Summary Information

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

Funding Opportunity Title: Notice of Funding Opportunity for NRCS's Wetland Mitigation Banking Program for Federal fiscal year (FY) 2020.

Announcement Type: Funding Announcement

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NRCS-NHQ-WMBP-20-NOFO0001002

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.933

Funding Opportunity Announcement Summary

NRCS is announcing the availability of up to $5 million in Wetland Mitigation Banking Program (WMBP) grant funds for the development and establishment of mitigation banks and banking opportunities solely for agricultural producers with wetlands subject to the Wetland Conservation Compliance provisions of the 1985 Food Security Act (as amended). WMBP is a competitive grants program accepting proposals from Federally recognized Native American tribal governments, State and local units of government, for-profit entities, nonprofits with or without a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS other than institutions of higher education, private institutions of higher education, and public and State controlled institutions of higher education. Applications will be accepted from eligible entities in any of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands), and the Pacific Islands Area (Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands). Priority will be given to banks located in geographic areas with the largest numbers of wetland compliance producer requests. Based on NRCS data, proposals from the following States will receive priority consideration: Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on July 6, 2020.

SUBMISSIONS: Applications must be submitted electronically through https://www.grants.gov. Submissions must be received by the time and date due. The agency will rely on system-generated date and time receipt documentation for Grants.gov submissions.

The Grants.gov electronic submission interface is called Workspace. Workspace is the standard method for organizations or individuals to apply for Federal grants in Grants.gov. Workspace allows applicants to access and edit different forms within an application simultaneously. In addition, the forms may be completed online or as a PDF. An overview of Workspace can be viewed at Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html).

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 https://www.grants.gov, click on "Applicants", then choose the appropriate selection in the "Get Registered" section. 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 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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Applicants are encouraged to visit the WMBP website at https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/programs/farmbill/?cid=nrcseprd362686 to learn more about the program. Questions about this announcement can be directed to wmbp@usda.gov.

A webinar for potential WMBP applicants is scheduled for 3:00 p.m. Eastern time on May 19, 2020. Participate in the webinar by using the coordinates below.

Join ZoomGov Meeting
https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1610517291?pwd=RHJMVENwS21leGgwWVpSM0hBNW5NQT09

Meeting ID: 161 051 7291
Password: 927680

Dial by your location
+1 (669) 254-5252 U.S. (San Jose)
+1 (646) 828-7666 U.S. (New York)

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

The Wetland Mitigation Banking Program (WMBP) is authorized by section 1222(k) of the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended by section 2609 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 3822(k), and reauthorized under the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018, Section 1222(k)(1)(B).

B. Overview

Purchasing credits from a wetland mitigation bank provides a legal mechanism for agricultural producers to maintain their eligibility for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program benefits if they convert agricultural wetlands. A producer may offset the loss of wetland functions and values resulting from a conversion activity by restoring, enhancing, or creating

wetland functions and values on a different site. Through a mitigation bank, producers can purchase offsetting wetland credits generated from previously drained (prior to 1985) wetlands that have been restored and approved for wetland mitigation.

The WMBP supports the establishment and development of wetland mitigation banks to make credits available for agricultural producers. WMBP awardees work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to develop a mitigation banking instrument that provides details for development, establishment, and operation of a mitigation banking program. Mitigation banking instruments are developed in conjunction with national and State NRCS staff technical oversight and are subject to NRCS approval. Awardees must ensure the following wetlands receive priority for mitigation under the NRCS WMBP (note that the wetland designation labels are those used by NRCS for implementation of the wetland compliance provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985):

- Farmed Wetland (FW).
- Farmed Wetland Pasture (FWP).
- Wetland (W) less than 5 acres in size that is predominantly bordered by land that has been cropped 8 of the past 10 years when the wetland is designated as degraded according to a functional assessment tool.
- Converted Wetland (CW) that, prior to conversion, qualified under one of the items of above, as determined by NRCS staff.

II. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

A. Estimated Funding

This announcement makes available up to $5 million.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

A minimum of 25 percent of the Federal funding request must be provided by applicants as matching funds. Matching funds may be any combination of cash and in-kind services, materials, and equipment. See section IV(F)(2) of this announcement for information on cost share/match. Land purchases and purchases of conservation easements using non-Federal funding sources may count toward a partner's matching funds requirement but only if the expenditures occur during the life of the grant agreement.

C. Start Dates and Performance Periods

Projects may be up to 4 years in duration. Applicants should plan their projects based on a project start date of January 1, 2021. Awardees shall not incur expenses for billing to the USDA until a grant award agreement has been fully executed.

D. Type of Federal Award

The agency plans to award grant agreements pursuant to this opportunity.

