

Summary Information

Federal Awarding Agency Name: U.S. Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC)

Funding Opportunity Title: Announcement for Program Funding for NRCS' Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) for Federal fiscal year (FY) 2019 – OREGON

Initial Announcement

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NRCS-OR-CIG-19-GEN0010093

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 10.912

NRCS is announcing the availability of CIG to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies. Applications are accepted from [eligible entities](#) for projects carried out in the state of Oregon. A total of up to \$250,000 is available for CIG in FY 2019. All non-federal entities (NFE) and individuals are invited to apply, with the sole exception of federal agencies. Projects may be between one and three years in duration. The maximum award amount for a single award in FY 2019 is \$75,000.

APPLICATIONS DUE DATE: Applications must be received by 5 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on May 31, 2019.

SUBMISSIONS: Applications must be submitted electronically through [grants.gov](#). Submissions must be received by the time and date due. Late submissions will not be reviewed or considered. The agency will rely on system generated date and time receipt documentation for submission made via Grants.gov to determine whether applications meet the submission deadline. [Click here for more on how to submit an application.](#)

The grants.gov electronic submission interface is called Workspace. Workspace is the standard way for organizations or individuals to apply for federal grants in grants.gov. Workspace allows an applicant grant team to access and edit different forms within an application simultaneously. In addition, the forms may be filled out online or as a PDF. An overview of Workspace can be viewed at grants.gov ([WEBINAR - Getting Started with Workspace: Become a Workspace Wizard](#)).

Please allow extra time to register in Workspace because there are several preliminary registration steps before an applicant can submit the application. To register, go to [www.grants.gov](#), click on "Applicants", then click on "Get Registered." If you have completed a prior grants.gov application, you may already have completed the registration process. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication (e.g., Braille, large print, or audio tape) should contact the USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

FOR MORE INFORMATION: A webinar for CIG applicants is scheduled for April 18, 2019 at 1 p.m. Pacific Standard Time. Information on how to participate in the webinar will be posted to the Oregon NRCS website: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/or/home/>. Applicants are encouraged to visit the website to learn more about the CIG program. Questions about this announcement can be directed to mailto: amy.fischer@or.usda.gov or (503) 414-3292, Oregon Farm Bill Specialist.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

The Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program is authorized as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) (16 U.S.C. 3839aa-8). The Secretary of Agriculture delegated the authority for the administration of EQIP, including CIG, to the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), who is Vice President of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). EQIP is funded and administered by NRCS under the authorities of CCC.

B. Overview

The purpose of CIG is to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies in conjunction with agricultural production. CIG projects are expected to lead to the transfer of conservation technologies, management systems, and innovative approaches (such as market-based systems) to agricultural producers, into NRCS technical manuals and guides, or to the private sector. CIG generally funds pilot projects, field demonstrations, and on-farm conservation research. On-farm conservation research is defined as an investigation conducted to answer a specific applied conservation question using a statistically valid design while employing farm-scale equipment on farms, ranches or private forest lands.

C. Innovative Conservation Projects or Activities

CIG funds the development and field testing, on-farm research and demonstration, evaluation, or implementation of:

- Approaches to incentivizing conservation adoption, including market-based and conservation finance approaches; and
- Conservation technologies, practices, and systems.

Projects or activities under CIG must comply with all applicable federal, tribal, state, and local laws and regulations throughout the duration of the project; and

- Use a technology or approach that was studied sufficiently to indicate a high probability for success;
- Demonstrate, evaluate, and verify the effectiveness, utility, affordability, and usability of natural resource conservation technologies and approaches in the field;
- Adapt and transfer conservation technologies, management, practices, systems, approaches, and incentive systems to improve performance and encourage adoption;
- Introduce proven conservation technologies and approaches to a geographic area or agricultural sector where that technology or approach is not currently in use.

Technologies and approaches that are eligible for funding in a project's geographic area using an EQIP contract for an established conservation practice standard are ineligible for CIG funding, except where the use of those technologies and approaches demonstrates clear innovation.

D. State Component

For FY 2019, NRCS accepts proposals that address one or more of the State priorities listed below.

CIG Priorities for FY 2019:

1) Energy Priority

The objective of this priority is to implement new technologies and/or approaches to conserve energy while indirectly promoting on farm renewable energy opportunities.

Possible subtopics include:

- Evaluate and demonstrate on farm sustainable energy systems (e.g. bio-fuels, hydropower, solar, and/or wind) that offset fossil fuel energy use and meet on-farm energy needs, while addressing a primary natural resource concern and increasing energy efficiency and/or reducing environmental contaminants (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions);
- Develop and demonstrate innovative planning and decision aids to assess on-farm energy conservation needs that can be adapted in NRCS planning process

2) Air Quality and Atmospheric Change Priority

The objective of this priority is to demonstrate the capabilities of agricultural and forest conservation systems to improve air quality and/or reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase soil and vegetation carbon sequestration, and to maintain high levels of food and fiber production in the face of changing temperature and precipitation regimes.

