will allow users to select a specific CCA funding pool. More information on CCAs, including boundary maps, is available on the [RCPP website](#). Please note all proposed counties for the project must at least partially fall within the boundaries of the CCA.
- e. *Lead State* – Select the lead state where the largest portion of the work will be performed. If a CCA funding pool is selected this dropdown will only include states within that CCA.
- f. *Partner States* – Select all states where work will be performed. If a CCA funding pool is selected this dropdown will only include states within that CCA.
- g. *Project Type* – Select either RCPP Classic, AFA, or Renewals. Not all options will be available and may depend on what national funding opportunities (NFOs) are currently posted.
- h. *SAM Registration* – Users should click the checkbox if they have a SAM.gov registration. If this box is not checked users will still be able to submit the proposal, but

you will receive an error message reminding users that a SAM.gov registration will be necessary to enter in to a partnership agreement with NRCS.

The screenshot shows a web form for entering Project Director information. It includes the following fields: 'Project Director Name*' (a single-line text box), 'Project Director Email*' (a single-line text box), 'Project Director Secondary Email' (a single-line text box), 'Project Director Phone Number*' (a single-line text box), 'DUNS*' (a single-line text box), 'Alternative Contact Name' (a single-line text box), 'Alternative Contact Phone' (a single-line text box), and 'Alternative Contact Email' (a single-line text box). At the bottom of the form are two blue buttons: 'Save as Draft' and 'Save & Continue'.

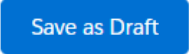
- j. *Project Director Email* – Enter an email address for the Project Director.
- k. *Project Director Email* – Enter a secondary form of email for contacting the Project Director.
- l. *Project Director Phone Number* – Enter the telephone number of the Project Director including the area code.
- m. *DUNS* - Please enter the Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number assigned to your organization. See the yellow help box below for help finding your organization's number or registering for one.




Finding or registering a DUNS number –

<https://www.grants.gov/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html>

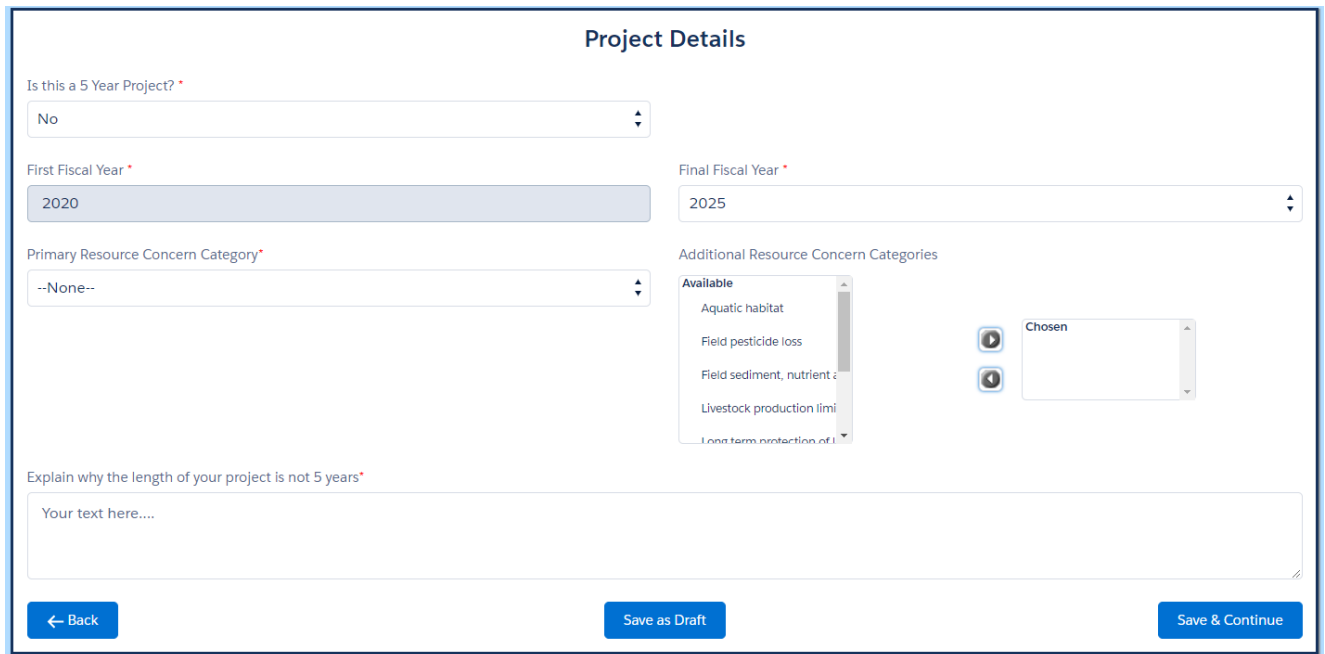
Finding or registering a SAM number –

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register->

- n. *Alternative Contact Name* – Enter the name of an individual from the lead partner organization who can be contacted should the Project Director be unavailable, or change.
 - o. *Alternative Contact Phone* – Enter a telephone number for the alternative contact.
 - p. *Alternative Contact Email* - Enter an email address for the alternative contact.
4. Click  to save the information and proceed to the next section without validating the data in this section. Users will progress to the *Project Details* section.

5. Click  to validate the information in this section. Error messages will appear below required fields that are blank, or required fields that were not entered correctly. If there are no errors users will progress to the *Project Details* section and a green check mark will appear to the right of the  Basic Project Information  label on the left menu.

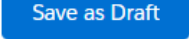
6. Fill out the *Project Details Section*.





The screenshot shows the 'Project Details' form. It includes a dropdown for 'Is this a 5 Year Project?' with 'No' selected. 'First Fiscal Year' is set to 2020 and 'Final Fiscal Year' is set to 2025. 'Primary Resource Concern Category' is set to '--None--'. There is a list of 'Additional Resource Concern Categories' with 'Aquatic habitat', 'Field pesticide loss', 'Field sediment, nutrient', 'Livestock production limit', and 'Long term protection of'. A 'Chosen' dropdown is empty. A text area for 'Explain why the length of your project is not 5 years' contains 'Your text here....'. At the bottom are buttons for 'Back', 'Save as Draft', and 'Save & Continue'.

- b. *First Fiscal Year* – This is automatically set at 2020.
- c. *Final Fiscal Year* – Enter the proposed end date. Most projects are expected to end no more than five years after the start date. If a project is proposed for a period other than five years, a justification is required below.
- d. *Primary Resource Concern* – Select the primary resource concern among the dropdown options. This should be the resource concern that will receive the largest portion of proposed financial assistance, technical assistance, and contributions. For CCA projects, partners must select one of the priority resource concerns listed for the relevant CCA in the RCPP funding announcement.
- e. *Additional Resource Concerns* – Please select all other resource concerns your project will address through financial assistance, technical assistance, and/or contributions.

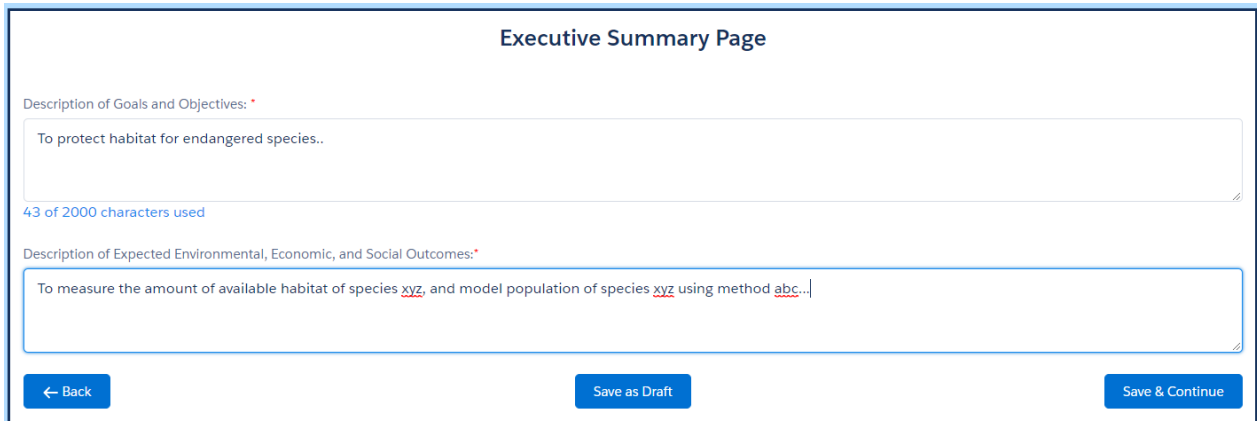
- f. *Explain why the length of your project is not 5 years.* –Enter a justification for why a project length other than five years is needed to achieve the goals and objectives of the proposed project. This field is only visible if the user selects No for the prompt *Is this a 5 year project?*

7. Click  to save the information and proceed to the next section without validating the data in this section. Users will progress to the *Executive Summary* section.



