

U.S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Alexandria, Louisiana

LOUISIANA Component - CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS

Fiscal Year 2011 Announcement of Program Funding

Announcement Number: USDA-NRCS-LA-11-01

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.912

SUMMARY: NRCS Louisiana requests applications for Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies. For fiscal year 2011, up to \$150,000 may be available for the Louisiana State CIG competition. NRCS will reserve the right to offer more or less funding at the discretion of the State Conservationist. Grants under the Louisiana state component will not exceed \$75,000 from NRCS and must be implemented within the state of Louisiana. Funds will be awarded through a competitive grant process. The Louisiana CIG category available in FY 2011 is the “Natural Resource Concerns Category”. Applications are requested from eligible government or non-government organizations or individuals for competitive consideration of grant awards for projects in Louisiana between 1 to 3 years in duration.

This notice identifies the objectives for Louisiana CIG projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and associated instructions needed to apply to CIG. Each proposal application will be screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete applications will be eliminated from competition, and notification of elimination will be mailed to the applicant.

APPLICATION DUE DATE AND ADDRESSES:

Dates: Applications must be received in the NRCS Louisiana State Office by 4:00 p.m., Central Time (CT) on **June 3, 2011**.

Addresses: Applications that are hand-delivered or sent via express mail, overnight courier, US Postal Service, or any other form of mail delivery must be addressed to:

Attn: Scott Edwards
USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
3737 Government Street
Alexandria, Louisiana 71302

Applications submitted by fax or e-mail will NOT be accepted.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Scott Edwards, State Resource Conservationist, NRCS, 3737 Government Street, Alexandria, Louisiana 71302, Phone: (318) 473-7774, email: scott.edwards@la.usda.gov.

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) were authorized as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance ("CFDA") 10.912 [16 U.S.C. 3839aa-8] under Section 1240H of the Food Security Act of 1985, as added by Section 2509 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-246). The Secretary of Agriculture delegated the authority for the administration of EQIP and 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 the CCC.

B. OVERVIEW

The purpose of CIG is to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging the Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural and forestry production. CIG projects are expected to lead to the transfer of conservation technologies, management systems, and innovative approaches into NRCS technical manuals, guides, and references or to the private sector. CIG does not fund research projects. Projects intended to formulate hypothesis do not qualify. CIG is to apply proven technology which has been shown to work previously. It is a vehicle to stimulate the development and adoption of conservation approaches or technologies that have been studied sufficiently to indicate a likelihood of success, and to be candidates for eventual technology transfer or institutionalization. CIG promotes sharing of skills, knowledge, technologies, and facilities among communities, governments, and other institutions to ensure that scientific and technological developments are accessible to a wider range of users. CIG funds projects targeting innovative on-the-ground conservation, including pilot projects and field demonstrations.

NRCS in Louisiana will accept applications for single or multi-year projects, not to exceed three years, submitted to NRCS from eligible entities including Federally-recognized Indian Tribes, State and local governments, and non-governmental organizations and individuals. Applications will only be considered for projects implemented within the State of Louisiana. Multi-state projects will not be accepted under this notice.

Complete applications received by the application deadline will be evaluated by a state peer review panel based on the Criteria for Application Evaluation identified in this document. Technically-based recommendations from the peer review groups will be forwarded to the Assistant State Conservationist for Programs. The Assistant State Conservationist for Programs will make recommendations for project approval to the State Conservationist, who will make the final selections.

C. INNOVATIVE CONSERVATION PROJECTS OR ACTIVITIES

For the purposes of CIG, the proposed innovative project or activity must encompass the development and field testing, evaluation, implementation, and monitoring of:

- Conservation adoption approaches or incentive systems, including market-based systems;
- Promising conservation technologies, practices, systems, procedures, or approaches; and

- Environmental soundness with goals of environmental protection and natural resource enhancement.