Possible subtopics include:

- Develop local or regional climate change assessments and/or tools to assist agriculture, forest and natural area land managers and partners in making conservation decisions.
- Demonstrate and evaluate innovative technologies for mitigating air emissions from livestock and poultry production systems via alternative animal and/or manure management strategies. The demonstration should focus on preventing the initial generation of air contaminants and quantify the economics of implementing the alternative management strategy, as well as the impact on animal health and performance;
- Develop and demonstrate ambient air quality assessment methodologies and procedures for identifying air quality issues and solutions related to animal and/or crop production systems. The methodologies and procedures should focus on one or more agriculturally related air contaminants and identify opportunities for mitigating emissions at multiple steps in the animal and/or crop production process;
- Innovative approaches for addressing odor – Emissions of odorous compounds can cause nuisance conditions. Odorous emissions can be sulfur-based (odorous sulfur compounds like hydrogen sulfide), nitrogen-based (ammonia), or carbon-based (odorous volatile organic compounds). Projects are sought to assist NRCS in helping agricultural producers reduce emissions and impacts of odors and evaluate farm operations for opportunities related to odors.

3) Water Quality Priority

The objective of this priority is to implement new technologies, methods or market-based approaches to maintain, restore, or enhance water quality resources associated with agricultural and forest land uses while sustaining productivity.

Possible subtopics include:

- Innovative approaches to management, application and/or treatment of manure on farms;
- Demonstrate and evaluate innovative organic pest and nutrient management technologies for single and/or integrated vegetable, row crop, orchard, and/or livestock systems;
- Demonstrations of organic and non-organic farms or ranches using edge-of-field monitoring. Voluntary edge-of-field water quality monitoring enables agricultural producers and scientists to quantify conservation work on water quality. Through edge-

of-field monitoring, NRCS works with producers and conservation partners to measure nutrients and sediment levels in water runoff from a field and compare the improvements gained under different conservation systems;

- Demonstrate and quantify the effectiveness of methods to capture dissolved phosphorus from field runoff and subsurface drainage.
- Develop and evaluate a computer application using existing easily available software (e.g. Access database, Excel spreadsheet) that uses inputs such as soil test results, location, crop rotation, phosphorus index, reasonable yield estimates, nutrient source (e.g. commercial products, manure, compost, organic amendments), and land-grant university nutrient recommendations to develop a nutrient application plan that can be used as part of a NRCS Nutrient Management job sheet.

4) *Water Quantity Priority*

The objective of this priority is to implement new technologies, methods or market-based approaches to maintain, restore, or enhance water quantity resources associated with agricultural uses while sustaining productivity.

Possible subtopics include:

- Innovative technologies and/or approaches that provide an economic incentive to convert irrigated crop lands to dry cropland use. Innovation should demonstrate and evaluate impacts to resources as well as economic and environmental market benefits;
- Develop practical adaptation innovative strategies for cropland, rangeland, and forest systems affected by drought.
- Innovative water management methods and systems (technical, economic, social) that promote the efficient use of agricultural water resources

5) *Plant Health/Vigor Priority*

The objective of this priority is to develop and/or implement new technologies, methods or market-based approaches to maintain, restore, or enhance plant health and vigor on forest, crop, hay, pasture and range lands while sustaining productivity.

Possible subtopics include:

- Innovative methods or technologies in fuels reduction and fire management on forest or rangelands;
- New and innovative approaches/methods to treat and manage invasive species on grazing land or forestlands;
- Innovations or methods to assess, enhance, and preserve cultural plants (first foods) critical to tribal lands;
- Innovative development and testing of a plant database designed to aid clients, NRCS, and conservation partners in developing appropriate seeding and planting recommendations for native species, given location, soil type, and objectives that can be used as part of NRCS job sheets for Conservation Cover, Critical Area Planting, Filter Strip, Field Border, Riparian Herbaceous Cover, Tree/shrub Establishment, and Riparian Forest Border.

6) *Soil Quality Priority*

The objective of this priority is to implement new technologies, methods or market-based approaches to maintain, restore, or enhance soil resources associated with agricultural and forest land uses while sustaining productivity.

Possible subtopics include:

- Economic/Financial case studies on successful Soil Health Management Systems (SHMS) across varied production systems that include quantifying on-site net profit and offsite impacts (e.g., soil erosion, nutrient losses, water and air quality).
- Develop, demonstrate, inform, and promote design and implementation of SHMSs that are location- and production system-appropriate, economically viable, and improve soil health/soil functioning (e.g., optimize nutrient availability, optimize productivity, control soil-borne diseases, increase plant available water, increase resilience to extreme weather), including:
 - Implementation strategies for feasible transition from degraded soils in varied production systems.
 - Innovative approaches on irrigated lands, including adapted irrigation system design, consideration of soil solidity, nutrient management, irrigation water quality and quantity issues, and/or transition strategies from irrigated to no irrigated systems.
 - Transitions to more diverse cropping rotations and grazing systems.
 - Optimal species mixes, seeding rates and seeding methods (e.g., inter-seeding, inter-cropping, frost-seeding) to enhance cover crop establishment/survival, as well as management and termination. Innovative approaches to incorporating cover crops in high intensity/high value cropping systems that address concerns such as delayed planting, pest issues, residue challenges and nitrogen availability challenges.
 - Establishment and management of grazing systems that incorporate multiple plant species (e.g., native warm season grasses in the southeast).
- Demonstrate and quantify the impacts of Soil Health Management Systems (in the Willamette Valley) on pest prevention, avoidance and suppression;
- Demonstrate innovative ways to control pest (e.g. slug control in the Willamette Valley) that facilitate the implementation of Soil Health Management Systems.
- Quantify the impact on soil health by different types of grazing systems across a range of climates, soils, and livestock systems, including use of standard methods for physical, biological, and chemical soil properties/soil health indicators.