 Project Details 

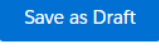
9. Fill out the **Executive Summary** section.





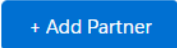


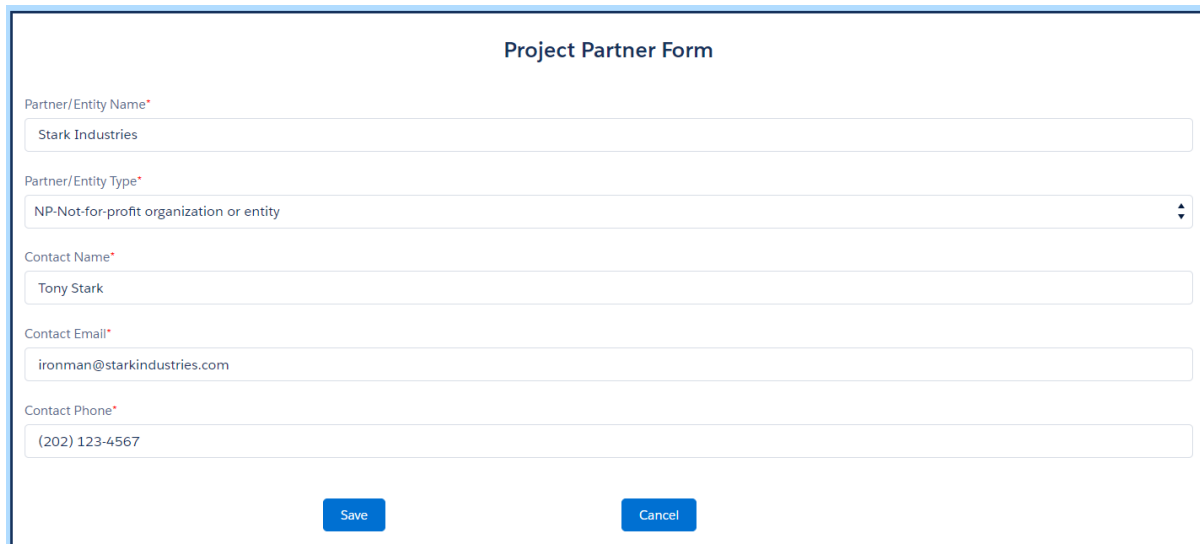
The screenshot shows the 'Executive Summary Page' with two text input fields. The first field is labeled 'Description of Goals and Objectives: *' and contains the text 'To protect habitat for endangered species..'. Below the field, it says '43 of 2000 characters used'. The second field is labeled 'Description of Expected Environmental, Economic, and Social Outcomes: *' and contains the text 'To measure the amount of available habitat of species xyz, and model population of species xyz using method abc...'. At the bottom of the form, there are three buttons: '← Back', 'Save as Draft', and 'Save & Continue'.

- b. *Description of Expected Environmental, Economic, and Social Outcomes* – All RCPP projects are required to develop and report on environmental outcomes. Partners may also choose to develop and report on economic and social outcomes. Partners are highly encouraged to review the RCPP outcomes guidance document posted to the RCPP website for more information.

In this box, partners should briefly describe the anticipated outcomes of their project and the proposed method for measuring outcomes. After a RCPP project is selected for funding, NRCS will work with partners to ensure that proposed project outcomes are meaningful and that methods for measuring and reporting on outcomes are feasible.

10. Click  to save the information and proceed to the next section without validating the data in this section. Users will progress to the *Partners & Contributions* section.


11. Click  to validate the information in this section. Error messages will appear below required fields that are blank, or required fields that were not entered correctly. If there are no errors users will progress to the *Partners & Contributions* section and a green check mark will appear to the right of the  Executive Summary  label on the left menu.
12. Fill out the **Project Partner Form** – Lead partners must enter information for each partner (other than the lead) providing contributions. This includes eligible partners (see list in funding announcement), third-parties(e.g., individuals/entities not considered eligible partners) and Federal agencies providing contributions.
13. Click the  icon to edit the lead partner entry to select a *Partner/Entity Type*. All other fields are auto-populated by the users account information.
14. Click  to add a new partner or contributing entry. The *Project Partner Form* will appear.

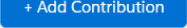


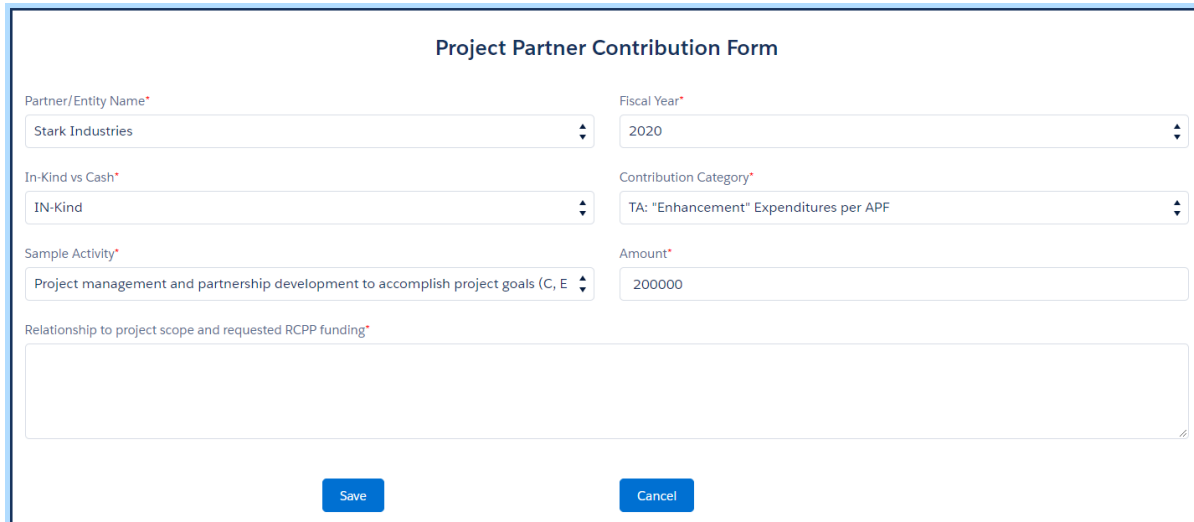
The screenshot shows a form titled "Project Partner Form". It contains five input fields, each with a red asterisk indicating it is required:

- Partner/Entity Name***: A text box containing "Stark Industries".
- Partner/Entity Type***: A dropdown menu with "NP-Not-for-profit organization or entity" selected.
- Contact Name***: A text box containing "Tony Stark".
- Contact Email***: A text box containing "ironman@starkindustries.com".
- Contact Phone***: A text box containing "(202) 123-4567".

At the bottom of the form are two buttons: "Save" and "Cancel".

