

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO)

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Federal Awarding Agency Name: U.S. Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service

Funding Opportunity Title: 2020 Soil Science Collaborative Research Proposals

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NRCS-NHQ-SOIL-20-NOFO0001003

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number (also known as Assistance Listing): 10.903

Funding Opportunity Announcement Summary

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), an agency under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), is announcing the potential availability of funding for agreements for the purposes of:

- Promoting research collaboration between the NRCS Soil and Plant Science Division (SPSD) and university cooperators on significant national issues;
- Providing technology transfer and training for NRCS staff;
- Assisting in training of students in soil science and related fields.

Proposals must be for projects based in the United States and its territories and possessions and focus on the priorities described in Section A of this notice. Research proposals are sought. NRCS anticipates that the amount available for support of this program in FY 2020 will be up to \$1,700,000.00. Eligibility is limited to institutions of higher education in the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) network (<http://www.cesu.psu.edu/>). Proposals are requested for competitive consideration of awards for projects 1-2 years in duration.

This notice identifies the objectives, eligibility criteria, and application instructions for projects. Proposals will be screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete and/or noncompliant proposals will be eliminated from competition, and notification of elimination will be sent to the applicant.

Key Dates

May 19, 2020	Questions submission due date
May 25, 2020	Questions and Answers posting date
June 11, 2020	Application submission due date
June 30, 2020	Notifications to selected proposals
September 15, 2020	Planned project start date

Applicants must submit their applications via Grants.gov by 11:59 pm Eastern Time. For technical issues with Grants.gov, please contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts.

Federal Funding Floor and Ceiling Amounts

The funding floor for this opportunity is \$200,000 and the funding ceiling is \$500,000. The funding floor means the minimum agreement funding amount for the Federal share per agreement awarded. The ceiling is the maximum agreement funding amount for the Federal share per agreement awarded.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The authorizing statutes and regulations for this opportunity are 16 U.S.C. 590a-f and 590q and 42 U.S.C. 3271-3274. (CFDA 10-903)

This competitive cooperative research program focuses on soil science and soil survey research topics and needs that have been identified through:

- Soil and Plant Science Division (SPSD) priorities;
- National-level National Cooperative Soil Survey (NCSS) conference committees.

The objectives of the research are to:

- Promote research collaboration between the NRCS Soil and Plant Science Division (SPSD) and university cooperators on significant national issues.

Proposals exhibiting substantial collaboration between the applicant, multiple NCSS cooperators (i.e., a multi-state project), and NRCS soil scientists (National Soil Survey Center (NSSC) Research Soil Scientists, Soil Survey Regional and Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) Soil Survey Office (SSO) soil scientists, State Soil Scientists, and/or Resource Soil Scientists) are encouraged to apply.

- Provide technology transfer and training for NRCS staff.

Each proposal should include a technology transfer component that documents how research results can be incorporated into Soil Survey field or office (databases, interpretations, etc.) functions. In addition, the plan should document how research findings will be shared with the NCSS (e.g., publications, webinars (required), onsite training, and/or other mechanisms).

- Assist in training of students in soil science and related fields.

Proposals that include a strong education component (undergraduate and graduate student involvement) are encouraged, as are proposals from early career scientists and faculty.

Proposals submitted under this request must be aligned with one or more components of the national Soil and Plant Science Division (SPSD) priorities, which are:

- Novel techniques to leverage big data for applications in soil survey
- Spatial and temporal variability of dynamic soil properties
- Inventory of blue carbon soil stocks in coastal ecosystems
- Incorporation of technologies to enhance soil survey –geospatial focus on fine scale –urban, proximal sensing, Mid-Infra Red (MIR) Spectra in biological context

All research areas should be explicitly transferable to soil survey. Therefore, projects should involve collaboration with NRCS, SPSP and NCSS personnel as appropriate. Projects with broad applicability involving multiple institutions and investigators are encouraged. Deliverables should include reports and publications, data and maps, and presentations of results to NRCS scientists (such as webinars).

Further information, including examples of deliverables:

Novel techniques to leverage big data for applications in soil survey

This topic area is targeted towards the utilization of big data into developing areas of soil survey. Projects should aim to be directly transferable to current and future efforts in soil survey.