7) *Wildlife Habitat/Livestock Priority*

The objective of this priority is to implement new technologies, methods or market-based approaches for environmentally sound wildlife habitat management while sustaining agricultural and forest productivity.

Possible subtopics include:

- Demonstrate methods and quantify the impacts of grazing as a wildlife habitat management tool for Sage Grouse;
- Development of cost-effective strategies to restore and/or maintain (such as grazing prescriptions for plant community objectives) native plant communities;
- Demonstrate wildlife-livestock coexistence practices that minimize contact between livestock and wildlife predators and reduce livestock mortality;
- Development and/or demonstration of innovative on farm automated and/or remote-controlled livestock watering monitoring systems on isolated range areas to improve livestock distribution and improve range forage health.

- Innovative approaches to restoring native vegetation that are compatible with USDA programs such as EQIP, WRE, CREP, including measurement of the habitat benefits resulting from these approaches.

II. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

It is anticipated that a total of up to \$250,000 in funding will be available for this announcement. The funding floor for a single award is \$5,000 and the funding ceiling for a single award is \$75,000.

Awards made through this announcement will be executed through a grant agreement between NRCS and the awardee.

NRCS accepts proposals for projects of one to three years in duration.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Applicant Eligibility

All non-Federal entities (NFE) and individuals, except for Federal agencies, are eligible to apply for projects carried out in Oregon. Individuals and entities may submit more than one application and may receive more than one award.

B. Project Eligibility

All CIG projects must involve EQIP-eligible producers that meet EQIP's eligibility requirements listed in [7 CFR § 1466.6\(b\)\(1\) through \(3\)](#):

- Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions (7 CFR Part 12).
- Be a person, legal entity, joint operation, Indian tribe, or native corporation who is engaged in agricultural production or forestry management or has an interest in the agricultural or forestry operation as defined in [7 CFR Part 1400](#).
- Have control of the land involved for the term of the proposed contract period.

C. EQIP Payment Limitation and Duplicate Payments

The following provisions apply to CIG funding:

- CIG funds are awarded through grant agreements. These grant agreements are not EQIP contracts; thus, CIG awards in and of themselves are not limited by the payment limitation found at section 1240G of the Food Security Act of 1985, 16 U.S.C. 3839aa-7, which imposes a \$450,000 payment limitation for all payments made to persons or legal entities under an EQIP contract entered between FY 2019 and FY 2023.
- All agricultural producers receiving a payment through participation in a CIG project must meet the eligibility requirements of [7 CFR § 1466.6\(b\)\(1\) through \(3\)](#) noted above. In addition, all CIG payments are subject to the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitation. All agricultural producers receiving a payment through participation in a CIG project must have an AGI that does not exceed \$900,000. If awarded a grant, grantees must self-certify and maintain records showing that participating producers receiving payments using CIG funding meet the EQIP eligibility and AGI requirements. Section 1704 (a)(3) of the 2018 Farm Bill states the Secretary may waive the AGI limit on a case by case basis, if the Secretary determines that environmentally sensitive land of special significance would be protected as a result of such waiver. CIG grantees may request waivers once their project commences.
- Section 1240B of the Food Security Act of 1985, 16 U.S.C. 3839aa-2, prohibits duplicative payments. Accordingly, direct or indirect payments cannot be made for a practice for which an individual or legal entity has already received funds or is contracted to receive funds through any USDA conservation program (e.g., Conservation Reserve Program, EQIP, Agricultural Management Assistance, Conservation Stewardship Program). If awarded a grant, grantees must self-certify that payments to producers using CIG funding are not duplicative.

D. Cost Sharing/Matching Requirements

CIG recipients must provide a non-federal funding match or cost-share amount at least equal to the amount of federal funding requested. Applications that do not include cost-sharing will be ineligible for award. Cost sharing may be achieved with contributions of cash, services, materials, equipment, or third party in-kind contributions. See [Section IV, subsection 8](#) of this announcement for information on cost share/match.

E. Historically Underserved Producers and Veteran Farmers or Ranchers

For the FY 2019 CIG award special considerations will be given in the selection process for those applicants that are either: 1) Historically Underserved producers, veteran farmers or ranchers (HU/VFR), or community-based organizations comprised of or representing these entities, or 2) the results of the proposal can be shown to directly benefit HU/VFRs. The regulatory definitions of a Historically Underserved producer and a veteran farmer or rancher (HU/VFR) may be found at [7 CFR 1466.3](#).

To receive this special consideration in the selection process, the applicant must signal their intent by following the instructions [here](#). These applicants must meet all other requirements of this announcement, including addressing at least one CIG priority [listed in this notice](#).

This represents a special consideration and is not a guarantee that funds will be awarded to applicants that self-certify that they qualify for this special consideration.

F. Technical Assistance for CIG Projects

Conservation Innovation Grants are Grant Agreements and as such do not provide for substantial involvement between NRCS and the grantee in carrying out the activity contemplated by the federal award. The technical assistance required to carry out a project is the responsibility of the grantee. NRCS designates an NRCS employee as a Technical Contact for each grant award. Technical contacts provide oversight activities during the project, such as site visits, reviewing performance reports, financial reports, and audits to ensure that standards, objectives, terms, and conditions for the projects are accomplished, but will not be substantially involved in carrying out the activity contemplated by the federal award.