- Partner Name* – Enter the partner, entity, or Federal agency’s full name.
 - Partner/Entity Type* – Select from the dropdown options of partner and entity types.
 - Partner Contact Name, Email, and Telephone* – Enter the name, email, and telephone number of an individual that can be contacted for questions related to the partner organization, third-party entity, or Federal agency.
16. Click the **Save** button. The Partner/Entity will not be available in the dropdown menu for the **Partner Contributions Table**.
17. Repeat step 13 for all contributing partners, entities, and Federal Agencies.
18. Click  to upload a letter of contribution for each non-lead partner.


19. Click  for each partner and type of contribution.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Project Partner Contribution Form". It contains several input fields: "Partner/Entity Name" with a dropdown menu showing "Stark Industries"; "Fiscal Year" with a dropdown menu showing "2020"; "In-Kind vs Cash" with a dropdown menu showing "IN-Kind"; "Contribution Category" with a dropdown menu showing "TA: 'Enhancement' Expenditures per APF"; "Sample Activity" with a dropdown menu showing "Project management and partnership development to accomplish project goals (C, E)"; and "Amount" with a text input field showing "200000". At the bottom, there is a large text area for "Relationship to project scope and requested RCPP funding*", and two buttons: "Save" and "Cancel".

- b. *Fiscal Year* - Select the Fiscal Year for the specific contribution.
- c. *In-Kind vs Cash* – Select whether the contribution is In-Kind or Cash.
 - i. Cash, i.e., a cash contribution, can come from the partner’s own funds (general revenue), cash donations from non-federal third parties (i.e. partner organizations), or from grants.
 - ii. In-Kind contribution is a non-cash contribution of value provided by the partner or by third parties. In-kind contributions are typically the calculated value of personnel, goods, and services, including direct and indirect costs.
- d. *Contribution Category* – Select from the dropdown list of contribution categories. These categories mirror the types of technical assistance (see **Appendix B**) or fall under a category covering all types of financial assistance.
- e. *Sample Activities* – Select from the dropdown list of sample activities. The options within the dropdown list are determined by the Contribution Category selected.
- f. *Amount* – Enter the value of the contribution in whole dollars.
- g. *Relationship to project scope and requested RCPP funding* – Describe how this contribution relates to requested RCPP funding and/or how the contribution will further the goals and objectives of the project.

Note: Contributions beginning on the date on which the Secretary announces the approval of an application may be counted toward partner contributions based on partner request to the extent they are ultimately included in the final negotiated project deliverables (i.e. NRCS will have input into rates and tasks to ensure contributions are defensible and related to actual development/management).

21. Click  to attach a document to explain the cost basis and tie to project scope. This can provide a summary of how the proposed contributions are expected to be valued (e.g. actual partner expenses paid to contractors vs costs to partner of in-kind services based on attached fee schedule) and elaborate on the relationship of proposed contributions to project scope (e.g. details of specific non-RCPP FA related expenses and how they relate to the proposed project's conservation benefits).

 Save

 Upload File

 Next →

4.2.6. RCPP Funding Request

RCPP funding is divided into five FA activity types and three TA activity types. The portal will automatically add NRCS TA to the proposal budget to ensure a 70/30 split between FA and TA activity types. Any partner TA added will reduce the amount of NRCS TA included. Proposals must adhere to the 70/30 split, but a different allocation of FA and TA funds can be decided during agreement negotiation if the proposal is selected for funding. FA activity types are covered in Appendix A of this guide.

Other Considerations:

- Enhancement TA cannot exceed 7% of the total project ask.
- Partner TA-I cannot exceed 18% of total project ask.
- NRCS TA cannot be less than 5% of the project.
- Enhancement TA that is not requested will reduce the maximum amount of NRCS funding that can be requested and will result in FA being greater than 70% of the proposal budget.
- Some FA activity types have limited TA-I that can be delegated to a partner, see Appendix B for these limitations.

25. The **RCPP Funding Request** screen is displayed. At the top of the page is a summary of the requested funds as well as the maximum amount for each type of funds. If any category is out of alignment (i.e. requested more than 18% in implementation TA or contributions less than the desired 1:1 ratio, an error message will appear below the category in red). With the exception of the partner contribution ratio, the section will not be marked complete unless all rules have been followed.

Partner Contribution Ratio : 0.00
Contribution ratio does not satisfy goal of contributions greater than or equal to RCPP funding

Minimum Amount that can be requested : \$250,000.00

Total Project Cost : \$1,428,571.43

Maximum Amount that can be requested : \$10,000,000.00

Total Financial Assistance Requested : \$1,000,000.00

Maximum Financial Assistance allowed : \$7,000,000.00

Total Technical Assistance Requested : \$428,571.43

Total Partner Enhancement TA Requested : \$100,000.00

Maximum Partner Enhancement TA allowed : \$100,000.00

Total NRCS Implementation TA : \$128,571.43

Minimum NRCS Implementation TA allocated : \$71,428.57

Total Partner Implementation TA Requested : \$200,000.00

Maximum Partner Implementation TA allowed : \$257,142.86

Below the summary chart is the **RCPP Financial Assistance Funding Request**. At the top is a summary of the total FA request by activity type.

RCPP Financial Assistance Funding Request

Type of Assistance		Request Type		Total Funding Requested	
Financial Assistance (FA)		Land Management		\$350,000.00	
Financial Assistance (FA)		Watershed		\$350,000.00	
Financial Assistance (FA)		Rentals		\$300,000.00	

Action	Activity Type	Fiscal Year	State	Amount	Proposed Activity
 	Land Management	2020	VA	\$250,000.00	Great activity here
 	Land Management	2021	MD	\$100,000.00	Amazing work...
 	Watershed	2022	VA	\$350,000.00	Great watershed plans...
 	Rentals	2020	MD	\$300,000.00	Great activities...

+ Add Financial Assistance Request

26. Click [+ Add Financial Assistance Request](#) to open the **Financial Assistance Funding Request Form**.

Financial Assistance Funding Request Form

Activity Type*
Land Management

Fiscal Year*
2020

State*
VA

Deliverable Type*
Producer Contract involving Conservation Practices and/or Enhancement to address

Amount(s)*
|

Proposed Activity*
[Empty text area]

Description
[Empty text area]

Save Cancel

- b. *Fiscal Year* - Enter the year this work will be performed. A separate row is needed for each fiscal year, even if the same work is being performed in consecutive years.
- c. *State* – Select the state from the dropdown where the work will be performed. A separate line is needed for each state for each fiscal year for each contract type.
- d. *Deliverable Type* – This column will be auto-populated based on the activity type entered in the first column.
- e. *Proposed Activity* – Enter a very brief description of the proposed project activities under the proposed contract type.


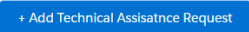
Some sample proposed activities:

- Practices to improve Sage-grouse habitat (e.g. fence marking, prescribed grazing, juniper removal).
- Rental contracts with producers for 3 years to defray landowner costs of fallowing lands during transition to organic production.
- Conservation easements to permanently protect critical riparian habitat for the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher.

- f. *Description* – This field is optional but partners are encouraged, where applicable, to illustrate the relationship between requested financial assistance and partner contributions that compliment and amplify the impact of the financial assistance.

28. Click  to save the financial assistance funding request.

30. Once all financial assistance funding requests have been entered, scroll down to the **RCPP Technical Assistance Funding Request** table. The top section is a summary of technical assistance requests by category.

RCPP Technical Assistance Funding Request				
Type of Assistance	Request Type		Total Funding Requested	
Technical Assistance (TA)	Enhancement TA		\$100,000.00	
Technical Assistance (TA)	Partner Implementation TA		\$200,000.00	
	Partner Requested TA		\$300,000.00	
Action	Technical Assistance Request Type	State of proposed TA activity	Amount	Proposed Activity
 	Enhancement TA	VA	\$100,000.00	Develop and manage RCPP agreements with NRCS (C, E)
 	Partner Implementation TA	VA	\$200,000.00	Technical assistance to producers for planning directly related to installation or manager
				

31. Click  to open the **Technical Assistance Funding Request Form**.

Technical Assistance Funding Request Form

Technical Assistance Request Type*

Enhancement TA

State of proposed TA activity *

VA

Amount(S)*

150000

Deliverable Type

Eligible Enhancement Activities As Described in APF (Subject to post-project selection negotiations)

Proposed Activity*

Manage RCPP agreements (C, E)

Relationship to project objectives and contributions.