Topics might include:

- Application of digital soil mapping techniques and products to conservation practices, planning (Highly Erodible Land, Hydric Soils, Hydrologic Soil Groups) and interpretations (suitability and limitations)
- Development of pedotransfer functions that use soil survey and land use and management to predict dynamic soil properties
- Incorporation of legacy data into SPSP databases for actionable use in soil inventory and evaluation.

Examples of potential deliverables:

- Web app that uses big data in conservation recommendations
- Pedotransfer functions that use and/or apply to soil survey products

Spatial and temporal variability of dynamic soil properties

This topic area is directed to establish links and decision points between the spatial and temporal variability of dynamic soil properties (DSP) to soil survey and conservation planning. Projects should aim to link DSP projects with data collected at sample, pedon, plot and field scales to soil survey products on soil components, map units, interpretations and watersheds.

Topics might include:

- Determination of spatial and temporal rates of change for DSPs across field and farm scales

Algorithms for scaling from point measures to survey and regional areas.
Decision support tools for soil health assessment based on multiple scales of aggregation.

Functions linking of dynamic soil properties to interpretation. Example: linking aggregate stability/surface bulk density to infiltration rate

Examples of potential deliverables:

- Protocols for scaling from sample test results to fields to MLRAs
- Proposed schematic for delivering soil survey data by land use and management systems

Inventory of blue carbon soil stocks in coastal ecosystems

Collecting, analyzing and reporting carbon that is stored in coastal and marine ecosystems (blue carbon) is becoming increasingly important to NRCS in its Coastal Zone Soil Survey initiative. NRCS is actively mapping the soils and vegetation within tidal marshes, mangrove swamps, seagrass meadows, bays and estuaries to meet coastal and land use management needs. Projects should link appropriate methods with direct application to soil survey.

Topics might include:

Standardization of protocols for collection, analyzing and reporting of blue carbon
Protocol differences in a variety of vegetative communities
Algorithms for scaling from point measures to representative areas

Examples of potential deliverables:

- Regional maps of blue carbon stocks with uncertainty
- Identification and proposed solution for any measurement errors in soil survey based blue carbon stock accounting

Funded research will be targeted to universities that assist NRCS in establishing these new areas of coastal work, aid in the delivery of high-quality blue carbon and overall soils data, and strengthen the collaborative mapping and describing of these important soils and their properties.

Incorporation of technologies to enhance soil survey –geospatial focus on fine scale – urban, proximal sensing, MIR in biological context

Proximal soil sensing (including MIR and other spectral technologies) have proven to be powerful tools for refining the scale and magnitude of man soil properties. There is increasing interest in applying these technologies to improve predictions and decision support in specific situations of great importance for management and conservation.

Topics might include:

Prediction of biologically important soil carbon fractions with MIR or proximal sensing
Usage and decision guides for the use of MIR in urban land management

Geospatial interpolation of soil interpretations across proximal scales

Examples of potential deliverables:

- Tests of transferability of MIR models between regions
- Model to predict biological function across pedons and fields using proximally sensed data

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimated Funding

The total amount of Federal funding the agency expects to award through this opportunity is \$1,700,000.00.

2. Start Dates and Performance Periods

Projects may be between one and two years in duration. Applicants should plan their projects based on a project start date of September 15, 2020.

3. Type of Federal Award

The agency plans to award a cooperative agreement pursuant to this opportunity. The agency will be substantially involved in the work performed under the agreement and will undertake activities such as the following: NRCS and recipient collaboration or joint participation.

4. Number of Awards

The agency expects to make 4 award(s).

5. Procurement Contracts

The agency does not expect to award procurement contracts associated with this opportunity.

6. Eligibility of Renewal or Supplemental Project Applications

Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are not eligible to compete with applications for new Federal awards. An application for renewal means an application submitted to continue an existing agreement that meets the objectives and requirements of this NFO. An application for supplementation of an existing project means an application to add components to an existing agreement so that it would meet the objectives and requirements in this NFO.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Applicants and applications must meet eligibility criteria by the application deadline to be considered for award. Eligible applicant type is determined by the implementing program statute. Applicant entities identified in the SAM.gov

Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or excluded from receiving Federal contracts 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)).

Eligibility for this opportunity is limited to the following entity types :

- Private institutions of higher education that are part of a CESU network.
- Public and State-controlled institutions of higher education that are part of a CESU network.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

There is no cost sharing or matching requirement for this opportunity.