G. SAM.gov Exclusions Database

Applicant entities identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits will not be considered for Federal funding, as applicable to the funding being requested under this Federal program (2 CFR 200.205(d)).

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

There is no pre-proposal process for this announcement. All standard forms necessary for CIG application submission are included in the [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) application package.

A. Executive Order (EO) 12372

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.”

B. Content and Format

Applications must contain the content, format, and information set forth below to receive consideration for funding. Submit a separate application for each project if submitting more than one. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of NRCS or others as to the relative merits of the project described in the application. Applicants must submit a single copy of the application in the following format:

- Each page must be on numbered, letter-sized (8½” x 11”) paper using a white background that has one-inch margins; and
- The text of the application must be typed, single spaced, black, and in a font no smaller than 12-point.

Applications that are incomplete or fail to comply with the required content and formatting requirements will not be considered for funding.

1. *Project Abstract (1-page maximum).*

On a single page, provide the following information:

- The applicant entity name.
- The duration of project in months.
- The amount of federal funding requested.

- The amount of non-federal cost-share/match funding committed.
- The project title.
- The geographic location of the project.
- A brief project description - describe in non-technical language the issue or problem, the objectives to address the issue or problem, the innovative approach to be employed (including the role of participating partners, if applicable), how the impact will be quantified, and the predicted benefits or deliverables of the project.
- The State priority that is being addressed by the project. List one priority from section I.D. above. If the proposal addresses more than one priority, please use your discretion to select the one that is the best fit.
- An indication if applicable that either 1) you are a Historically Underserved producer, veteran farmers or ranchers (HU/VFR), or community-based organizations comprised of or representing these entities, or 2) the results of the proposal can be shown to directly benefit HU/VFRs. Please refer to the [section of this notice](#).
- A technical and administrative contact for the project (if both are the same person, please note this). NRCS will use the technical and administrative contacts identified as the primary applicant contacts.

2. *Standard application form.*

“Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance” and instructions to complete it are included in the application package posted on grants.gov.

3. *Project Narrative (15-page maximum).*

The project description must include the following information in order. A sample project description is included in the application package on grants.gov.:

- Project background: Describe the issue or problem driving the need for the proposed innovation. Provide evidence that the proposed innovation has been studied sufficiently to indicate a high probability for success of the project.
- Project objectives: Be specific using qualitative and quantitative measures, if possible, to describe the project’s purpose, goals, and objectives. Describe how the project is innovative. If the project is addressing a NRCS Conservation Practice Standard, or proposing a new standard, please state this explicitly and identify the standard.
- Project methods: Describe clearly the methodology of the project and the tools or processes that will be used to implement the project.
- Geographic location and size of project or project area: Identify the geographic location and the relative size and scope (e.g., acres, farm types, demographics, etc.) of the project area. Maps are highly recommended.
- EQIP eligible producer participation: Estimate the number of EQIP eligible producers involved in the project and describe the type and extent of their involvement.
- Project action plan and timeline: Provide a table listing project actions, timeframes, and associated milestones through project completion. Applicants should develop their timelines based on a project start date of September 30, 2019.
- Project management: Give a description of how the project will be organized and managed, including a list/description of project partners. Include a list of key technical and administrative personnel, their experience managing federal awards, and their anticipated contributions to the project. Also, include a description of how communication will be

structured within the project team to ensure effective project management. Do not include resumes or CVs.

- h. Project deliverables/products: Provide a list of specific deliverables and products that will allow NRCS to monitor project progress and approve payments. The proposal must include a set of technical deliverables designed to evaluate the performance and broader applicability of the project. In addition, the deliverables must include at least one of the following:
 - 1. Participation in at least one event (e.g., conference or workshop) during the grant period where the grantee presents on the activities of the project, with notification of the NRCS technical contact;
 - 2. A final fact sheet for use in public settings;
 - 3. Closing event – could be a webinar, field day, training event, etc., with notification of the NRCS technical contact.
- i. Project evaluation: Describe the methodology or procedures used to evaluate the project, determine technical feasibility, quantify the results of the project, and ensure project objectives were impactful.
- j. Benefits or results expected and transferability: Identify the results and benefits derived from the project. Identify project beneficiaries, i.e., agricultural producers by type, region, or sector; Historically Underserved producers, or Veteran farmers or ranchers and communities; rural communities; and/or municipalities. Describe how the results will be communicated to others via outreach activities and how these entities will benefit. Forecast the lasting impact of project results.
- k. Graphics – including pictures, charts, graphs and similar items – count towards the 15-page maximum.
- l. References, bibliographies, and citations, if included, do not count towards the 15-page maximum.

4. Assessment of environmental impacts.

If implementation of the proposal is anticipated to have physical, chemical, or biological impacts on the environment, please describe the impacts and their extent. The description of the potential environmental impacts must address both beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action. The length of the description should be commensurate with the complexity of the project proposed and the natural environmental resources impacted directly, indirectly, or cumulatively. Where possible, information on environmental impacts should be quantified, such as number of acres of wetlands impacted, amount of carbon sequestration estimated, etc. Natural environmental resources include soil, water, air, plants, and animals, as well as other resources protected by law, regulation, executive order, and agency policy. NRCS may choose not to approve funding for projects that may result in unacceptable adverse environmental impacts.

