United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS Natural Resources
Conservation Service

9173 W. Barnes Dr.
Suite C
Boise, Idaho 83709

Idaho Bulletin: 300-22-04

Subject: LTP –Idaho EQIP Program Guidance – FY 2022   Date: November 5, 2021

Purpose. To provide guidance for Fiscal Year 2022 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):

Expiration Date. September 30, 2022

Background. This bulletin and attachments provide guidance for general, national initiative, and RCPP-EQIP ranking pools.

Explanation. The following dates have been established:

Timeline for EQIP Sign-up 1
> **November 5 -** Application cut-off
> **December 10 –** Eligibility and Screening
> **March 4 –** Ranking and Cost Estimates
> **March 11 –** Additional Funds Requests
> **April 15 -** Documents signed, uploaded to the Document Management System (DMS), and submitted for 2nd level review
> **April 15 –** Obligation Review prior to participant signatures

Timeline for EQIP Sign-up 2
> **April 29 -** Application cut-off
> **May 27 –** Eligibility and Screening
> **June 17 -** Ranking and Cost Estimates
> **July 15 -** Documents signed, uploaded to DMS, and submitted for 2nd level review.
> Obligation Review prior to participant signatures.

As a reminder, the second sign-up only applies to Sage Grouse Initiative, Cheatgrass Challenge, EQIP Water Smart and second signups for RCPP-EQIP pools, if needed.

Please make sure the following items are completed for eligible applications that screen high and will be ranked.
- Enter Direct Deposit (SF-1199A) and ensure that the Vendor Code is **Active** in ProTracts.
- Assure NRCS personnel with the proper "Planning" and "Design" job approval authority have reviewed the proposed conservation practices.
- Applicants must get concurrence from other Landowners for any structural or vegetative practices that will be installed on land not owned by the applicant. Refer to the Programs Guidance for Public Lands (see attachment) for information specific to public lands.

- Inform the applicant what records will be required should their control of land or HU self-certification be selected for an annual 5% spot check.

National will consider state requests for additional funds in two separate notices. The first fund request will be in early spring. If teams would like to fund additional applications, please fill out the attached EQIP Additional Funds Request spreadsheet and return to ASTC-Programs with cc: to your AC and Farm Bill Specialist. Lump application assistance types together. For example, if a Team has 3 Irrigation applications, and 2 Rangeland applications that they would like assistance for please list them on separate lines in the spreadsheet. A Team cannot skip an application to pick up another application that ranked lower, and all applications must be currently ranked in an existing fund pool. Compelling justification must be provided as to why additional funds are needed. Additional guidance will be provided in a future bulletin.

The 5% Obligation Review will happen prior to collecting application signatures. Applications that will be reviewed will be selected at the time of Pre-Approval. When all needed documents are uploaded to DMS for applications that were selected for review, email the State Program Manager to let her know. Work on the applications that were picked for the review first so that this doesn't hold up your obligation on other contracts. A review will take place using only the Pre-Obligation checklist and results returned. Correction of all errors found will be completed prior to seeking participant's signature. Once State Office provides approval to move forward, all applications can move forward. A random application will be pulled from other applications that were not selected for review to make sure that all errors that were found in the 5% Obligation Review were corrected on all applications. If the same error is found on the randomly selected application, the Area Conservationist will be notified, and the Team Lead may receive disciplinary action.

The following steps will be completed for contract development:
1. The State Program Manager will preapprove applications using the Select Applications Tool (SAT) and ProTracts in each ranking pool, based on the ranking score and availability of funds.
2. Digitize practices in Conservation Desktop (CD). Practices can be digitized either before/during/after assessment or after preapproval.
3. Create/Edit Agreement Items
   a. The application needs to have a cost list and be in 'Eligible 'or 'Pre-Approved' status in ProTracts and 'Pre-Approved' status in SAT.
   b. All practices 'Pre-Approved' must have an agreement item created.
4. Submit items to ProTracts.
5. Ensure all information is accurate on the application and the 'applicant info' screens, then check rules in ProTracts.
6. Please make sure to manually set the expiration date of your contracts to a consistent date (suggest December 31) beyond the last day of the month that the last practice is scheduled. Please ensure the expiration date provides adequate time beyond the last practice.
7. The Team Lead will then approve their applications in ProTracts, ensuring each application and contract meets EQIP and contracting policy. The pre-obligation checklist should be reviewed prior to approving the application.
8. Once approved, the Team Lead   will complete the technical adequacy e-signature function in ProTracts.

9. Print the NRCS-CPA-1202, Appendix, and NRCS-CPA-1155 and obtain participant signatures.
10. The Team Lead   will complete and sign the EQIP pre-obligation checklist for all approved applications.
11. Scan and upload all documents listed in the attached DMS guidance.
12. Notify the applicable second level reviewer that all documents are uploaded to the DMS and are ready for second level review.
13. When you are notified that the program manager has signed and obligated the contract, upload the e-signed NRCS-CPA-1155 and NRCS-CPA-1202 from ProTracts to the DMS and place a copy of them in the case file.

Contact. Please contact your Area Farm Bill Specialist or the applicable program manager if you have any questions.

Amie Miller
Acting State Conservationist

Attachments:

Attachment A – EQIP Protocols
Attachment B – Dairy/AFO/CAFO
Attachment C – National On Farm Energy Initiative
Attachment D – National Organic Initiative
Attachment E – Source Water Protection Practices
Attachment F – Programs Guidance for Public Lands
Attachment G – Idaho EQIP Pre-Obligation Checklist 2022
Attachment H – EQIP Additional Funds Request
Attachment I – Advance Payment Requirements
Attachment J – Intent to Proceed Template Letter
Attachment K– Idaho Data Management System (DMS)
Documentation and Guidance
Attachment L – WME Info and Proposal Form
Attachment M – Acceptable Signatures
Attachment N – Fund Pool Allocation
Attachment O – Team Funding Allocation
Attachment P – NRCS Idaho Fence Guidance
Attachment Q – State Screening Tool