To be given priority consideration, the innovative project or activity:

- Makes use of a technology that has been studied sufficiently to indicate a good probability for success;
- Demonstrates, tests, evaluates, and verifies environmental (soil, water, air, plants, and animal) effectiveness, utility, affordability, and usability of conservation technology in the field;
- Adapts conservation technologies, practices, systems, procedures, approaches, and incentive systems to improve performance and encourage adoption;
- Introduces conservation systems, approaches, and procedures from another geographic area or agricultural sector;
- Adapts conservation technology, management, or incentive systems to improve performance; and
- Demonstrates transferability of knowledge

D. STATE COMPONENT CIG CATEGORY

For Fiscal Year 2011, one category, the State Resource Concern Category, will be offered in Louisiana. Applications must identify the most appropriate subcategory and subtopic, listed below, for their proposal. Applications must demonstrate the use of innovative technologies and/or approaches to address the selected subcategory and subtopic, while sustaining agricultural and forest productivity.

1. State Resource Concern Category

Energy

- Innovative implementation systems to achieve greater use of energy audits including energy audits that address cropland in addition to buildings and equipment;
- Innovative on-farm energy conservation technologies;
- Innovative on-farm applications of renewable energy production technologies to displace fossil fuel energy;
- Sustainable biomass production, harvest, and handling technologies.

Productivity and Environmental Health of Pastureland or Rangeland

- Implement the use of new or novel pasture management systems that can benefit water or air quality, greenhouse gases (GHGs), or pathogen loading and runoff, and metrics to quantify measurable units of improvement gained through the use of these systems.

Productivity and Environmental Health of Forestland

- Implement the use of new or novel forest/agroforestry management systems that can benefit water or air quality, greenhouse gases (GHGs), or other ecosystem services, and metrics to quantify measurable units of improvement gained through the use of these systems.

Soil Quality

- New and innovative methods to improve soil tilth and soil quality related to maintained or improved productivity; or
- Innovative approaches or methods to aid land management decisions to enhance soil quality and other related ecosystem resources.
- Demonstration of the performance and effectiveness of conservation buffers (filter strips, vegetative barriers, contour buffer strips, etc) by assessing the situational effectiveness of the component practice and design parameters (including appropriate width and plant materials)
- Demonstrate technologies to restore and enhance the overall health and function of degraded soils.
- Identify cover crop species and management strategies for areas with more than 55 inches of rainfall.

Priority Landscapes

- Demonstrate new and innovative technologies to restore and enhance at risk forest ecosystems, e.g., longleaf pine.
- Implement conservation practices and measure effects on ecosystem services at watershed landscape scales.

Nutrient Management

- Demonstrate feed management, or adoption of new or novel feedstuffs or additives, for manure nutrient reduction to reduce water and air quality problems, GHGs, or pathogen loading and runoff.
- Demonstrate active methods which improve on the capture of nitrogen in manure management systems and provide the opportunity to recycle the manure nitrogen in lieu of synthetic fertilizers.
- Demonstrate the use of water filtration or other medium as a method of reducing chemical compounds and odors from poultry operations and other livestock facilities.
- Development of new strategies to fully implement existing nutrient management conservation.
- Demonstrate methods to capture dissolved phosphorus from field runoff and subsurface drainage.

Sustainable and Organic Agriculture

- Develop technology to determine which crops help to suppress specific pests and the sequencing of the crops to minimize pest (weeds, insects, diseases).
- Demonstrate technology to determine the proper crops and the sequence of the crops to maximize the nutrient cycling of crop nutrients.
- Determine the proper source, rate, timing, and method(s) of application for organically approved nutrient amendments.
- Determine harvesting times and techniques that may minimize pest damage for the planned commodity.
- Demonstrate technology to determine the amount (acres) of habitat required to provide adequate pest control, matching plant species to attract desirable beneficial insect species, and managing habitat to provide pest control during the cropping season.

- Demonstrate technology to determine how cover crops can be used on a continuous basis throughout the growing season to provide erosion control, crop nutrients, and pest control for the next crop in rotation and other ecosystem services.
- Adaption of technology and approaches to aid organic farming and organic transition.
- Adaption of technology and approaches to aid small scale farming.