Every funded CIG project that involves ground disturbance activities is subject to the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). NRCS must complete an environmental review of each awarded project before project commencement. Applicants may be required to prepare and pay for preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), should the environmental review find that an EA or EIS is required.

In addition, a National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 review and consultation by NRCS State or area office with consulting parties (such as the pertinent State Historic Preservation Officer and federally recognized Indian Tribes) may be required prior to the implementation of project activities that have the potential to impact cultural resources. NHPA Section 106, its implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800), and other related authorities, require federal agencies

to determine if a project has the potential to cause an effect to historic properties and, if so, if they are adverse and how the effects may be addressed. The NHPA review and compliance in accordance with Section 106 of NHPA and implementing regulations at 36 CFR Part 800 must be completed by NRCS and applicants may be required to pay for any cultural resource surveys needed for NRCS to assess CIG project effects. More information on the applicants role in NHPA Section 106 process can be [found here](#).

5. Budget Information, (12-page maximum).

The budget portion of the application consists of two parts, as described below:

- a. Standard Form (SF) 424A Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs. The SF-424A is included as part of the application package posted on Grants.gov. Section B, Item 6, Column 1 should reflect the agency funds, and Column 2 should reflect the applicant's matching funds. This form is the summary budget for the project. See Instructions for Completing SF 424A located in the Related Documents tab of this announcement on Grants.gov.
- b. Detailed Budget Narrative. Provide a detailed narrative in support of the budget for the project broken down by each project year. Detail how the totals on the SF-424A were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. Justify the project cost effectiveness and include justification for personnel and consultant salaries with a description of duties. Statement(s) of work for any subcontractors and consultants must be included as part of the application. The budget narrative should include both the federal funds requested and the applicant's matching funds.

The budget narrative must be in text format with no charts, spreadsheets, or tables. It should be readable on letter-size, printable pages. The information needs to be presented in such a way that the reviewers can readily understand what expenses are incurred to support the project.

6. Funding Restrictions

CIG funds may not be used to pay any of the following costs unless otherwise permitted by law or approved in writing by the Authorized Departmental Officer in advance of incurring such costs:

1. Costs above the amount of funds authorized for the project;
2. Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the grant (preaward costs);
3. Costs which lay outside the scope of the approved project and amendments thereto;
4. Entertainment costs, regardless of their apparent relationship to project objectives;
5. Compensation for injuries to persons or damage to property arising out of project activities;
6. Consulting services performed by a federal employee during official duty hours when such consulting services result in the payment of additional compensation to the employee; and
7. Renovation or refurbishment of research or related spaces, the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such spaces, and the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

This list is not exhaustive. For more details, refer to [2 CFR 200](#).

Profit is not an eligible project cost. Therefore, any funds awarded to for-profit entities must be used for reimbursement of award related direct and indirect costs only.

Individuals applying for a CIG award may not include any indirect costs in the proposed budget.

7. Indirect (F&A) costs.

To be eligible to recover any indirect costs under a federal award, an applicant must either 1) have a current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) with its cognizant federal agency that has not expired or 2) qualify for use of the de minimis rate of 10% of the modified total direct costs (MTDC) as authorized by 2 CFR 200.414(f). To qualify for the de minimis rate, the applicant must not have, or have previously held, a NICRA. A State, local, or tribal governmental department or agency unit that receives more than \$35 million in direct federal funding is not eligible for the de minimis rate.

Applicants with a NICRA must calculate indirect costs using the rate and base specified in their NICRA. The total amount of indirect costs is entered in Section B, Row J, of the SF-424A (Budget Information). A copy of the applicant's current NICRA must be provided with the application. If the applicant does not have a current NICRA, indirect costs may not be recovered under an expired NICRA. A new NICRA can be negotiated with its cognizant federal agency, which is the agency that provides the applicant entity its largest amount of federal funding.

Entities that are eligible for the de minimis rate who already have a de minimis rate agreement must use the rate and base specified in the agreement, which is modified total direct costs (MTDC) as defined by 2 CFR 200.68 and excluding the amount of each subcontract exceeding \$25,000. Note that MTDC excludes certain costs from the base to which the rate is applied. A copy of the applicant's de minimis rate agreement must be provided with the application. If a recipient is eligible to use the de minimis rate, but does not have a de minimis rate agreement, use an indirect cost rate of no more than 10% of MTDC when preparing the budget and state in the budget narrative that a de minimis rate agreement is requested. If selected for award, a de minimis rate agreement will be executed along with the award.

An applicant may voluntarily reduce or waive recovery of indirect costs at their sole discretion and must not be encouraged or coerced in any way to do so by the NRCS. If voluntarily reduced or waived, the applicant may choose to apply any unrecovered indirect costs as part of their cost share or match. Unrecovered indirect cost is the difference between the amount charged to the federal award and the amount which could have been charged to the federal award under the applicant's approved negotiated indirect cost rate (2 CFR 200.306(c)).

8. Cost Share or Matching Funds.

Selected applicants may receive CIG grants of up to 50 percent of their total project cost. CIG recipients must provide a non-federal funding match or cost-share amount at least equal to the amount of federal funding requested. For example, if an applicant requests \$50,000 in CIG funding, at least \$50,000 in non-federal cost-share or matching funds must be committed by the applicant.