E. Number of Awards

The agency anticipates making 5 to 10 awards.

F. Federal Funding Floor and Ceiling Amounts

The funding floor for this announcement is $100,000, and the funding ceiling is $1 million. 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.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are qualified third parties with the expertise and capacity to operate and manage all aspects of a wetland mitigation bank. Applications will be accepted from Federally recognized Indian Tribes, State and local governments, for-profit entities, nonprofits with or without a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS other than institutions of higher education, private institutions of higher education, and public and State controlled institutions of higher education.

B. Eligible Projects

WMBP funding can be used to develop and establish a wetland mitigation bank only for use by agricultural producers. Agricultural wetlands that have been converted or manipulated are ideal candidates for mitigation bank development under this program. Eligible entities must operate and manage all aspects of the wetland mitigation bank with technical oversight by NRCS.

C. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds

For information on cost sharing and matching funds, see section IV(F)(2).

IV. 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.

A. Address to Request Application Package

All standard forms and instructions necessary for this opportunity are included in the Grants.gov opportunity (https://www.grants.gov).

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

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

1. **Application Form.**—Standard Form (SF) 424, "Application for Federal Assistance.". See "Instructions for Completing SF-424" located in the "Related Documents" tab of this announcement on Grants.gov.
2. **SF-424A, "Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs."**—Fill in all spaces as appropriate. 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.

3. **Budget Narrative.**—Appendix A of this funding announcement includes guidance on developing a budget narrative as well as a sample budget narrative. Applicants must use this format, both the table and narrative. By standardizing the budget narrative of the proposal, NRCS is hoping to improve transparency and improve peer panel reviewers' ability to evaluate proposal budgets quickly and efficiently.

   As required in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 200, Subpart F, "Audit Requirements," all U.S. States, local governments, federally recognized Indian Tribal Governments, and nonprofit organizations expending $750,000 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.

4. **Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities—**
   Under Title 31 of the United States Code (U.S.C.), 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 connected 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 proposal AND the Federal share exceeds $100,000, you must also complete and submit the Form 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.

5. **Executive Summary and Project Narrative:**

   a. Executive Summary (1-page maximum)

      On a single page, provide the following information:
      - The applicant entity name.
      - The lead contact for the project, with email address and phone number. NRCS will use the contact identified as the primary applicant contact.
      - The duration of the project in months (maximum 48 months). This is the anticipated agreement length between NRCS and the awardee.
      - The amount of Federal funding requested.
      - A brief project description. Provide a summary of the activities to be accomplished under the WMBP grant.
      - A brief description of project deliverables. The description should include the planned number of wetland bank site acres to be restored, enhanced, or created, and an estimate of the number of wetland credits to be offered through the bank.
      - Geographic location. The region or area of the State or Tribal land impacted by the program.

b. Project Narrative (10-page maximum)

The project description must include the information below in the following order:

(1) Project objectives and deliverables:
- Describe how NRCS funding will be used to establish and develop a wetland mitigation bank site available to agricultural producers. Provide an estimate of the number of acres planned for restoration for inclusion in the mitigation bank. Include activities supported by partner funding (e.g., land or easement acquisition).
- Describe the complexity of the planned restorations and the extent to which the project is "shovel ready."

(2) Project timeline:

NRCS provides priority consideration to projects that can be completed and offering credits to landowners in a relatively short time frame. Provide a bulleted list of key project actions, milestones, and deliverables.

(3) Project management:

List key personnel and describe their qualifications, experience, and anticipated contributions to the project.

(4) Project marketing:
- It is critical that agricultural producers in the mitigation bank's service area are aware that the bank offers a mitigation option. Describe how the project will be marketed to USDA program participants.
- NRCS gives priority consideration to applicants who provide outreach to historically underserved landowners. If applicable, describe these outreach activities. The definition of historically underserved and veteran producers is available on https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/people/outreach/slbfr/.

(5) Project evaluation:

Describe the methodology and procedures used to evaluate the success of the project.

(6) Assessment of environmental impacts:
- Please describe the environmental impacts of planned wetland restoration, enhancement, or creation 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 resources impacted directly, indirectly, or cumulatively.
- Where possible, information on environmental impacts should be quantified, such as number of acres of wetlands impacted, volume of dredging needed, feet of ditch filled or tile drains plugged, etc. Natural 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.

Each page must be numbered and have 1-inch margins. The text of the project narrative must be single spaced and typed in Times New Roman, no smaller than 12-point font and must not exceed 10 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.

C. Unique identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR Section 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR Section 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.