Specialty Crops

- Demonstrate technology to determine which crops help to suppress specific pests and the sequencing of the crops to minimize pests (weeds, insects, diseases) in specialty crop systems.
- Determine the proper crops and the sequence of the crops to maximize the nutrient cycling in specialty crop production systems.
- Determine harvesting times and techniques that may minimize pest damage for the planned commodity.
- Demonstrate technology to determine the amount (acres) of habitat required to provide adequate pest control, matching plant species to attract desirable beneficial insect species, and managing habitat to provide pest during the cropping season.
- Develop guidelines and management strategies for establishing, maintaining and harvesting culturally significant plants

Pollinator Habitat

- Develop guidelines and management strategies for establishing and maintaining the foraging and nesting needs for specific pollinators and other beneficial insects.
- Develop guidelines and management strategies for the provision of quality foraging and “resting” areas for the European honey bee during or after their being transported to provide pollination services.
- Establish demonstration plantings of NRCS-recommended pollinator habitat seed/plant mixes to determine if these mixes are providing the expected pollinator habitat while also performing the intended conservation function.
- Develop strategies to integrate pollinator habitat management into the agricultural working lands matrix to promote holistic, ecosystem-based conservation plans that support the full suite of ecosystem services.

II. FUNDING AVAILABILITY

For fiscal year 2011, up to \$150,000 may be available for the Louisiana State CIG competition. NRCS will reserve the right to offer more or less funding at the discretion of the State Conservationist. Individual projects funded through CIG in fiscal year 2011 may not receive more than \$75,000 from NRCS. Applications will be considered for in-state single and multi-year projects, not to exceed three years. Awards will be made using grant agreements with the Louisiana NRCS State Office. The anticipated state date for awarded projects is **July 29, 2011.**

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

CIG applicants must be a federally recognized Indian Tribe, State, or local unit of government, nongovernmental organization, or individual.

A. MATCHING FUNDS

Selected applicants may receive CIG grants of up to 50 percent of the total project cost, not to exceed \$75,000. The recipient is required to match the USDA funds awarded on a dollar-for-dollar basis from non-Federal sources with cash and in-kind contributions. Up to half of the applicant's matching funds (up to 25 percent of the total project cost) may be from in-kind contributions. In-kind costs of equipment or project personnel cannot exceed 50 percent of the applicant's match (except in the case of projects carried out by either a Beginning Farmer or Rancher, Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher, or Indian tribe or a community-based organization comprised of or representing these entities). The remainder of the match must be provided in cash (SF 424A must be completed).

Matching funds must be available at time of application. Applications should include written verification of commitments of matching support, including both cash and in-kind contributions, from third parties when applicable.

B. BEGINNING OR LIMITED RESOURCE FARMERS OR RANCHERS, OR INDIAN TRIBES

An exception regarding matching funds is made for projects submitted by Beginning or Limited Resource Farmers or Ranchers and Indian tribes. Up to three-fourths of the required matching funds for such projects (up to 37.5 percent of the total project cost) may be derived from in-kind contributions. The applicant must make a declaration in the application as described in Part IV B.5 of this notice.

Beginning Farmer or Rancher Definition - a person or legal entity who:

- Has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years. This requirement applies to all members of an entity who will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch.
- In the case of a contract with an individual, individually, or with the immediate family, material and substantial participation requires that the individual provide substantial day-to-day labor and management of the farm or ranch consistent with the practices in the county or State where the farm is located.
- In the case of a contract with an entity or joint operation, all members must materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch. Material and substantial participation requires that each of the members provide some amount of the management or labor and management necessary for day-to-day activities, such that if each of the members did not provide these inputs, operation of the farm or ranch would be seriously impaired.

Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher -

- A person with direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than \$155,200 in each of the previous 2 years (adjusted for inflation using Prices Paid by Farmer Index as compiled by National Agricultural Statistical Service); and

- Has a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous 2 years (to be determined annually using Department of Commerce data).

C. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP) PAYMENT LIMITATION AND DUPLICATE PAYMENTS

Section 1240G of the Food Security Act of 1985, 16 U.S.C.3839aa-7, imposes a \$300,000 limitation for all cost-share or incentive payments disbursed to individuals or entities under an EQIP contract between fiscal years 2008 and 2012. The limitation applies to CIG in the following manner:

- 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.
- Direct or indirect payments made to an individual or entity using funds from a CIG award to carry out structural, vegetative, or management practices count toward each individual's or entity's EQIP payment limitation. Through project progress reports, CIG grantees are responsible for certifying that producers involved in CIG projects do not exceed the payment limitation. Further, all direct and indirect payments made to producers using CIG funds must be reported to the NRCS CIG program manager in the semi-annual report. Direct or indirect payments cannot be made for a practice for which the producer has already received funds, or is contracted to receive funds, through any of the USDA Programs (EQIP, Conservation Security Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, etc.) since this would be considered a duplicate payment.

D. PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for CIG, projects must involve landowners who meet the EQIP eligibility requirements as set forth in [16 USC 3839aa-1](#). Further, all agricultural producers receiving direct or indirect payments through participation in a CIG project must also meet the EQIP eligibility requirements. Refer to <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/> for more information on EQIP eligibility requirements. Participating producers are not required to have an EQIP contract.

A person or legal entity shall not be eligible to receive any benefit during a crop, fiscal, or program year, as appropriate, if the average adjusted gross non-farm income of the person or legal entity exceeds \$1,000,000, unless two-thirds of that income is derived from agriculture, ranching or forestry, unless not less than 66.66 percent of the average adjusted gross income of the person or legal entity is average adjusted gross farm income.

A person who is determined ineligible for USDA program benefits under the Highly Erodible Land Compliance (HELC) and Wetland Compliance (WC) provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985 will not be eligible to receive direct or indirect payments through CIG.

Technologies and approaches that are eligible for funding in a project's geographic area through EQIP are ineligible for CIG funding except where the use of those technologies and approaches demonstrates clear innovation. The burden falls on the applicant to sufficiently describe the innovative features of the proposed technology or approach (applicants should reference the appropriate State's EQIP Eligible Practices List by contacting the NRCS State office).

The grantee is responsible for providing the technical assistance required to successfully implement and complete the project. NRCS will designate a Program Contact, Administrative Contact, and Technical Contact to provide oversight for each project receiving an award.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. HOW TO OBTAIN APPLICATION MATERIALS

All Office of Management and Budget standard forms necessary for CIG submissions are posted on the following website: <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>

B. APPLICATION CONTENT AND FORMAT

Applications must contain the information set forth below in order to receive consideration for a grant. 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 their application in the following format:

- Applications should be typewritten or printed on 8½” x 11” white paper. The text of the application should be in a font no smaller than 12-point, single spaced, with one-inch margins.

NOTE: Applications that fail to comply with the required content and format will not be considered for funding.

Applications must include all required forms and narrative sections described below. **Incomplete applications will not be considered.**

- 1. Application Cover Sheet:** Applicants must use Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance as the cover sheet for project application. Standard Form 424 can be downloaded from <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>
- 2. Project Summary Sheet:** Applicants must submit a project summary in **no more than two pages in length (single sided, single spaced)** that includes the information listed below. Project summary should describe the work to be undertaken, brief budget summary, expected outcomes and benefits, and evaluation factors.
 - Project Title;
 - Project Director name and contact information (mailing address, telephone, email, etc.);
 - Names and Affiliations of Project Collaborators;
 - CIG funding subcategory and subtopic;
 - Technology or innovation to be addressed;
 - List of deliverables/products of project activities;
 - Summary of the work to be performed;
 - Estimated number of EQIP-eligible producers involved in the project;
 - Project scope/area
 - Project Duration (beginning and ending dates);
 - Total project cost; and
 - Total Federal funds requested.

3. **One-Page Abstract:** A **one-page (single-sided)** non-confidential technical summary that describes the work to be undertaken and the expected outcome and benefits. The technical summary should take into account the priorities and evaluation factors described in this announcement. Pages in excess of the one-page limit will be discarded.
4. **Project Description:** The project must be completely and accurately described in **no more than 7 pages in length (single-sided, single-spaced)** and include the information listed below. Pages in excess will be discarded and not evaluated (Bibliography, resumes and references will be included in the page count for the project page limit).
- Project narrative: The project narrative should provide a clear and concise description of the project, work to be undertaken, how it will be accomplished, and expected benefits. The project narrative must also detail the amount of money applied for and matching dollars provided;
 - Project background: Describe the history of and need for the proposed innovation. Provide evidence that the proposed innovation has been studied sufficiently to indicate a good probability for success of the project;
 - Project objectives: Be specific using qualitative and quantitative measures, if possible, to describe the project's purpose and goals. Describe how the project is innovative;
 - Project methods: Describe clearly the methodology of the project and the tools or processes that will be used to implement the project;
 - Location and size of project or project area: Describe the location of the project and the relative size and scope (e.g., acres, farm types and demographics, etc.) of the project area. Provide a map, if possible;
 - Producer participation: Estimate the number of producers involved in the project and describes the extent of their involvement (**all producers involved in the project must be EQIP eligible**);
 - Project action plan and timeline: Provide a table listing project actions, timeframes, and associated milestones through project completion;
 - Project management: Give a detailed description of how the project will be organized and managed. Include a list of key project personnel, their relevant education or experience, and their anticipated contributions to the project. Explain the level of participation required in the project by government and non-government entities. Identify who will participate in monitoring and evaluating the project;
 - Benefits or results expected and transferability: Identify the results and benefits to be derived from the proposed project activities and explain how the results will be measured. Identify project beneficiaries, i.e., agricultural producers by type or region or sector; rural communities; municipalities. Explain how these entities will benefit. In addition, describe how results will be communicated to others via outreach activities;
 - Project evaluation: Describe the methodology or procedures to be followed to evaluate the project, determine technical feasibility, and quantify the results of the project for the final report (Grant recipients will be required to provide a written biannual report of progress, quarterly financial reports, and a final project report to