3. Other (if applicable)

Any individual award made pursuant to this opportunity will be made to a single entity. Applicants that apply as “partnerships” or other similar groupings must clearly describe the relationship between the applicant and the “partner” parties. In all but exceptional cases, it must be reflected in the award as an awardee/subawardee relationship.

All applications must include a data management plan and commit to making data and product publicly available. See the National Agricultural Library Data Services for more information <https://www.nal.usda.gov/main/data>.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

For technical issues with Grants.gov, please contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts.

1. Address to Request Application Package

All information and materials necessary for this opportunity announcement are included in the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) opportunity.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

To be considered for funding under this opportunity, an application must contain:

a. Proposal

Proposals must contain the following sections and adhere to the following guidelines:

- a. Title page with Title, Project Investigators, priority area and brief

description of the proposal

- b. Project title
- c. Problem statement/Need and justification for project: Identification of which research priority the proposal is being written to address.
- d. Expected project deliverables that will contribute to achieving the Soil Survey mission
- e. A brief review of current related literature
- f. Research objective(s)
- g. Hypothesis to be tested
- h. Research methods and procedures: Provide enough detail to allow evaluation of the adequacy of the approach and methods for meeting project objectives. As applicable, the methods should include:
 - Description of project area, including soils, topography, land use/vegetation, and climate
 - Field sampling and measurement design, techniques, and methods
 - Laboratory analyses (include specific methods)
 - Data analysis, including statistical procedures if applicable
 - Description of the involvement of NRCS soil scientists (including required/requested field or laboratory support from Kellogg Soil Survey Laboratory (KSSL)) and NRCS SPSPD (including KSSL, NSSC, MLRA Soil Survey Office, SSR, and State staffs)
- i. Project timetable, including:
 - Sample collection and field measurements (if needed)
 - Laboratory analyses (if needed)
 - Data analyses
 - Data interpretation
 - Report/manuscript writing
- j. Information transfer plan: Describe means for disseminating information of the research results and promoting its application, including project reports, peer-reviewed publications, guidebooks, new technique methods, software, workshops, etc.
- k. Documentation of the involvement of and training provided to graduate and/or undergraduate students.
- l. Documentation of the involvement of and training provided to NRCS field scientists.

- m. References
- n. Investigator's qualifications. Include resumes of the principle investigator(s) (limited to 2 pages and 15 pertinent publications).
- o. Brief description of existing facilities
- p. Existing collaborative agreements/relationships with NRCS
- q. Results from prior NRCS support
- r. Data management plan

Each page must be on numbered 8½" x 11" paper with one-inch margins. The text of the proposal must be single spaced and typed in New Times Roman, no smaller than 12-point font and must not exceed 15 pages.

Proposals that fail to comply with the required content and format will not be considered for funding. **Material exceeding stated page limits and/or formatting structure will not be considered.** Incomplete and/or noncompliant proposals will not be considered.

- b. **Application Form:** (Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance) See Instructions for Completing SF 424 located in the Related Documents tab of this opportunity on Grants.gov.
- c. **Standard Form (SF) 424A, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs.** Fill in all spaces as appropriate. Section B, Item 6, Column 2 should reflect the agency funds, and Column 1 should reflect the applicant's matching funds. This form is the summary budget for the project and should include the full project totals on pages one and two. See Instructions for Completing SF 424A located in the Related Documents tab of this opportunity on Grants.gov.
- d. **Budget Narrative.** In a separate narrative titled "Budget Narrative", explain and justify all requested budget items/costs. Detail how the totals on the SF-424A were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. For personnel salary costs and efforts, include the base-line salary figures and the estimates of time (as percentages) to be directly charged to the project. Describe any item that under the applicable Federal cost principles requires the agency's approval and estimate its cost. Describe the applicant's institutional interest, support, and involvement in the project. This information is used to assess the capability of the organizational resources available to perform the effort proposed. Identify the facilities to be used (Laboratory, Animal, Computer, Office, Clinical and Other). If appropriate, indicate their capacities, pertinent capabilities, relative proximity, and extent of availability to the project. Describe only those resources that are directly applicable to the proposed work. Provide any information describing

the Other Resources available to the project and the extent to which they would be available to the project.

As required in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, Subpart F Audit Requirements, all U.S. states, local governments, federally-recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending \$750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in a fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System.

Per NRCS Appropriations restrictions and CESU Network agreements, indirect costs are limited to 10% of Total Direct Costs. Please see the applicable CESU Network agreement for information on charging indirect costs with NRCS. If requesting indirect costs, a current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) must be provided with the application.