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. 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/SAM/. The Federal Service Desk is available for registration assistance and can be contacted through the "Help" tab at the website listed above.

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

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applicants must submit proposals through Grants.gov. Proposals must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on July 6, 2020. 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.

E. Intergovernmental Review

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

F. 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:

- Purchase of land or conservation easement(s).
- Expenses incurred prior to full execution of a grant agreement between NRCS and the awardee.
- Expenses incurred after the grant agreement between NRCS and the awardee has expired.
- Expenses or activities that have already been funded by NRCS through another program;
- Purchase, rental, or installation of fixed equipment;
- Costs above the amount of funds authorized for the project;
- 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.

This list is not exhaustive. Questions regarding allowable costs should be directed to wmbp@nrcs.gov.

1. Indirect costs limitations

To be eligible to recover any indirect cost under a Federal award, recipients must either (1) have a current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) with a Federal agency that has not expired; or (2) qualify for use of the de minimis rate authorized by 2 CFR 200.414(f). In order to qualify for the de minimis rate, the recipient must have never had 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 current NICRA, must calculate indirect costs using the rate and base specified in their NICRA. An awardee may voluntarily reduce or waive recovery of indirect costs at its sole discretion and must not be encouraged or coerced in any way to do so by the agency. If voluntarily reduced or waived, the awardee may choose to apply any unrecovered indirect costs as part of their cost share or match. Unrecovered indirect cost means the difference between the

amount charged to the Federal award and the amount which could have been charged to the Federal award under the awardee's approved negotiated indirect cost rate (2 CFR 200.306(c)). A copy of the applicant's current NICRA must be provided with the application. Indirect costs may not be recovered under an expired NICRA.

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 also excluding the amount of each subaward 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 an awardee 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 percent of MTDC when preparing the budget. If selected for award, a de minimis rate agreement will be executed along with the award.

All applicants are hereby notified of the following:

- Recipients without an approved indirect cost rate are prohibited from charging indirect costs to a Federal award. (Accepting the 10% de minimis rate as a condition of award constitutes establishing an approved rate.)
- Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award.
- Recipients are prohibited from shifting unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funding

Recipients must provide a non-Federal funding match amount at least equal to 25 percent of the Federal funding request. For example, if an applicant requests $1,000,000 in funding, at least $250,000 in non-Federal matching funds must be committed by the applicant for total project costs of $1,250,000. Applications that do not include cost-sharing will be ineligible for award.

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 accomplished 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.

Matching funds must be committed at the time of application submission. Cost sharing or matching funds must meet the criteria stated in 2 CFR 200.306 and be valued in accordance with 2 CFR 200.306(d). Additional details about cost sharing or matching funds/contributions can be found at https://www.govinfo.gov/ and enter 2 CFR 200.306 in "Search."

All matching funds must be identified in both the SF-424A and budget narrative components of the application. Project partners/third parties (i.e., any entity other than the applicant) must provide commitment letters for all cash and in-kind matching contributions. A separate

commitment letter is required from each contributing partner. 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 matching funds are provided, (4) the dollar value of the matching funds; and (5) a statement that the contributor commits to furnish the matching funds during the grant period.

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

3. Previous Wetland Mitigation Banking Program Awards

If the applicant has previously received and managed a WMBP award, the applicant must provide a short summary of project, including the year of award, the award amount, and a brief description of project accomplishments.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. Proposal Review Criteria

1. Geographic Scope/Project Goals (30 points)

- Priority will be given to banks located in geographic areas with the largest numbers of wetland compliance producer requests. According to NRCS data, proposals from the following States will receive priority consideration: Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.
- The project identifies clear, measurable, and achievable goals and deliverables including the planned number of wetland acres to be restored, enhanced, or created for the inclusion in the wetland bank with an estimate of the number of credits to be made available through the bank.

2. Project Management (30 points)

- The applicant has a proven track record of establishing and operating wetland mitigation banks, including bank site establishment and success in selling bank credits to agricultural producers.
- The applicant describes a sound marketing plan for marketing the wetland bank to USDA program participants.
- The proposal describes plans for marketing the wetland bank to historically underserved producers.
- Project staff has the necessary capacity, technical, and administrative expertise to restore wetlands and operate a wetland mitigation bank.
- The budget is fully explained and justified, and expenses are allowable.

3. Bank Development and Operation (40 points)

- The proposal has a plan for locating and securing potential wetland mitigation bank sites.
- The proposal describes a reasonable approach to ensure that the land to be restored, enhanced, or created is appropriate for wetland mitigation.