NRCS. All reports will discuss project deliverables. Instructions for submitting quarterly reports will be detailed in the grant agreement); and

- **Environmental Information and Assessment of Environmental Impacts:** Describe the anticipated environmental effects of the proposed project. The description of the potential environmental and social impacts must address all potential beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action. A full description of the potential impacts to all potentially impacted environmental resources must be disclosed. One line or short descriptions of environmental impacts are not acceptable. The length of the analysis should be commensurate with the complexity of the project proposed and the environmental impacts impacted either directly, indirectly (later in time), 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. Environmental resources include soil, water, air, plants, and animals, as well as other specific resources protected by law, Executive Order, and Agency policy. These resources are outlined in the NRCS Environmental Evaluation Worksheet, form NRCS-CPA-52, which is available at: [NRCS-CPA-52](#). The CPA 52 form can be used as a guide for the scope of environmental information that should be prepared for this section of the application. In addition to describing impacts, applicants are required to assess the significance or degree of potential environmental impact of the proposed project on environmental resources. Applicants may consult with a NRCS Environmental Liaison concerning the scope of what should be addressed in this section of the application. For additional assistance please contact Louisiana's Environmental Liaison, John Pitre, at 318-473-7809 or john.pitre@la.usda.gov.

NOTE: Please be aware that applications for projects with potentially adverse impacts may need to be modified in order to achieve acceptable and beneficial levels of environmental impact. If projects cannot be modified, then there is a potential during the screening process that the application may not be selected.

5. **Budget Information:** Applicants must submit an SF 424A Budget Information Non-Construction Programs to document budget needs. SF 424A is available at: <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>

The Cost Proposal must:

- Itemize the costs necessary for successful completion of the proposed project. Indicate the total amount (both cash and in-kind) of non-Federal matching support that will be provided to the proposed project.
- Provide a project budget and the applicant's request for a specific amount of federal funds under this solicitation. The project budget should show a summary of proposed costs for each task identified in the Technical Approach/Work Plan, as well as the matching or corresponding resources devoted to this project by the applicant, including each of the participating entities in a consortium engaged to carry out the project as proposed.
- The project budget should include the following for the applicant and each participant:
 - Position title, number of hours, and total cost for personnel proposed.

- Total cost for travel.
- Proposed equipment, supplies, or other major expenses over \$2,500.
- Total of all direct costs.
- Total of indirect costs.
- Summary of total project costs.

6. Budget Narrative: In addition to the SF-424A, all applicants must provide a detailed narrative (**4 pages maximum, single-sided, single-spaced**) in support of the budget for the project, broken down by each task (deliverables) and project year. Itemize the cost necessary for successful completion of the proposed project. Indicate the total amount (both cash and in-kind) of non-Federal matching support that will be provided to the proposed project. Identify and provide documentation of the source(s), the amount, and the nature (cash or in-kind) of the matching funds. An indirect cost-rate agreement must be included if the applicant is claiming indirect costs. Indirect costs cannot exceed 15 percent. In-kind costs of equipment or project personnel cannot exceed 50 percent of the applicant's match (except in the case of projects carried out by either Beginning or Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher, or Indian Tribe, or a community-based organization comprised of or representing these entities). The remainder of the match must be provided in cash.