Matching funds may be committed by the applicant, project partners, or both and can be a combination of cash and in-kind contributions. Examples of in-kind contributions include work done by unpaid volunteers and donations of supplies, facilities, or equipment. In-kind contributions

identified in the project budget must be quantifiable, verifiable, and necessary to accomplish program activities.

Cost sharing/matching must be committed at the time of application submission. Cost sharing or matching funds must meet the criteria stated at 2 CFR 200.306 and be valued in accordance with 2 CFR 200.306(d). Additional details about cost sharing or matching funds/contributions is located at 2 CFR 200.306.

All matching funds must be identified in both the SF-424A and budget narrative components of the application. Project partners (other than the applicant) must provide commitment letters for all cash and in-kind matching contributions. A separate commitment letter is required for each cash and/or in-kind match contribution. Commitment letters must be signed by the authorized organizational representative of the contributing organization and the applicant organization and must include: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the project partner; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the contribution is made, (4) the dollar value of the contribution; and (5) a statement that the contributor commits to furnish the contribution during the grant period. A sample commitment letter is included as part of the application package on grants.gov.

Applications without signed written commitments covering the full value of the matching contribution are deemed incomplete.

The value of applicant contributions to the project is established according to federal cost principles. Applicants should refer to [2 CFR 200.306](#) for additional guidance on matching funds, in-kind contributions, and allowable costs.

9. Declaration of previous CIG projects involvement and past performance.

If the applicant has previously received a CIG award (either at the National or State levels), please list the following for each award:

- Project Title
- CIG agreement number
- Award funding amount
- Year of Award

10. Declaration of Historically Underserved and veteran farmers or ranchers.

To receive the special consideration in the selection process as a Historically Underserved producers or veteran farmers or ranchers (HU/VFR), or a community-based organization comprised of or representing these entities, applicants must self-certify. HU/VFRs can do so with a simple declarative sentence such as:

“I qualify as a (Historically Underserved producer) (veteran farmer) (veteran rancher) (community-based organization representing...) and wish to compete in the set-aside funding pool.”

In addition to the self-certification statement, community-based organizations comprised of or representing HU/VFRs must provide a brief description of the entity and the types and numbers of HU/VFRs the organization intends to service through the project.

To receive the special consideration in the selection process and the applicant does not qualify as a HU/VFR, or a community-based organization comprised of or representing these entities, the applicant must provide a brief description of the types and numbers of HU/VFRs the project will directly benefit.

Refer to the [section of this notice](#) that describes the special considerations that will be given in the selection process.

11. *Certifications.*

All proposals must include the following signed certification forms, which are available at [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov):

- AD-3030 Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants. Must be submitted if entity is a corporate non-profit or for-profit corporation as indicated in the applicants SAM registration.
- AD-3031 Assurances Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants. Must be submitted if entity is a corporate non-profit or for-profit corporation as indicated in the applicants SAM registration.
- SF-424B, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs. Must be completed by all applicants.
- Certification Regarding Lobbying. Must be completed by all applicants.

12. *Letters of support.*

Letters of support for the project from individuals or entities that are not project partners may be submitted and should be placed at the very end of the application package.

13. *Risk Review Documentation*

NRCS may request additional documentation from selected applicants to evaluate the financial, management, and performance risk posed by awardees as required by 2 CFR 200.205. Based on this risk review, NRCS may apply to a CIG award special conditions that correspond to the degree of risk assessed.

C. DUNS and SAM Numbers

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR §25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the federal awarding agency under 2 CFR §25.110(d)) is required to: (i) Be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number) in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal award, application, or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. NRCS may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant complies with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant does not fully comply with the requirements when the NRCS is ready to make a federal award, NRCS may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

NFEs must obtain a DUNS and register in SAM prior to registering with Grants.gov. NFEs are strongly encouraged to apply early for their DUNS number and SAM registration.

1. **Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number:** A Dun and Bradstreet DUNS number is a unique, nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. CIG applicants must obtain a DUNS number. Information on how to obtain a DUNS number can be found at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or by calling 1-866-705-5711.
2. **System for Award Management (SAM) Registration:** SAM is the official Federal system that consolidated the capabilities of Central Contractor Registry, Federal Agency Registration, Online Representations and Certifications Application, and Excluded Parties List System. To register, go to: <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>. The Federal Service Desk is available for registration assistance and can be contacted via the Help tab at the website listed above.

D. How to Submit an Application

Applications must be submitted through the Grants.gov web portal by 5 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on May 30, 2019.

Submitting a CIG application through www.grants.gov requires a number of tasks. There are several preliminary registration steps before an applicant can submit the application. To register in the grants.gov system, go to www.grants.gov, click on “Applicants,” and then click on “Get Registered.”

If you have completed a prior grants.gov application, you may already have completed the registration process.

Please allow sufficient time to register in grants.gov, and for possible system delays. An overview of Workspace can be viewed through grants.gov ([WEBINAR - Getting Started with Workspace: Become a Workspace Wizard](#)).

Below are instructions for accessing the forms necessary to complete an application in grants.gov:

- Go to www.grants.gov.
- Select the “Applicants” tab.
- Select the “Apply for Grants” heading.
- Click on “Get Application Package.” Follow all steps.
- All necessary forms are included within the grants.gov “Application Package.”
- Provide the “Funding Opportunity Number” listed on page 1 of this announcement or return to the [“Search Grants”](#) section.