- e. **Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.** Under Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1352, an applicant or recipient must not use any federally appropriated funds (both annually appropriated and continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a grant or cooperative agreement award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is defined as influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress connection with the award. Submission of an application also represents the applicant's certification of the statements in 2 CFR Part 418, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying. If you/your organization have/has made or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with this application AND the Federal share exceeds \$100,000, you must also complete and submit the SF LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities located at 2 CFR 418, Appendix B. See 2 CFR, Subpart 418.110 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

3. **Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)**

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 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 or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. The agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the agency is ready to make an award, it 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.

Entities must obtain a DUNS and register in SAM prior to registering with Grants.gov. A description of each is below. Entities are strongly encouraged to apply early for their DUNS number and SAM registration.

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. 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.

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>. The Federal Service Desk is available for registration assistance, and can be contacted via the Help tab at the website listed above.

Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding DUNS or SAM issues.

4. Submission Dates and Times

Applicants must submit applications via Grants.gov. Applications must be received by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on June 11, 2020. Late submissions will not be reviewed or considered. The agency will rely on system generated date and time receipt documentation to determine whether applications meet the submission deadline. Grants.gov provides an automatic acknowledgement when applications are received.

5. Intergovernmental Review

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

6. Funding Restrictions

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 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; and
 - 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.
 - Management fees and profit

This list is not exhaustive. Questions regarding the allowances of particular items of cost should be directed to the administrative contact person listed in this opportunity announcement.

Indirect costs limitations:

- Per NRCS Appropriations restrictions and CESU Network agreements, indirect costs are limited to 10% of Total Direct Costs. Please see the applicable CESU Network agreement for information on charging indirect costs with NRCS. If requesting indirect costs, a current NICRA must be provided with the application.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Merit/Technical Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Relevance and importance: Does the proposal fit within the mission of the Soil Survey and directly address a research priority described in Section II? Are the results potentially applicable to more than one State or MLRA?

Scientific merit: Does the proposed research have potential to expand the fundamental knowledge in its priority area(s)? Is it scientifically sound? Is the investigator aware of past research in the area? Is the proposal well written, organized, and complete?

Feasibility: Are the hypotheses, objectives, methodologies, designs, and techniques adequate and completely described? What is the likelihood of success given the methods, timeframe, and funding proposed?
Information transfer: Can the proposed research results enhance and improve NRCS' ability to meet one or more parts of the Soil Survey mission? Does the proposal address methods to transfer knowledge gained and potential impact of the results?
Training: Does the proposal have a strong educational component and provide for student support?
Collaboration: Does the proposal explicitly document direct collaboration with multiple NCSS collaborators and NRCS/NSSC affiliated soil scientists?
Qualifications of the investigators: Are the qualifications of the investigators adequate to complete the proposed research? Are the facilities and equipment adequate?
Budget: Is the budget reasonable and adequate for the proposed research? What is the applicant's institutional interest, support, and involvement in the project? Budget will be evaluated for cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

2. Risk Criteria

The awarding agency will check SAM to ensure the applicant is not suspended or debarred, which would preclude receiving an award. In addition, prior to making a Federal award with a total Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold (\$250,000), the agency must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (the Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System, FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313 and 2 CFR 200.205(a)).

To further comply with the requirements at 2 CFR 200.205, the agency has established the following risk review process and related standards that an applicant must meet to be considered for award:

- a. Financial Stability. The applicant certifies that it maintains adequate financial resources or cash flow to meet its financial obligations on a routine basis and successfully complete any agreement it may be awarded.
- b. Quality of Management Systems and Ability to meet Management Standards prescribed in 2 CFR Part 200. The applicant certifies it has a financial management system adequate to segregate and track federal funds. It further certifies it has adequate systems in place for proper agreement administration; compliance with the standards outlined in 2 CFR Part 200 Section D for procurement, property, and records management; and required financial and performance reporting.
- c. History of Performance. If the applicant has previously obtained Federal financial assistance award, it certifies that it has never failed to materially comply with the Federal award terms and conditions and further that it has never had an award terminated on that basis.

Submission of an application constitutes certification that an applicant meets these standards.