7. Declaration of Beginning Farmer or Rancher, Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher, or Indian Tribe: If an applicant identifies themselves as a Beginning Farmer or Rancher, Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher, or Indian tribe (see section III B.) and avail themselves of the in-kind contribution exception, applicants must make a declaration in writing of their status as a Beginning Farmer or Rancher, Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher, Indian tribe or a community-based organization comprised of or representing these entities.

8. Declaration of EQIP Eligibility: Applicants must include a statement indicating that the proposed project will involve EQIP-eligible producers. Applicants must make a declaration in writing that they, or parties involved in the project, are eligible for EQIP (if EQIP eligible producers are not involved in the project, the proposal will be considered ineligible). Declaration must describe and certify level of involvement by EQIP eligible producers.

9. Certifications: All applications must include a signed Standard Form (SF) 424B - Assurances, Non-construction Programs. SF 424B may be found at:
<http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>

Applicants, by signing and submitting an application, assure and certify that they are in compliance with the following from 7 Code of Federal Register (CFR):

- Part 3017, [Government wide Debarment and Suspension \(Non-procurement\)](#)
- Part 3018, [New Restrictions on Lobbying](#)
- Part 3021, [Government wide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace \(Financial Assistance\)](#)

10. DUNS Number: A Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. A *Federal Register* notice of final policy issuance (68 FR 38402) requires a DUNS number in every application (i.e., hard copy and electronic) for a grant or cooperative agreement (except applications from individuals) submitted on or after October 1, 2003. For information about how to obtain a DUNS number, go to <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.

11. Required CCR Registration: The Central Contractor Registry (CCR) is a database that serves as the primary Government repository for contractor information required for the conduct of business with the Government. This database will also be used as a central location for maintaining organizational information for organizations seeking and receiving grants from the Government. CIG applicants must register with the CCR. To register, visit <http://www.ccr.gov>. Allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration. A DUNS number will be needed in order to complete the CCR Registration process.

C. HOW TO SUBMIT A WRITTEN APPLICATION

Applicants must submit one signed original copy of the project application. Hard copies must be accompanied by an electronic copy on a compact disc (CD). Electronic files must be either Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat (pdf) files. **Applications submitted via facsimile, e-mail, or not meeting the above requirements will not be considered.**

The address for hand-delivered applications or applications submitted using express mail, overnight courier service, or regular mail is:

Scott Edwards
USDA NRCS
3737 Government Street
Alexandria, LA 71302
Phone: (318) 473-7774
E-mail: scott.edwards@la.usda.gov.

D. APPLICATION DUE DATE

Complete applications must be received in the Louisiana State Office by 4:00 p.m., Central Time (CT) on **June 3, 2011**. A postmark date is NOT a factor in whether an application is received on time. The applicant assumes the risk of any delays in application delivery. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit completed applications via overnight mail or delivery service to ensure timely receipt by NRCS.

E. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SUBMISSION

Applications received by the due date will be acknowledged with an official letter. If an applicant has not received an acknowledgement within 30 days of the submission, they must contact the NRCS program contact (See Part VII). Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding.

F. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

Awardees may not use unrecovered indirect costs as part of their matching funds. 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:

- Costs above the amount of funds authorized for the project;
- Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the grant;
- Costs which lie outside the scope of the approved project and any amendments thereto;
- Entertainment costs, regardless of their apparent relationship to project objectives;
- Compensation for injuries to persons, or damage to property arising out of project activities;
- 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;
- 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. Questions regarding the allowances of particular items of cost should be directed to the administrative contact person.

G. PATENTS AND INVENTIONS

Allocation of rights to patents and inventions shall be in accordance with USDA regulation 7 CFR 3019.36. This regulation provides that small businesses normally may retain the principal worldwide patent rights to any invention developed with USDA support. In accordance with 7 CFR 3019.2, this provision will also apply to commercial organizations for the purposes of CIG. USDA receives a royalty free license for Federal Government 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.

H. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and NRCS regulations that implement NEPA require that an environmental review be prepared for actions where the Agency has discretion and control. Accordingly, NRCS' financial assistance under the CIG program requires compliance with these regulations. **As part of the application packet, applicants are required to provide environmental information pertaining to their project (described further under Part IV B.4.k.) to help NRCS determine the appropriate documentation required to comply with NEPA and NRCS regulations.** If the application is selected for funding, the NRCS Program Contact and NRCS Environmental Liaison will coordinate with the selected applicant concerning documentation for compliance with NEPA. The selected applicant will be required to prepare and/or pay for the preparation of the appropriate NEPA document (e.g., Environmental Assessment and/or Environmental Impact Statement if required for NEPA compliance). Grant funding cannot be approved until the environmental review requirements demonstrating compliance with NEPA are met.

