Notice of Funding Opportunity: USDA-NRCS-PIA-MULTI-21-NOFO0001062
Pacific Islands Area Fiscal Year 2021 Conservation Solutions Through Strategic Partnerships Announcement for Funding
Questions and Answers – As of 04/08/2021

Question 1: Who is eligible to apply for the Conservation Solutions offering? Who should apply for the offering?

Answer: For the Conservation Solutions offering, only the following entity types are eligible:

a. City governments
b. County governments
c. Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS (other than institutions of higher education)
d. Nonprofits that do not have a 501 (c)(3) status with the IRS (other than institutions of higher education)
e. Private institutions of higher education
f. Public and State/Territorial-controlled institutions of higher education
g. State and Territorial governments

As to who should apply, eligible institutions or organizations that have projects meeting the specifications identified in the notice of funding opportunity.

It is important to note that funds being offered are for the purpose of increasing adoption of conservation under Farm Bill programs. Eligibility for Farm Bill programs extends to more than farms (https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/payment-eligibility/index). Any individual or entity interested in participating in Farm Bill programs should contact their local Farm Services Agency office (https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=us&agency=fsa).

Any agricultural producers receiving a payment through participation in a project must meet the eligibility requirements of 7 CFR Part 12 and 7 CFR Part 1400 and have control of the land involved for the term of the proposed award period.

Also, projects should be designed with NRCS' conservation practices and planning processes in mind.

For example, the use of biochar is covered under NRCS' conservation practice standard 808 https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/api/CPSFile/29747/808_PI_ICPS_Soil_Carbon_Amendment_2021). The practice is using amendments derived from plant or animal residues to improve the physical, chemical, and biological properties of the soil

The purpose of the practice is to:
- Maintain, increase, or improve soil organic matter quantity and quality
- Maintain or improve soil aggregate stability
- Maintain or improve habitat for soil organisms
- Improve plant productivity and health
- Improve moisture management and enhance the efficient use of irrigation water

• Improve air quality by reducing emissions of particulate matter (PM) and PM precursors, GHGs, ozone precursors and airborne reactive nitrogen

The practice applies to all land uses where organic carbon amendment applications will improve soil conditions, with the following exceptions:
• native grasslands or other areas where any resulting changes in the plant community would be undesirable
• fields where nutrients in the amendment will not be utilized (e.g., fallow land or fields without an existing or planned cover crop or cash crop)

Also important is for the applicant to be able to provide information required for the project application submission. The resource issue or problem being addressed, the approach and sufficient information about the approach to indicate high probability for success, project objectives and deliverables, design and methods, project management, etc.

If a business is the applicant, the business would need to identify EQIP eligible producers involved in the project and the extent of their involvement. If a "program" (I'm assuming this would be an entity of some kind) is the applicant, they would need to be responsible for meeting all of the applicant requirements and agreement management requirements. If there will be more than one "program" applying the practice, whoever is the applicant will need to coordinate with all the "programs."

Question 2: I am not able to see webinar information. Has that been posted yet?

Answer: The webinar recording has been added to the bottom of the news release about the funding opportunity (https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/pia/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1746573).

Webinar Information
USDA-NRCS-PIA-MULTI-21-NOFO0001062 (Competitive Grants)
Date: **March 10, 2021**, 2 p.m. Hawaii Standard Time
Microsoft Teams: View the recorded event

For more information on this funding opportunity, contact Susan Kubo at (808) 600-2921 or susan.kubo@usda.gov.