Applications not received by the submission due date and time will not be accepted. All applications must contain all of the elements of a complete package and meet the requirements described in this announcement. Grants.gov provides instructions for submitting the required application items through the portal. An application’s receipt date and time will be determined by the respective system-generated documentation of receipt date and time (grants.gov provides date and time stamps for all proposals submitted through the portal).

NRCS is not responsible for any technical malfunctions or website problems related to grants.gov submissions. If you encounter issues with grants.gov, please contact the grants.gov help desk at (800) 518-4726 or support@grants.gov. The applicant assumes the risk of any delays in application submission through grants.gov and therefore is encouraged to submit your application early to ensure there is time to work out unforeseen issues.

E. Due Date

Proposals must be received by 5 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on May 30, 2019. Application receipt date and time will be determined by the respective system-generated documentation of receipt date and time (grants.gov provides date and time stamps for all proposals submitted through the portal). The applicant assumes the risk of any delays in application receipt.

F. Acknowledgement of Submission

Grants.gov provides receipt of application submissions. An applicant who does not receive such an email acknowledgement within 10 business days of the submission deadline, but believes the proposal was submitted on time, must [contact the CIG program](#) within 30 business days of the submission deadline. Failure to do so may result in the proposal not being considered.

G. Withdrawal

Proposals may be withdrawn by written notice at any time before award execution. Written notice of withdrawal must be signed by the applicant or an authorized representative.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Proposals will be initially screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this announcement. Incomplete or noncompliant proposals will be eliminated from competition prior to initiation of the peer review process.

A. Application Evaluation Criteria

Risk Criteria Evaluation

In accordance with 2 CFR 200.205, NRCS will review risk posed by applicants. This screening process includes:

- 1) Confirming the NFE does not have an active exclusion in SAM precluding it from eligibility receipt of an award (i.e., suspended or debarred; see [2 CFR Part 180](#) and [7 CFR Part 417](#)).
- 2) Confirming the NFE does not have adverse information located in the [Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System \(FAPIIS\)](#).

Merit Criteria Evaluation

Three panels (Basin/Local, Technical, Executive) will be used to evaluate and provide information and recommendations to the State Conservationist for their decision. These panels and their evaluation criteria include:

- 1) Basin/Local review panel will be assembled by the NRCS Basin Team Leaders to review proposals based on local adaptation and integration to local conservation implementation strategies. For each proposal reviewed, the panel will determine whether the proposal is highly recommended, recommended, or not recommended. The following criteria are used

by the Basin/Local review panel to evaluate proposals.

A. Strategic Approach

- Project relation to the local conservation implementation strategy(s) (CIS).
- Project integrates with NRCS Oregon's strategic approach.
- Facilitates a systems approach in addressing the resource concern.
- Promotes environmental enhancement & protection in conjunction with agricultural production.

B. Applicability

- Adapts conservation technologies, practices, management, systems, procedures, approaches, and incentive systems to improve performance and encourage adoption.
- Potential for producers and landowners to use the innovative technology or technologies.
- Improves and enhances existing conservation efforts in the basin.

C. Transferability

- Potential to transfer the approach or technology statewide or to a broader audience or other geographic or socio-economic areas, including limited resource, socially disadvantaged and other traditionally underserved producers and communities.
- Potential for NRCS to successfully use the innovative approach or methods.
- Project will result in the development of useful technical materials to assist field staff in planning.

- 2) Technical review panel consists of technical specialist who review proposals based on technical feasibility and application of the project. For each proposal reviewed, the panel will determine whether the proposal is highly recommended, recommended, or not recommended. The following criteria are used by the Technical review panel to evaluate proposals.

A. Purpose, Approach, and Goals

- Design and implementation of project based on sound methodology and/or demonstrated technology.
- Promotes environmental enhancement & protection in conjunction with agricultural production.
- Project outcome is clearly measurable.
- Potential for successful completion.
- Both beneficial and adverse impacts are considered, and a significant level of improvement will be achieved.

B. Innovative Technology or Approach

- Project is innovative (Statewide, regional within Oregon, or local in nature).
- Project conforms to description of innovative projects or activities in proposal request announcement.
- Technical design and implementation strategy is based on sound science.
- There is a good likelihood that the project will be successfully completed on time and within budget.
- The project clearly promotes environmental enhancement and protection in conjunction with agricultural production.

C. Project Management

- Timeline and milestones are clear and reasonable.
- Project has sufficient staff with the necessary technical expertise to successfully accomplish the objectives and timeframes of the project.
- Budget is adequately explained and justified.
- The proposal includes a proposed schedule of deliverables with a corresponding schedule of payments.