Save

Cancel

- Activity Type* – Select between Enhancement TA and Partner Implementation TA. For a definition of these assistance types please see **Appendix B**.
- State* – Select the state from the dropdown where the work will be performed. A separate line is needed for each state for each technical assistance type.
- Deliverable Type* – This column will be auto-populated based on the contract type entered in the first column.

- d. *Proposed Activity* - Briefly describe the types of technical assistance activities that will be performed for each deliverable.

Some sample proposed activities:

- Fence marking and fencing supplies related to prescribed grazing are provided by the lead partner as described in Contributions section.
- State agency providing cash match for easements; easement support services provided as cash contribution by lead partner

- e. *Relationship to project objectives and contributions* – Briefly justify the need and substantiate the funding request.

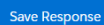
33. Click  to save the technical assistance funding request.

35. Enter a description for how your organization has the capability and capacity to perform technical assistance deliverables included in the RCPP funding request table.


Describe how your organization has the capability and capacity to perform technical assistance deliverables included in the RCPP funding request table (i.e. the certifications, educational background, prior experience of individuals assigned to the task as well as the time and number of staff allocated to these tasks):

0 of 4000 characters used









39. Upload a map by clicking  or dragging a jpeg, png, or tiff file on the box shown below.


Document

• Upload any format (jpeg/pdf/etc) map of the proposed area of the RCPP project. Applicants may work with their local NRCS field office for help with project maps

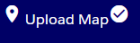


or Drop Images





File Name	Action
-----------	--------





40. Once a file has been uploaded a checkmark will be visible on the left menu next to the section header .

Things to consider:

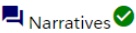
- The map should clearly show the boundary of the project area so that reviewers can easily identify what land may enrolled in this project.
- Maps for proposals within a Critical Conservation Area can only include a single CCA, and cannot include any county that is not at least partially within the CCA area.

41. Click the  icon to delete the file.



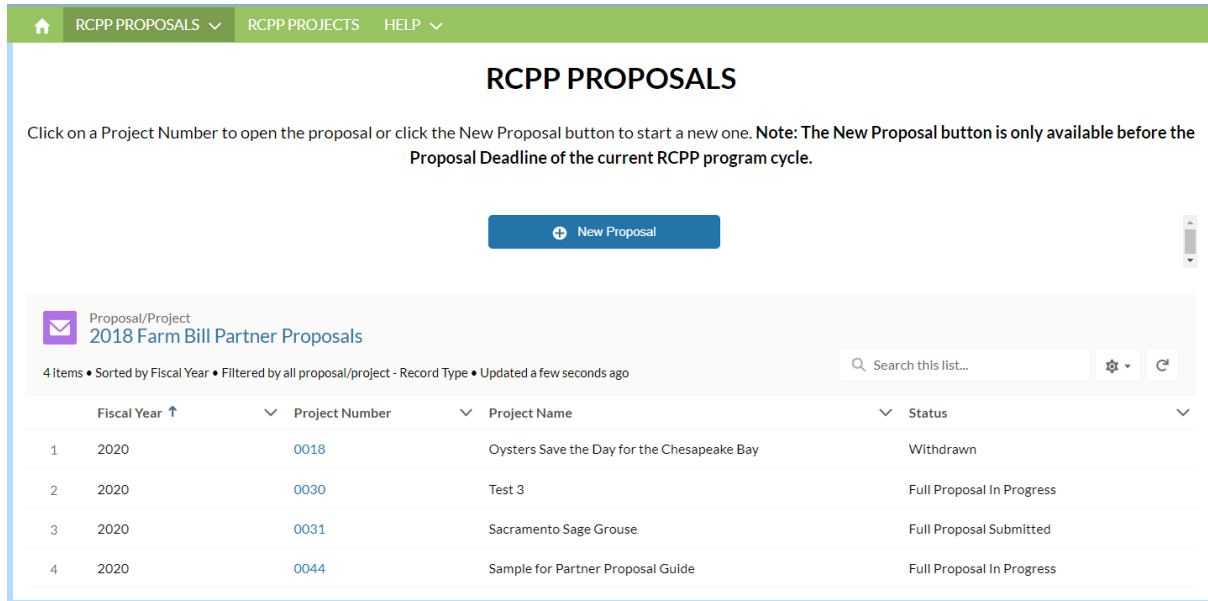
43. The ***Proposal Narrative Questions*** screen is displayed. Answer all questions within this section through the input box at the bottom of the page.
44. After submitting each narrative response click  to save the response and move to the next question. Click  to save the response, mark the answer as complete, and move to the next question. Questions that have been started will display a  icon while questions that have been marked complete will show a  icon. To return to a question click on that question within the **Narratives** section.

Note: For the list of narrative questions, see **Appendix C**. The narrative questions will be different depending on whether the proposal is for an RCPP Classic project, an Alternative Funding Arrangement, or a Renewal request.

45. Once all of the questions have been marked complete there will be a green check mark on the section header of the left menu, .

4.3. View/Editing a Proposal

1. Click the **RCPP Proposals** tab. A list of the Partner's proposals will be displayed and include the Fiscal Year, Project Number (link to the proposal), Project Name, and Status.



The screenshot shows the 'RCPP PROPOSALS' interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'RCPP PROPOSALS', 'RCPP PROJECTS', and 'HELP'. Below this, the title 'RCPP PROPOSALS' is centered. A note states: 'Click on a Project Number to open the proposal or click the New Proposal button to start a new one. Note: The New Proposal button is only available before the Proposal Deadline of the current RCPP program cycle.' A 'New Proposal' button is visible. Below the button, there is a section for '2018 Farm Bill Partner Proposals' with a search bar and a table of proposals.

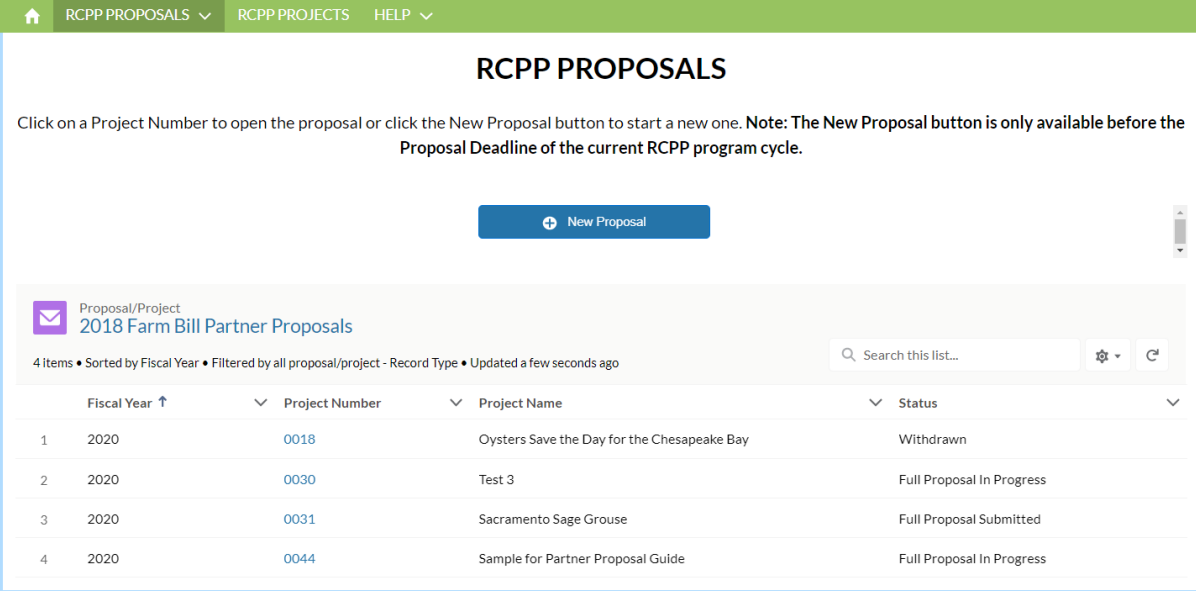
	Fiscal Year ↑	Project Number	Project Name	Status
1	2020	0018	Oysters Save the Day for the Chesapeake Bay	Withdrawn
2	2020	0030	Test 3	Full Proposal In Progress
3	2020	0031	Sacramento Sage Grouse	Full Proposal Submitted
4	2020	0044	Sample for Partner Proposal Guide	Full Proposal In Progress

3. Click the project number to access the proposal. The proposal opens in the same screen.
4. Use the left side panel to navigate the various proposal sections to view and/or edit.

