

Conservation Innovation Grants



Technical and Financial Assistance Available

Benefits of CIG

The CIG program enables NRCS to work with public and private entities and individuals to accelerate technology transfer and adoption of promising technologies and approaches to address some of the nation's most pressing natural resource concerns. CIG funds benefit agricultural producers by providing more options for environmental enhancement and compliance with federal, state, and local regulations.

Program At A Glance

National and State CIG - Public and private grantees develop the tools, technologies, and strategies to support next-generation conservation efforts on working lands and develop market-based solutions to resource challenges. Grantees must match the CIG investment at least one to one.

On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials – feature collaboration between NRCS and partners to implement on-the-ground conservation activities and then evaluate their impact.

Overview

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers competitive grants to further innovative approaches to agricultural production and environmental enhancement through the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program.

CIG funds may be awarded to individual agricultural producers, local and state governments, federally-recognized tribes, and non-governmental organizations.

CIG projects are designed with technology transfer in mind. The overall goal is to incorporate new innovations into NRCS technical manuals and make them available to the agricultural community.



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Eligibility

NRCS accepts CIG applications from state or local governments, federally recognized Indian tribes, non-governmental organizations and individuals in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands) and the Pacific Islands Area (Guam, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands).

To be considered for CIG funding, conservation approaches or technologies must be sufficiently studied to indicate a likelihood of success for technology transfer. CIG supports innovative, on-the-ground conservation projects, including pilot projects and field demonstrations. CIG does not fund research projects. Projects need to have a statistically valid design and application in an agricultural setting. Proposed projects should address one of the innovative conservation topics published in the announcement for program funding notice. Technologies and approaches commonly used in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) are not eligible for funding through CIG.

At least 50 percent of the project cost must come from non-federal matching funds (either cash and/or in-kind contributions) provided by the grantee. Proposed projects must involve EQIP-eligible producers, which are farmers, ranchers or non-industrial private forest owners that meet EQIP eligibility requirements. CIG funds provided directly or indirectly to a producer are counted toward the producer's EQIP payment limitation.

National vs. State CIG

National CIG: Under the National CIG program, the NRCS national office in Washington, D.C. will announce a funding notice each year. Projects may be watershed-based, regional, multi-state, or nationwide in scope. Projects cannot exceed three years.

National CIG applicants must address one of the natural resource categories identified in the funding announcement. NRCS will evaluate applications through a technical peer review panel and make sure they address the criteria identified in the funding notice. Then the NRCS Grants Review Board will make recommendations to the Chief of NRCS for final selections. Awards are made through a grant agreement with the NRCS national office.

State CIG: Each NRCS State Conservationist has the discretion to offer CIG in their respective states. In Alaska, the State Conservationist will offer a state CIG for fiscal year 2020. Projects may be farm-based, multi-county, small watershed, or Statewide in scope. Projects cannot exceed three years.

State CIG applicants must address one of the natural resource concern topics identified in the state funding announcement.

On-Farm Trials

On-Farm Trials supports more widespread adoption of innovative approaches, practices and systems on working lands. Incentive payments are provided to producers to offset the risk of implementing innovative approaches. The NRCS national office in Washington, D.C. will announce a funding notice each year.



Contact

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Where to find CIG Funding Notices

CIG Announcements for Program Funding (AFP) can be found on the federal eGrants portal at: www.grants.gov.

Remember, there are three notices, one for National CIG, one for State CIG, and one for On Farm Trials. Each notice will specify the information required to complete an application for CIG.

How to Apply

Visit your local USDA Service Center to apply or visit: www.nrcs.usda.gov/getstarted

More Information

Visit the CIG program website to learn more.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/cig/>

