

Conservation Innovation Grants

Conservation Innovation for America's Working Lands



Investment in Innovation

The Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) Program, managed by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), supports market-based solutions to resource challenges and the tools, technologies and strategies for next-generation conservation efforts on America's working lands.

For more than a decade, CIG projects have addressed a wide diversity of topics and resource concerns, including soil health, irrigation efficiency, wildlife and pollinator habitat, water and air quality, greenhouse gas markets, on-farm energy use and conservation finance.

Program Eligibility

CIG applications are accepted from state or local governments, federally-recognized American Indian tribes, non-governmental organizations and individuals in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands) and the

Pacific Islands Area.

CIG funds innovative, on-the-ground conservation projects, including pilot projects and field demonstrations. Proposed projects must conform to the description of innovative conservation projects or activities published in the annual funding notice. With its focus on innovation, CIG does not fund projects supporting technologies and approaches commonly used in the geographic area covered by the application, including those already eligible for funding through EQIP.

The maximum CIG award is set annually by the NRCS Chief and historically has been either \$1 million or \$2 million. An applicant's CIG funding request must be matched at least 1:1 with non-federal funding. Matching funds can be any combination of cash and in-kind contributions. The grantee is also responsible for providing the technical assistance required to successfully complete the project. NRCS will provide technical oversight for each project receiving an award.

CIG Snapshot

Conservation Innovation Grants are competitive grants that stimulate the development and adoption of innovative approaches and technologies for conservation on agricultural lands.

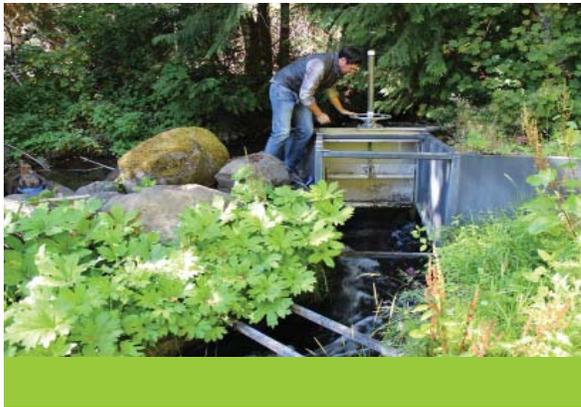
- First authorized by 2002 Farm Bill
- Funding source: Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- Annual national CIG funding average: \$20 million
- Total national CIGs awarded since 2004: 711
- Total national CIG funding since 2004: \$286.7 million

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/cig>



Historically Underserved and Military Veteran Farmers, Ranchers and Forest Landowners

NRCS recognizes the need to provide special consideration to historically-underserved agricultural producers and forest landowners and strives to ensure that they benefit from innovative technologies and approaches. Each year, up to 10 percent of national CIG funds is set aside for applicants who are beginning or limited resource farmers and ranchers, American Indian tribes or community-based organizations that include or represent these producers and private forest landowners.



Application Process

National CIG: A CIG funding notice is announced each year. Funds for single- or multi-year projects, not to exceed three years, will be awarded through a nationwide competitive grants process. Projects may be watershed-based, regional, multi-state, or nationwide in scope. The natural resource concerns eligible for funding through CIG are identified in the funding announcement and may change annually.

Applications are evaluated by a technical peer review panel against criteria identified in the funding notice. The peer panel recommendations are reviewed by an NRCS Grants Review Board that makes funding recommendations to the NRCS Chief. The NRCS Chief makes the final award selections.

State CIG: NRCS State Offices can choose each year to administer their own CIG competitions. State projects are smaller in scale and are limited to a maximum award of \$75,000. Public notices in each participating state announce the availability of funds for state CIG competitions.

More Information

Once funds for CIG become available, a funding notice is posted on www.grants.gov, the federal e-Grants portal. The funding notice is also posted on the NRCS website: www.nrcs.usda.gov. The funding notice details CIG requirements and the information required from applicants.

Complete applications must be submitted through www.grants.gov and e-mailed to the NRCS National Office at nrcscig@wdc.usda.gov.



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