Please note: Proposals can only be edited if before the Proposal deadline and not already submitted. See below sections on Submitting and Un-Submitting a Proposal.

4.4. Submitting a Proposal.

1. Click the **RCPP Proposals** tab. A list of the Partner's proposals will be displayed and include the Fiscal Year, Project Number (link to the proposal), Project Name, and Status.



The screenshot shows the 'RCPP PROPOSALS' interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'RCPP PROPOSALS', 'RCPP PROJECTS', and 'HELP'. Below the navigation bar, the title 'RCPP PROPOSALS' is centered. A note states: 'Click on a Project Number to open the proposal or click the New Proposal button to start a new one. Note: The New Proposal button is only available before the Proposal Deadline of the current RCPP program cycle.' Below the note is a 'New Proposal' button. A table titled '2018 Farm Bill Partner Proposals' displays a list of proposals. The table has columns for Fiscal Year, Project Number, Project Name, and Status. The data rows are as follows:

	Fiscal Year ↑	Project Number	Project Name	Status
1	2020	0018	Oysters Save the Day for the Chesapeake Bay	Withdrawn
2	2020	0030	Test 3	Full Proposal In Progress
3	2020	0031	Sacramento Sage Grouse	Full Proposal Submitted
4	2020	0044	Sample for Partner Proposal Guide	Full Proposal In Progress

2. Find the proposal in the Proposal in Progress status.
3. Click the project number to access the proposal. The proposal opens in the same screen.
4. Click the **Submit** button to submit the proposal for review.

Please note: Upon submission, (1) the Status of the Proposal changes to Pre-Proposal Submitted, (2) the user receives an email confirmation for their submission, and (3) the pre-proposal is locked for editing.

The Submit button is only available if before the Proposal deadline, all Proposal sections are complete, and the Status is Proposal in Progress.

Upon approval or denial of the Proposal by the RCPP Team, the Partner will receive an email notification.

4.5. Un-Submitting a Proposal

1. Click the **RCPP Proposals** tab and select **2018 Farm Bill**. A list of the Partner's proposals will be displayed and include the Fiscal Year, Project Number (link to the proposal), Project Name, and Status.

The screenshot shows the 'RCPP PROPOSALS' interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'RCPP PROPOSALS', 'RCPP PROJECTS', and 'HELP'. Below this, the title 'RCPP PROPOSALS' is centered. A note states: 'Click on a Project Number to open the proposal or click the New Proposal button to start a new one. Note: The New Proposal button is only available before the Proposal Deadline of the current RCPP program cycle.' A blue button labeled 'New Proposal' is visible. Below this, a section titled 'Proposal/Project 2018 Farm Bill Partner Proposals' shows a list of 4 items. The list is sorted by Fiscal Year and filtered by all proposal/project - Record Type. The table below shows the details of these proposals.

	Fiscal Year ↑	Project Number	Project Name	Status
1	2020	0018	Oysters Save the Day for the Chesapeake Bay	Withdrawn
2	2020	0030	Test 3	Full Proposal In Progress
3	2020	0031	Sacramento Sage Grouse	Full Proposal Submitted
4	2020	0044	Sample for Partner Proposal Guide	Full Proposal In Progress

3. Click the project number to access the proposal. The proposal opens in the same screen.
4. Click the button **Un-Submit** to un-submit the Proposal.
5. A message is displayed: Do you really want to un-submit this Proposal? Click the **Yes** button to continue.

Please note: Upon clicking the Un-Submit button, (1) the Status of the Proposal changes back to Proposal in Progress, (2) the user receives an email confirmation that their proposal was un-submitted, and (3) the pre-proposal is unlocked for editing.

The Un-Submit button is only available if before the Proposal deadline and the status is Proposal Submitted. User can make appropriate changes and re-submit before the Proposal deadline.

4.6. Withdrawing a Proposal

1. Click the **RCPP Proposals** tab and select **2018 Farm Bill**. A list of the Partner's proposals will be displayed and include the Fiscal Year, Project Number (link to the proposal), Project Name, and Status.

RCPP PROPOSALS

Click on a Project Number to open the proposal or click the New Proposal button to start a new one. **Note: The New Proposal button is only available before the Proposal Deadline of the current RCPP program cycle.**

[+ New Proposal](#)

Proposal/Project
2018 Farm Bill Partner Proposals

4 Items • Sorted by Fiscal Year • Filtered by all proposal/project - Record Type • Updated a few seconds ago

Search this list...

	Fiscal Year ↑	Project Number	Project Name	Status
1	2020	0018	Oysters Save the Day for the Chesapeake Bay	Withdrawn
2	2020	0030	Test 3	Full Proposal In Progress
3	2020	0031	Sacramento Sage Grouse	Full Proposal Submitted
4	2020	0044	Sample for Partner Proposal Guide	Full Proposal In Progress

3. At the bottom of the screen click [Withdraw](#) to completely remove the proposal from consideration. This cannot be undone.

Withdraw Proposal

Are you sure you want to withdraw this Proposal ?

[Yes](#) [No](#)

Please note: Upon clicking the Withdraw button, (1) the Status of the Proposal changes to Withdrawn, (2) the user receives an email confirmation that their proposal was withdrawn, and (3) the Proposal is locked for editing.

Proposals can be withdrawn at any time. If the Status was Proposal in Review, an email notification is also sent to the RCPP Team.

Appendix A – RCPP Contract Types

RCPP Activity Type	Associated Covered Program Authorities
Land improvement / management/ restoration	EQIP, CSP, ACEP-Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) (restoration), HFRP (restoration), Public Law 83-566
Land rental	CRP
Easement (U.S.-held)	ACEP-WRE, HFRP (easement), Public Law 83-566 (floodplain easement); expanded to include land uses other than those traditionally eligible under the covered programs (e.g. grasslands, agricultural lands, riparian areas)
Easement (entity-held)	ACEP-ALE (currently); expanded to include easements on land uses other than those traditionally eligible under the covered programs (e.g., wetlands, floodplains, forest lands)
Public works/watersheds	Public Law 83-566

Land Improvement/Land Management/Restoration Activities

Land improvement/land management/restoration contracts will be offered based on an EQIP/CSP-like contracting model between NRCS and an eligible producer, including private landowners, committed to addressing RCPP project resource concerns on eligible lands. The conservation activities included under this category also include restoration and land management practices authorized under ACEP-WRE, HFRP, and Public Law 83-566 (land treatment).

Funds awarded for these purposes will utilize proven aspects of NRCS planning, implementation, and contracting methodology, and are expected to be based principally on NRCS conservation practice standards, existing CSP enhancements, stewardship activities, and existing payment schedules.

Application, ranking, and contracting will emulate similar aspects of EQIP and CSP program implementation. Producer and land eligibility restrictions tied to specific EQIP and CSP regulatory requirements, such as CSP “whole operation” requirements or EQIP irrigation history requirements do not apply to RCPP land management contracts.