I. WITHDRAWAL OF APPLICATIONS

Applications may be withdrawn by written notice at any time before an award is made. Applications may be withdrawn by the applicant, or by an authorized representative thereof, if

the representative's identity is made known and the representative signs a receipt for the application.

J. DELIVERABLES

Applications must include the following activities as deliverables:

- Semi-annual reports;
- Supplemental narratives to explain and support payment requests;
- Final report;
- Performance items specific to the project that indicate progress; A thorough list and explanation of measurable performance items specific to the project will be used in the technical evaluation.
- New technology and innovative approach fact sheet;
- Presentation regarding the project to the Louisiana Technical Advisory Committee.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW

A. APPLICATION REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Applications will be sent to the NRCS Louisiana State Office and screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete applications, and those that do not meet the provisions of this notice, will be eliminated from competition and notification of elimination will be mailed to the applicant.

A state peer review panel consisting of state technical and program specialists will review all complete applications and evaluate based on the CIG Application Evaluation Criteria listed in Section V.B. Evaluation results and recommendations from the state peer review panel will be forwarded to the Assistant State Conservationist for Programs.

The Assistant State Conservationist for Programs will make recommendations for project approval to the NRCS Louisiana State Conservationist, who will make final award selections.

B. CRITERIA FOR APPLICATION EVALUATION

The following criteria will be used to evaluate project applications. Applications must identify the primary resource concern subcategory and subtopic that is being addressed in the proposal.

CIG Application Evaluation Criteria
Purpose and Goals
a) The purpose and goals are clearly stated. b) Project outcome is clearly measurable. c) Potential for successful completion. d) Both beneficial and adverse impacts are considered and an acceptably significant level of improvement will be achieved.

Innovative Technology or Approach

- a) Project is innovative (national, regionally, and local in nature), and adheres to sections I.B. and I.C. of this announcement.
- b) The project clearly promotes environment enhancement and protection in conjunction with agricultural production.
- c) Technical design and implementation strategy is based on sound science.
- d) The project substantively involves EQIP eligible producers.

Project Management

- a) Timeline and milestones are clear and reasonable.
- b) Project has sufficient staff with the necessary technical expertise to successfully accomplish the objectives and timeframes of the project.
- c) Budget is adequately explained and justified.
- d) The proposal includes a proposed schedule of deliverables with a corresponding schedule of payments.
- e) Experience and capacity to partner with and gain the support of other organizations, institutions and agencies.
- f) Percentage that the project leverages non-Federal matching funds above the required 50 percent (degree to which non-Federal matching funds are leveraged above what is required)

Transferability

- a) Potential for producers and landowners to use the innovative technology or technologies.
- b) Potential to transfer the approach or technology beyond the state or to a broader audience or other geographic or socio-economic areas, including limited resource, socially disadvantaged and other traditionally underserved producers and communities.
- c) Potential for NRCS to successfully use the innovative approach or methods.
- d) Project will result in the development of technical or related technology transfer materials (technical standards, technical notes, guide sheets, handbooks, software, etc.)

C. ANTICIPATED ANNOUNCEMENT AND AWARD DATES

CIG Awards are anticipated to be announced by **June 24, 2011**. Funds are not awarded, and work may not start, until an agreement is signed by both NRCS and the grantee. All agreements are expected to be executed by **July 29, 2011**.

VI. AWARD INFORMATION AND ADMINISTRATION

A. AWARD NOTIFICATION

Applicants who have been selected will receive a letter of official notification from the NRCS Louisiana State Office. Applicants who are not selected will be notified by official letter.

B. GRANT AGREEMENT

The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), through NRCS, will use a grant agreement with selected applicants to document participation in the Louisiana CIG program. The grant agreement will include:

- Project purpose;
- Project objectives and deliverables;
- Project progress and budget reporting requirements;
- Award amount and budget information;
- Information regarding requests for advance of funds or reimbursement;
- Acknowledgement of 1619 Compliance;
- Other requirements and terms deemed necessary by the CCC to protect the interests of the United States.