- Experience and capacity to partner with and gain the support of other organizations, institutions and agencies.
- D. Benefits and Transferability
- Potential for producers and landowners to use the innovative technology or technologies.
 - Project has a direct relationship to an NRCS Conservation Implementation Strategy (CIS) in addressing a resource concern.
 - Potential to transfer the approach or technology nationally or to a broader audience or other geographic or socio-economic areas, including limited resource, socially disadvantaged and other traditionally underserved producers and communities.
 - Potential for NRCS to successfully use the innovative approach or methods.
 - Project will result in the development of technical or related technology transfer materials (technical standards, technical notes, guide sheets, handbooks, software, etc.).
- 3) Executive review panel consists of members or designees from the NRCS Oregon Leadership Team who review proposals based on integration and value to NRCS Oregon's strategic approach. For each proposal reviewed, the panel will determine whether the proposal is highly recommended, recommended, or not recommended. The following criteria are used by the Executive review panel to evaluate proposals.
- A. Strategic Approach
- Value in addressing the resource concern and enhancing conservation on agricultural lands in Oregon.
 - Strengthens and further promotes NRCS Oregon's conservation program.
 - Strengthens technical assistance provided to agricultural producers.
 - Enhances and supports other partner conservation programs
 - Applicants either 1) Historically Underserved producers, veteran farmers or ranchers (HU/VFR), or community-based organizations comprised of or representing these entities, or 2) the results of the proposal can be shown to directly benefit HU/VFRs.

Partner matching contributions are considered an eligibility criterion as described in [this section of the notice](#), and will not be considered in the evaluation.

B. Review and Selection Process

Proposals that pass the initial screening are then evaluated using a two-part process:

- Basin/Local, Technical and Executive review panels will review and evaluate against the CIG Proposal Evaluation Criteria [listed here](#). The review panels will forward their recommendations (highly recommended, recommended, or not recommended) to the State Conservationist.
- The State Conservationist makes the final award selections based on the recommendations of the review panels.

C. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

NRCS anticipates announcing CIG selections through a USDA press release no later than September 6, 2019. Applicants should plan their projects based on a project start date of September 30, 2019.

VI. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Federal Award Notices

Successful Applicants

A successful applicant can expect to receive official notification by email from NRCS State office Staff. Awardees may not begin their project until a fully executed grant agreement has been signed by both NRCS and the awardee. The notice of federal award form (NRCS-ADS-093) signed by the authorized agency official is the only authorizing document and will be provided electronically to the applicant's authorized official. Any pre-award costs incurred by the awardee will not be reimbursed.

Unsuccessful Applicants

Applicants whose proposals are not selected for funding will receive feedback on their proposal. This evaluation will be emailed to the technical and administrative contacts listed in the proposal within 90 days of the announcement of CIG selections. Please do not contact NRCS requesting an evaluation prior to the end of this 90-day period.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All project funds will be used in accordance with 2 CFR 200 and NRCS' *General Terms and Conditions Grants and Cooperative Agreements*. A copy of the *General Terms and Conditions Grants and Cooperative Agreements* document may be obtained by contacting the Agency Contacts listed in [Section VII](#) below.

Patents, Inventions, and Copyrights

Allocation of rights to patents, inventions, and copyrights shall be in accordance with [2 CFR Part 200](#). This regulation provides that small businesses normally may retain the principal worldwide patent rights to any invention developed with USDA support. In accordance with 2 CFR Part 200, this provision will also apply to commercial organizations for the purposes of CIG. USDA receives a royalty-free license for federal use, reserves the right to require the patentee to license others in certain circumstances, and requires that anyone exclusively licensed to sell the invention in the United States must normally manufacture it domestically. With regard to copyright, the grant recipient may copyright any work that is subject to copyright and was developed, or for which ownership was acquired, under an award. USDA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work for federal purposes and to authorize others to do so.

All tools produced must meet the accessibility of Electronic and Information Technology (EIT) requirements as specified in Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794d) as amended by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-220). Specifically, subsection 508(a)(1) requires that when the federal government procures EIT, it must allow federal employees and individuals of the public with disabilities comparable access to and use of information and data that is provided to federal employees and individuals of the public without disabilities. All EIT that is subject to the 36 CFR 1194 standards will have a Section 508 acceptance test and will be validated upon acceptance. All maintenance for EIT that requires upgrades, modifications, installations, and purchases will adhere to the Section 508 standards

and 36 CFR 1194. [Contact the CIG program contact](#) with specific questions regarding the applicability of this section.

C. Reporting

Reporting details are included in the fully executed grant agreement. Reporting will generally include electronic submission of semiannual progress reports, annual financial status reports, and final reports.

VII. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT:

The NRCS CIG staff will be the agency contact for answering questions or helping with problems while this funding opportunity is open. The email address is accessed by multiple people, so someone will respond even if others are unexpectedly absent during critical periods.

Phone: (503) 414-3292

Email: amy.fischer@or.usda.gov, Oregon Farm Bill Specialist

USDA-NRCS

1201 NE Lloyd Blvd.

Suite 900

Portland, OR 97232

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. Freedom of Information and Privacy Act

CIG proposals are considered to be confidential information. Proposals are not shared with individuals or entities seeking public disclosure through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) without the consent of the applicant. More specifically, Executive Order 12600 and USDA FOIA regulation 7 CFR Part 1, Subpart A require the NRCS to provide notice to applicants that a third party has requested copies of their business information and requires NRCS and to consult with applicants regarding the releasability of their records.

B. National Component

The USDA NRCS CIG program has two components – the “National Competition” and the “State Competition.” This announcement is for the “State Competition” component. More information about the National Competition is available [here](#).

C. Notice to Applicants

The Federal Government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of this announcement. Only authorized federal officials can bind the Federal Government to the expenditure of funds.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/filing-program-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer> and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call

(866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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