Processes will be provided for consideration of adjustments to payment percentages, payment scenarios and/or the development and use of interim practice standards, subject to NRCS consideration and approval in accordance with Agency policy. Additional flexibilities that may be afforded to RCPP partners include project/partner-driven ranking pools, the potential for blending of previously distinct program activities in a single contract, and the potential for leveraging partner contributions for greater conservation benefits.

Land Rental Activities

Land rental activities will be offered based on a combination of the EQIP and CRP contracting model between NRCS and an eligible producer committed to addressing RCPP project resource concerns on eligible lands. Application, ranking, and contracting will emulate applicable aspects of NRCS ranking processes.

However, unlike the traditional CRP program, RCPP land rental authority is not generally expected to be used for landscape-scale soil erosion protection. Rather, NRCS will consider funding rental components of RCPP applications in which the lead partner is proposing that RCPP land rental activities focus on short-term, targeted rental needs in the context of a larger RCPP project. Examples include paying 1–3 years of foregone income to incentivize adoption of an innovative cropping system or to transition to an organic production system.

These awards will incorporate proven aspects of NRCS planning, implementation, and contracting methodology, and are expected to be based principally on an estimate of foregone income. Processes will be provided for consideration of partner-driven development of payment levels and payment standards. Anticipated flexibility and benefits of these awards, relative to existing covered program awards, will be in the possibility of project/partner driven ranking pools, potential for partner innovation in proposed conservation purposes warranting short-term rental payments, and in the potential for leveraging partner contributions for greater conservation benefits.

RCPP Conservation Easements

RCPP easements will retain some elements of ACEP and HFRP easements while differing in substantial ways. Both U.S.-held and entity-held easements are offered. Below is a table summarizing RCPP easements, with explanatory narratives below the table.

	U.S.-Held Easements	Entity-Held Easements
Easement Holder	Acquired and held by the United States by and through USDA NRCS	Acquired and held by an eligible entity that meets the requirements of 7 CFR Section 1468.3.
Easement Deed Requirements	Must use one of three warranty easement deeds provided by NRCS: 1 RCPP Warranty Easement Deed for Protection of Conservation Values (Highly restrictive);	Must attach the RCPP minimum deed terms provided by NRCS to the eligible entity's own conservation easement deed terms. NRCS minimum deed terms available: 1. RCPP Minimum Deed Terms for Protection of Conservation Values (Highly restrictive);

	U.S.-Held Easements	Entity-Held Easements
	<p>2. RCPP Warranty Easement Deed for Conservation Uses (Moderately restrictive);</p> <p>3. RCPP Warranty Easement Deed for Working Lands (Minimally restrictive).</p>	<p>2. RCPP Minimum Deed Terms for Conservation Use with Compatible Agricultural Uses (Moderately restrictive);</p> <p>3. RCPP Minimum Deed Terms for Agricultural Use (Minimally restrictive).</p> <p>NOTE: Two versions of each set of the above-listed RCPP minimum deed terms are available, one with and one without the terms related to a U.S. right-of-enforcement.</p>
Duration	Easements are perpetual or maximum duration allowed under State law	Easements are perpetual or maximum duration allowed under State law.
Potential Eligible Land Types	Private agricultural land, nonindustrial private forest land or associated lands (e.g., riparian areas, floodplains, seasonal or flooded wetlands).	
Basis for RCPP Compensation Cap	<p>Landowner is paid a percentage of the value of the easement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to 100% of easement value for the highly restrictive easement (similar to current ACEP-WRE) - Up to 75% of easement value for the moderately restrictive easement (similar to current ACEP-WRE with reservation of grazing rights or HFRP) - Up to 50% of easement value for the minimally restrictive easement (similar to current ACEP-ALE) 	<p>Cost-share provided to the eligible entity for their purchase of an easement based on a percentage of the value of the easement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to 50%—with U.S. right of enforcement (Not available in AFAs) - Up to 25%—without U.S right of enforcement
Valuation Methodology	Easement value determined via appraisal or GARC's, where appropriate*.	Easement value determined via appraisal of before-and-after fair market value of the offered acres.
Partner Match	Matching funds provided by partners are not required but	Partner match is required and may consist of any combination of landowner donation

	U.S.-Held Easements	Entity-Held Easements
	<p>contributions are encouraged to further RCPP project objectives.</p> <p>Any landowner donation associated with U.S.-held easements cannot count as partner contribution for the project.</p>	toward easement value or partner cash contribution toward payment of easement compensation to the landowner.
RCPP award type for easement purchase	Producer contract entered into directly with eligible landowners.	Supplemental agreement entered into with an eligible entity that will hold the easement on eligible land.
Allowed uses of RCPP financial assistance	Cost of easement itself, acquisition-related costs (e.g., appraisal, survey, due diligence, title and closing services), restoration implementation costs.	Cost of easement itself, costs for NRCS technical appraisal review, and NRCS environmental database search. RCPP financial assistance funds awarded for an entity-held easement may not be used for any other purposes.

*Use of existing GARCs is permissible where conservation value statements and deed restrictions match existing covered programs where GARCs are applicable. Any applicant interested in using GARCs for U.S.-held easements must consult on this issue with the relevant RCPP Coordinator ahead of proposal submission.

U.S.-Held Conservation Easements

RCPP conservation easement awards will be offered to eligible landowners to execute conservation easements on a diversity of land uses. U.S.-held easements are in general permanent easements with exceptions for Tribes (i.e., 30-year contracts) or States where State law prohibits permanent easements (duration set at the longest duration allowable under State law).

Under current NRCS covered programs, U.S.-held easements are only available for wetlands (ACEP-WRE) and forestland (HFRP). For RCPP, U.S.-held easements will be available for any agriculturally linked land use, such as cropland, grasslands, natural wetlands or riparian areas buffering agricultural lands. RCPP easements are driven by ties to RCPP project resource concerns and conservation benefits, not land use or other covered program eligibility factors.

Application, ranking, easement acquisition processes, and contracting will emulate applicable aspects of ACEP and HFRP. RCPP easements will use new template deeds based on the level of restriction warranted by the easement in the specific context of a RCPP project, which will be a foundational component of landowner application, evaluation, and ranking. The more restrictive the terms of the easement, the higher the percentage of the easement value that may be provided under RCPP.

For example, an RCPP wetland easement with restrictions and requirements similar to an ACEP-WRE easement (through which the landowner sells most of the property rights) will be eligible to receive a higher percentage of the easement value than a less restrictive wetland easement wherein the landowner sells fewer of those property rights in exchange for greater certainty regarding the ability to conduct future land management activities compatible with the easement (e.g., future timber harvest).

RCPP financial assistance that may be provided for the easement itself is based on the value of the easement as determined by a before-and-after appraisal via a methodology to be determined by NRCS.

Partner contributions will be allowed to complement NRCS funding. NRCS may use supplemental agreements to procure easement related surveys, appraisals, closing services or other realty-related services consistent with applicable DOJ acquisition processes and requirements. Additional flexibilities of RCPP U.S.-held easements may include partner-driven ranking pools, potential for partner innovation in providing outreach and project development with interested landowners to develop robust easement applications, and the potential for leveraging partner contributions for greater conservation and/or participant benefit.

Entity-Held RCPP Conservation Easements

Currently, NRCS only allows entities to hold ACEP-ALE agricultural land easements. For RCPP, entity-held easements are eligible for any land use and driven by conservation benefits and resource concerns identified in the RCPP project. For example, entity-held easements may be enrolled on forest land, wetlands, riparian areas, in addition to on agricultural lands and grasslands.

RCPP awards for entity-held easement require collaboration between NRCS, a qualified entity, and an eligible landowner. RCPP financial assistance that may be provided for the easement itself is based on the value of the easement as determined by a before-and-after appraisal via a methodology to be determined by NRCS. Acquisition and easement management costs are the responsibility of RCPP partners (i.e., they cannot be not reimbursed by NRCS). These costs may be counted as partner contributions based on final agreement terms and negotiated project deliverables.