3. Review and Selection Process

Applications will be screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete, noncompliant, and/or applications not meeting the formatting criteria will be eliminated from competition, and notification of elimination will be sent to the applicant. The agency intends to make a selection and award without conducting any discussions or allowing applicants to correct deficiencies or omissions in their applications. Consequently, they must ensure their applications are complete and accurate. However, while the agency intends to make a selection without contacting applicants, it reserves the right to request applicants to revise their applications to correct deficiencies or omissions identified by the awarding agency. If this is done, the agency will conduct discussions with all applicants and identify deficiencies and omissions and give applicants an opportunity to submit a revised application by a common cut-off date. The agency may also contact individual applicants to clarify certain components of their application.

Merit/technical reviews will be conducted by a technical review board nominated by the approving official. Risk reviews will be conducted by the FPAC Business Center, Grants and Agreements Division. The approving official will make the final award decisions. The approving official for this opportunity is the National Leader for Soil Research, National Soil Survey Center.

4. Awards Over the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (if applicable)

Notice to applicants:

- a. Prior to making a Federal award with a total Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold (\$250,000), the agency must review and

consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (the Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System, FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313 and 2 CFR 200.205(a));

- b. An applicant may review information in FAPIIS accessible through SAM and comment on any information about it that a Federal awarding agency previously entered;
- c. The agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR 200.205, Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

5. Anticipated Selection Announcement and Federal Award Dates

The agency anticipates announcing or notifying successful and unsuccessful applicants by June 30, 2020 and expects to have Federal awards in place by September 15, 2020.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

The agency will provide notice that an application has been selected before it actually makes the Federal award. As such, the selection notification is not an authorization to begin performance. Any pre-award costs incurred by the awardee will not be reimbursed. The Notice of Grant and Agreement Award (ADS-093) signed by the authorized agency representative is the only authorizing document, and will be provided electronically to the entity's authorized representative for signature.

Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the award decision via letter.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All project funds will be used in accordance with 2 CFR 200 and the General Terms and Conditions; a copy of the General Terms and Conditions may be obtained by contacting the Federal Awarding Agency Contacts listed in this opportunity announcement.

Any data produced under this agreement will be subject to public disclosure in accordance with 2 CFR 200.315. Applicants are specifically reminded of 2 CFR 200.315 (d):

“(d) The Federal Government has the right to:

- (1) Obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data produced under a Federal award; and
- (2) Authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data for Federal purposes.”

3. Reporting

Reporting will follow the guidelines included in the General Terms and Conditions but will generally include electronic submission of semiannual progress reports, semi-annual financial status reports, and final reports.

If the Federal share of any agreement awarded under this opportunity notice may include more than \$500,000 over the period of performance, recipients must also comply with the post award reporting requirements reflected in Appendix XII of 2 CFR Part 200 —Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters.

Applicants that receive awards pursuant to this opportunity and any sub awardees must comply with the reporting requirements described at 2 CFR Part 170, unless an exception applies. Applicants must ensure they have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with those requirements. A list of exceptions can be found at 2 CFR 170.110(b).

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

For questions regarding this opportunity, please contact one of the following individuals:

Administrative Contact (Primary Contact)

Name: Aileen Anderson

Grants Management Specialist

FPAC Business Center

Phone Number: 315-221-5884

Email: aileen.anderson@usda.gov with CC to FPAC.BC.GAD@usda.gov

Program Contact

Name: Skye Wills

National Leader for Soil Science Research

USDA NRCS

Phone Number: 402-314-5659

Email: skye.wills@usda.gov

H. OTHER INFORMATION

1. Questions regarding this opportunity must be submitted to the Administrative Contact identified above via email with “USDA-NRCS-NHQ-SOIL-20-NOFO0001003” in the subject line. Questions must be submitted by May 19, 2020. A questions and answers document addressing all questions will be posted to the Related Documents tab of this opportunity in Grants.gov by May 25, 2020.
2. For technical issues with Grants.gov, please contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts.
3. **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)**
Applications are considered confidential information. Applications 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 requires the awarding agency to provide notice to applicants that a third party has requested copies of their business information, and requires the awarding agency to consult with applicants regarding the releasing their records.
4. **Government Obligation**
The Federal Government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of this opportunity. Only authorized federal officials can bind the Federal Government to the expenditure of funds.

Additional Information

This request represents the continuation of annual funded research projects for the last ten years. It is anticipated that there will be continued funded research at a level dependent on agency priorities and allocations.

More information on the USDA/NRCS soils program can be found at <http://soils.usda.gov>.

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, audiotope, 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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