Neither the approval of any application nor the award of any grant agreement commits or obligates the United States to provide further support of a project or any portion thereof or implies any endorsement.

C. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Grantees must submit a SF-425 (Federal Financial Report) quarterly, no later than 15 days following the periods March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31. The following elements must be completed on the form:

- Federal Cash
- Federal Expenditures
- Recipient Share

The SF-425 are available at: [Grants Management Forms](#).

In addition, the grantee must submit a written performance progress report to the NRCS program contact and the NRCS technical contact every 6 months. This report is distinct from the quarterly financial report described above. Each progress report shall cover work performed during the previous 6-month period, including any funded or unfunded time extensions, a comparison of actual accomplishments to project goals, and a statement of work projected to be completed in the next 6-month period.

The grantee is responsible for providing the technical assistance required to successfully implement and complete the project. NRCS will designate a Program Contact, an Administrative

Contact, and a Technical Contact to provide oversight for each project receiving an award. These individuals will have technical oversight responsibility for the project.

To satisfy the requirements of EQIP ([7 CFR 1466](#)) compliance measures, the grantee is required to submit as a component of the semi-annual progress report:

1. A list of producers, identified by name and social security number, of all EQIP-eligible producers or entities involved in the project;
2. The dollar amount of direct and indirect payment made to each individual producer or entity for any structural, vegetative, or management practices. Both quarterly and cumulative payment amounts must be submitted; and
3. A self-certification indicating that each individual or entity receiving a direct or indirect payment through this grant is in compliance with the EQIP Payment Limitation, AGI, HEL, and Wetlands Conservation Compliance Farm Bill provisions.

A progress report template will be provided to grantees by the NRCS program contact. This template is available on the NRCS CIG website at: [Information for Grantees](#).

The grantee must send copies of each semi-annual progress report to these NRCS contacts, and comply with any requests for information from these individuals. NRCS recommends that the grantee work closely with these subject matter experts throughout the course of the project.

Upon passage of the completion date of the project, a final report must be submitted within 90 days detailing project activities, funding received, funding expended, results, and potential for transferability of results. The final report should address completion of the project deliverables listed in the grant agreement.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

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CIG Administrative / Agreement Contact:

Aaron Ramsey

Contract Specialist
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Additional information about CIG is available through the CIG webpage:

Louisiana: <http://www.la.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/>
National: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/cig/index.html>

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2011 Louisiana CIG Application Checklist

- ☐ **Application Cover Sheet:** Submit Standard Form 424 (SF 424) Application for Federal Assistance
- ☐ **Project Summary Sheet:** Two page maximum – single sided – single spaced. This is a summary describing the work to be undertaken, brief budget summary, expected outcomes and benefits. An outline is provided in the 2011 Louisiana CIG Announcement for Program Funding.
- ☐ **One-Page Abstract:** Non-confidential summary describing the project and expected outcomes and benefits.
- ☐ **Project Description:** Seven page maximum – single sided – single spaced. Submit a narrative that includes the items listed in the 2011 Louisiana CIG Announcement for Program Funding.
- ☐ **Budget Information:** Submit Standard Form 424A (SF 424A) Budget Information Non-Construction Programs.
- ☐ **Budget Narrative:** Submit a detailed narrative (Four page maximum – single sided – single spaced) in support of the budget for the project, broken down by year, and including the items listed in the 2011 Louisiana CIG Announcement for Program Funding.
- ☐ **Declaration of Beginning Farmer or Rancher, Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher, Indian tribe or Community-based organizations comprised of or representing these entities:** If applicable, include a statement declaring your status as one or more of the above groups.
- ☐ **Declaration of Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Eligibility:** Include a written statement indicating that the proposed project will involve EQIP-eligible producers. Applicants must make a declaration in writing that they, or parties involved in the project, are eligible for EQIP.
- ☐ **Certifications:** Submit Standard Form 424B(SF 424B) Assurances Non-Construction Programs.
- ☐ **DUNS Number:** The 2011 Louisiana CIG Announcement for Program Funding provides information on obtaining a DUNS number. Registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.
- ☐ **Required Central Contracting Registration (CCR):** The 2010 Louisiana CIG Announcement for Program Funding provides information on CCR registration.