Partners and landowners will be expected to follow easement acquisition and closing processes similar to ACEP-ALE and include or address NRCS-provided minimum deed terms in their conservation easement deeds. Either a qualified lead partner or a qualified third-party entity that meets the requirements of 7 CFR Section 1468.3 may apply to be the holder of an RCPP entity-held easement.

Application, ranking, easement acquisition processes, and contracting will emulate applicable aspects of existing NRCS easement programs. Lead partners may help inform NRCS funding decisions through project ranking criteria and/or bundled applications.

Partner matching funds for RCPP easements are required, mirroring ACEP-ALE policy. Easement matching funds may be counted as RCPP partner contributions for the project.

RCPP applicants may propose projects that incorporate buy-protect-sell transactions for acquisition of entity-held conservation easements. The applicant should identify in the proposal how buy-protect-sell transactions further the applicant's project goals. Any buy-protect-sell transactions, if funded, must satisfy NRCS requirements for such transactions. At a minimum, an eligible entity cannot hold simultaneously both the fee simple title and the conservation easement under an RCPP buy-protect-sell transaction.

Additional flexibilities of entity-held RCPP easements include the possibility of partner-driven ranking pools, potential for partner innovation in providing outreach and project development with interested landowners to build robust easement applications, and the potential for leveraging partner contributions for greater conservation and/or participants benefit.

Please note: US-Held Easements are not available in Alternative Funding Arrangements.

Public Works/Watersheds

Through the public works/watersheds component of RCPP, eligible partners may receive financial assistance awards to support implementation of structural works of improvement to address watershed-scale issues on eligible land, similar to projects currently carried out under Public Law 83-566. Unlike other RCPP contract types, RCPP project proposals must detail proposed public works/watershed activities (i.e., detailed plan of work) to provide project reviewers information needed to assess project viability. While RCPP projects could include planning, design, and installation of proposed public works/watershed projects, timing is critical to fully complete a project from start to finish in the 5 (or potentially longer) years of an RCPP project, so details of both TA and FA requests associated with public works projects must be included in the questionnaire section of application in the RCPP portal. Projects requesting lump-sum planning, design or public works installation funding that do not include proposals for defensible and trackable documentation of specific tasks and schedules may be penalized in the ranking process

Partner proposals for public works/watershed projects must include sufficient detail for reviewers to evaluate the project need and the ability of the partner to complete the project on time. Unlike for other types of RCPP activities, partners lead the planning, design, and installation public works/watershed. However, NRCS retains watershed plan and design approval authority consistent with Federal infrastructure projects and informed by NRCS watershed and engineering directives and related Public Law 83-566 policy. NRCS may discontinue assistance if the planning or design phases of a project indicate that timely project completion is unlikely. It is NRCS's intent that only those applications with robust work plans, detailed cost proposals, and proven partner capacities advance for funding consideration.

Applicants are reminded that all RCPP public works/watershed project must have demonstrable ties to proposed RCPP project conservation benefits and eligible agricultural lands.

When RCPP public works/watershed financial assistance funds are provided for a project, partner cash match is required for project purposes except flood damage prevention related to excess water control.

Flood control projects may request up to 100 percent RCPP financial assistance, though ranking may preclude their selection without substantial contributions (given these projects inclusion in RCPP). Watershed/public works improvements targeting non-flood control purposes will have a minimum 35 percent cash-match requirement. Cash-match requirements may be reduced or waived if funding is awarded to a project in which the benefits will principally accrue to communities or regions where most residents meet limited resource or socially disadvantaged criteria as included in the 2018 Farm Bill. Public works/watershed project cash match may be counted as RCPP project contributions, but neither cash nor in-kind RCPP partner contributions not directly associated with the RCPP public works/watershed funding can be counted toward public works/watershed match requirements.

Additional flexibilities associated with these awards include the potential for innovative contracting for experienced partners with demonstrated design, contracting, and implementation skills, and the potential for leveraging partner contributions for greater conservation and/or participants benefit.

As a reminder, Public Law 83-566-like land treatment activities will be funded under land improvement/ management/restoration contracts with the producer rather than public works supplemental agreements.

Appendix B – Technical Assistance

NRCS Technical Assistance

NRCS maintains substantial responsibility for ensuring that RCPP conservation activities are implemented consistent with Federal and agency statutes, regulations and policies. Some of NRCS's responsibilities are non-delegable, meaning that they must be performed by NRCS. For these non-delegable responsibilities, NRCS typically retains a minimum of five percent of the total project RCPP funding. Some of these responsibilities are listed in the table below.

NRCS Non-Delegable TA Responsibilities
Collaborate with lead partners to develop and manage RCPP agreements and associated components.
HEL/WC, AGI and NEPA-related compliance activities.
Eligibility determinations and other producer contract activities.
Project-related communications and coordination activities.

Implementation Technical Assistance

Technical assistance is required for conservation planning, practice design, installation and verification, U.S.-held easement due diligence and other needs associated with supporting the implementation of RCPP conservation activities. For RCPP, these activities are known as Implementation Technical Assistance, or TA-I.

For RCPP Classic:	For AFAs:
TA-I funding defaults to NRCS but may be awarded, during agreement negotiations, to qualified partners to provide eligible TA-I services. Whether TA-I activities are carried out by NRCS or by partners or a third party, they must be carried out according to applicable Federal requirements, including NRCS planning procedures, conservation practice standards, and job approval authority.	Partners are expected to deliver all TA-I required for the implementation of AFAs except for tasks that NRCS cannot delegate (see section above). TA-I is expected to

18 percent of the total funding request is set-aside for TA-I activities. Below is a list of common TA-I activities for RCPP projects.

Implementation Technical Assistance—Eligible Activities
Pre-application activities related to RCPP producer contracts, watershed activities or easements. This can include completion of inventories or data collection to support environmental evaluations and other NEPA-related activities.
Conservation planning to producers or landowners directly related to installation or management of eligible conservation activities.
Practice design related to land management, rental or watershed activities.
Assistance with practice installation and verification.
FA contract support services (i.e., securing and managing contracts for third-party services like engineering studies, surveys, appraisals, etc.) for US-Held Easements and watershed projects.

TA-I budgets in project proposals are tentative. The flexible RCPP agreement structure allows for TA-I to be either expended by NRCS or obligated to a partner at any time during the life of a project. At the start of PPA negotiations, all TA-I will be allocated for NRCS use. During both PPA and any subsequent supplemental agreement negotiations, NRCS will work with lead partners to refine proposal budgets so that TA-I is expended as efficiently as possible to ensure project success. This could include the allocation of TA-I funding to partners that have the capacity and capability to perform the work according to NRCS planning and practice standards.

Additional Considerations

- Land Management Activities typically have the greatest potential for TA-I to be delegated to an eligible partner.
- For Entity-Held Easements, consistent with ACEP-ALE, most due diligence activities are required partner contributions.
- For US-Held Easements, most TA-I is performed by NRCS and cannot be delegated.
- For Watershed Projects, most TA-I is expected to be performed by an eligible partner according to an approved Watershed Plan.

Enhancement Technical Assistance

Enhancement TA (TA-E) can be earned by partners for project-level activities—all field-level and producer/landowner-level conservation implementation activities are funded by TA-I. Enhancement activities include things such as project management, outcomes assessment and others listed in the table below. Like other RCPP funding, TA-E awards are not grants and payments are only made for verifiable completion of eligible, negotiated tasks. During PPA and subsequent supplemental

agreement negotiations, NRCS will work with partner(s) to establish eligible TA-E deliverables and valuation methods.

A maximum of seven percent of the total RCPP funding request is available as TA-E. It is anticipated that not all items potentially eligible for TA-E will be funded in selected projects due to the seven-percent cap. Where additional TA-E is required for project success, partners must provide contributions for enhancement activities when the cap is exceeded.

If applicants do not request TA-E as part of their proposal, that TA funding will be folded back into program funding as determined by NRCS. Proposals submitted without TA-E requests may be allowed to convert unneeded TA-I to TA-E during proposal negotiations, but such conversions are at the sole discretion of NRCS.

The table below (and the Portal's TA deliverable table) includes eligible TA-E activities.

Enhancement Technical Assistance—Eligible Activities
Develop and manage RCPP agreements with NRCS.
Other RCPP project-related producer outreach and education, including inventories, analyses, and tools needed to inform outreach.
Project-related communications and coordination activities.
Development and calculation of quantifiable project outcomes.
Development of innovative conservation approaches such as pay-for-performance or environmental credit markets.
Project management and partnership development to accomplish project goals.

IMPORTANT: Official NRCS approval of reimbursable TA activities included in an RCPP proposal does not occur when RCPP project selections are announced. RCPP financial awards are not grants and function similarly to contracts. Specific TA funding, deliverables and valuation methods are negotiated between NRCS and partners following project selection. All TA payment rates and performance standards will be specified and agreed to as part of these negotiations and may be subject to additional documentation requirements or approvals beyond those included in a selected proposal.

Appendix C – Proposal Narrative Questions

RCPP Classic Narrative Questions

Impact

1. Describe compelling need for the project and an overview of how the project will generate targeted conservation benefits.
2. Climate-Smart Agriculture and Urban Agriculture are two FY 22 RCPP themes. Describe how this project would support either or both of these agency priorities (if applicable).
3. Describe rationale for inclusion of each RCPP activity type in project proposal, and how each activity relates to the generation of conservation benefits.
4. Describe the rationale for the proposed geographic scope of the project.
5. Describe proposed approach for evaluating the success of the project, including environmental outcomes. If applicable also include social and economic outcomes that will be measured as part of success of this project.
6. Will this project assist producers in meeting or avoiding the need for natural resource regulatory requirements? If so, describe how.

Partner Contributions

7. Describe the plan and lead partner's experience managing and tracking the delivery of third-party contributions (if included in the proposal).
8. Describe how partner contributions add value to the proposed project to leverage and multiply the benefits of the potential committed RCPP funding.
9. Describe any proposed innovative methods or approaches for conservation planning, implementation, or assessment, and/or the proposed use of promising new technologies that have a demonstrated likelihood of success?

Innovation

10. Does the partner plan to target project funding to particular locations or producers based on a scientific assessment or research-based plan? If so, please describe the approach.
11. Describe any proposed innovative methods or approaches for conservation planning, implementation, or assessment, and/or the proposed use of promising new technologies that have a demonstrated likelihood of success?

Partnerships and Management

12. Extent of project development activities completed to date, and relationship to those expected to be needed to move forward if selected for funding. Include brief description of any coordination with NRCS staff.
13. Describe the lead and contributing partners' experience managing Federal funding awards or similar projects and conservation projects, executing deliverables, and successfully getting conservation on the ground? Include the overall budget of prior efforts.

14. Describe proposed producer outreach activities designed to identify, inform, and enroll eligible producers and entities in RCPP contract activities? Include any proposed targeting mechanisms in description.
15. Describe any proposed efforts to encourage or include the participation of historically underserved producers, including socially disadvantaged, beginning, limited resource and veteran farmers and ranchers, or include as a partner(s) organization working with or representing those groups of producers.
16. Does any of the lead/contributing partner(s) include an organization(s) with a history of collaborating with or representing HU producers? If so, describe each partner's history of collaborating with or representing HU producers.
17. Financial assistance, typically 70% of an RCPP Classic project, is delivered directly to producers/landowners by NRCS field offices. If this project's success is dependent on the partner performing part of the conservation activities, describe what parts of the proposed FA activities will be performed by the partner and why they cannot be accomplished through standard producer contractors?

RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangement Narrative Questions

Impact

1. Describe compelling need for the project and an overview of how the project will generate targeted conservation benefits.
2. Climate-Smart Agriculture and Urban Agriculture are two FY 22 RCPP themes. Describe how this project would support either or both of these agency priorities (if applicable).
3. Describe the rationale for inclusion of each RCPP activity type in project proposal, and how each activity relates to the generation of conservation benefits.
4. Describe the rationale for the proposed geographic scope of the project.
5. Describe proposed approach for evaluating the success of the project, including environmental outcomes. If applicable also include social and economic outcomes that will be measured as part of success of this project.
6. Will this project assist producers in meeting or avoiding the need for natural resource regulatory requirements? If so, describe how.

Partner Contributions

7. Describe the plan and lead partner's experience managing and tracking the delivery of third-party contributions (if included in the proposal).
8. Describe how partner contributions add value to the proposed project to leverage and multiply the benefits of the potential committed RCPP funding.
9. Provide a justification for why this project would be more effectively carried out through an AFA rather than through the traditional RCPP Classic approach.

Innovation

10. Does the partner plan to target project funding to particular locations or producers based on a scientific assessment or research-based plan? If so, please describe the approach.
11. Describe any proposed innovative methods or approaches for conservation planning, implementation, or assessment, and/or the proposed use of promising new technologies that have a demonstrated likelihood of success?
12. Describe how the lead partner intends to carry out the project outside the traditional RCPP Classic approach? Include details of how the partnership intends to identify participating producers/landowners and how the partnership intends to provide the necessary technical assistance to those participants.

Partnerships and Management

13. Is this a brand-new project or is this part of an existing effort? Describe the extent of project activities completed to date, and how the proposed activities relate to any existing efforts. Include a brief description of any historical coordination with NRCS staff or programs.
14. Describe the lead partner's experience managing Federal funding awards or similar projects and conservation projects, including the execution of deliverables and engagement with ag producers and private landowners to get conservation on the ground.
15. Describe any proposed efforts to encourage or include the participation of historically underserved producers, including socially disadvantaged, beginning, limited resource and veteran farmers and ranchers, or to include as a contributing partner(s) an organization(s) working with or representing those groups of producers.
16. Does any of the lead/contributing partner(s) include an organization(s) with a history of collaborating with or representing HU producers? If so, describe each partner's history of collaborating with or representing HU producers.
17. In some circumstances, RCPP funding may be used to purchase non-fixed/portable equipment. If such equipment purchases are proposed for this project, list the type of equipment, the per item cost of each piece of equipment, whether the equipment would be purchased using TA or FA funds and a justification for the equipment purchase(s) as it ties to the proposed conservation benefits of the project.

RCPP Renewals Narrative Questions

1. Percent of project financial assistance (FA) funding obligated by June 26, 2020.*
2. Percent of project financial assistance (FA) funding expended by June 26, 2020.*
3. Percent of project technical assistance (TA) funding expended by June 26, 2020.*
4. Percent of project partner contributions expended by June 26, 2020.*
5. Describe how the goals and objectives for the project have been met or exceeded.
6. At the time of proposal submission, have all required progress reports and financial reports been submitted on time?
7. Were there any agreement amendments and/or fund transfers associated with this project?
8. Describe the top three accomplishments of the project.

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9. Describe and proposed efforts to encourage or include the participation of historically underserved producers, including socially disadvantaged, beginning, limited resource, and veteran farmers and ranchers.
 10. Describe the compelling need for renewal of this project.
 11. Describe the proposed approach for evaluating the success of a renewed project, including environmental outcomes (and economic and social outcomes if possible).
 12. Describe how partner contributions add value to the renewed project to leverage and multiple the benefits of the potential committed RCPP funding.
 13. Does the partner plan to target project funding to particular locations or producers based on a scientific assessment or research-based plan? If so, please describe the approach.
 14. Describe any proposed innovative methods or approaches for conservation planning, implementation, or assessment, and/or the proposed use of promising new technologies that have a demonstrated likelihood of success.

*If less than 95%, describe remaining balance and any plans to expend remaining project FA by the time of the project expiration.