- The proposal includes a plan for accelerated development of a mitigation bank site(s) to make available mitigation credits within 24 months of project initiation.
- The application describes how, if applicable, NRCS conservation practice standards will be followed for wetland restoration activities.
- Bank description illustrates high potential for successful establishment and operation of a mitigation bank for agricultural producers seeking to comply with Farm Bill wetlands compliance provisions.

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)).

B. Review and Selection Process

Proposals will be screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete, noncompliant, and/or proposals not meeting the formatting criteria will be eliminated from competition, and notification of elimination will be sent to the applicant.

Proposals that pass the initial screening will undergo a technical review carried out by a panel consisting of Federal employees with experience in wetland restoration and mitigation banking. The technical panel will evaluate each proposal against the criteria in section V(A) of this notice and then rank all proposals to make recommendations for funding to NRCS leadership. NRCS State Conservationists will also review relevant proposals for duplication of existing efforts and ethical concerns and will provide overall recommendations. The NRCS Chief makes the final award decisions.

C. Development of Grant Agreement and Mitigation Banking Instrument

NRCS will use a grant agreement to provide program funds to each selected applicant. The project budget period, amount of Federal assistance, terms and conditions of the award, and reporting requirements will be described and provided to the selected applicants as a part of this process.

The wetlands and other natural resources that are part of a mitigation bank developed with NRCS funding must be protected by a conservation easement. The WMBP website contains a set of minimum easement deed terms that must be included in a conservation easement associated with the program. These terms can be found at: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/programs/farmbill/?cid=nrcseprd362686. The applicant is responsible for enforcing all easements.

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

Notice to applicants:

- 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)) at https://www.fapiis.gov/fapiis/index.action (see 41 U.S.C. 2313 and 2 CFR 200.205(a));

- An applicant may review information in FAPIIS accessible through SAM and comment on any information about it that a Federal awarding agency previously entered;
- 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."

E. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

The agency anticipates announcing or notifying successful and unsuccessful applicants on October 30, 2020, and expects to have awards in place by January 1, 2021.

VI. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. Federal Award Notices

1. Successful Applicants

NRCS will notify successful applicants by email. **Awardees may not begin their projects until a fully executed grant agreement has been signed by both NRCS and awardee**. Form NRCS-ADS-093, "Notice of Grant and Agreement Award," signed by the authorized agency official, is the only authorizing document and will be provided electronically to the applicant's authorized official.

2. Unsuccessful Applicants

NRCS will notify unsuccessful applicants by email. Applicants not selected for funding will also receive feedback on their proposal. This evaluation will be emailed to the contact listed in the proposal within 90 days of the announcement of WMBP selections. Please do not contact NRCS requesting feedback 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. A copy of the terms and conditions may be obtained by emailing wmbp@usda.gov.

Environmental Review

Every funded WMBP project is a Federal action subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NRCS must work with awardees to complete an environmental review of each awarded project before project commencement. In addition, prior to any ground-disturbing activities related to WMBP funding, the awardee must work with NRCS staff to complete an environmental evaluation (EE) related to those activities. Awardees may be required to prepare or pay for preparation of an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS), should any environmental review find that an EA or EIS is required.

In addition, a National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), Section 106 review and consultation by an 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 WMBP project effects. More information on the applicant's role in the NHPA Section 106 process can be found on the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation website at https://www.achp.gov/digital-library-section-106-landing/section-106-applicant-toolkit.

Consultation with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and/or the National Marine Fisheries Service under the section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is also required for projects that may affect listed or proposed species or destroy or modify critical habitat. The ESA consultation in accordance with section 7 of the ESA and implementing regulations at 50 CFR Part 402 must be completed by NRCS prior to the implementation of project activities that have the potential to impact species or habitat protected under the ESA. More information on the section 7 consultation process can be found at https://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/consultations-overview.html.

C. Reporting

Project reporting requirements include electronic submission of semiannual progress reports, annual financial status reports, and a final report.

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).

VII. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT

For administrative questions regarding this opportunity, please email Michele Devaney at: michele.devaney@usda.gov

For programmatic questions regarding this opportunity, please email: wmbp@usda.gov

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Proposals to NRCS are considered 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 requires the NRCS to provide notice to applicants that a third party has requested copies of their business information and requires NRCS to consult with applicants regarding the releasing their records.

B. Government Obligation

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.

C. Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this opportunity must be submitted to the email addresses identified above with the Opportunity Number in the subject line. Questions must be submitted by May 22, 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 28, 2020.

D. 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.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

APPENDIX A

NOTE: This appendix includes guidance on developing a budget narrative, as well as a template budget table and budget narrative. To ensure consistency in proposals and proposal reviews, applicants are required to use this budget table and narrative format in their proposals. An Excel spreadsheet and editable document version of these files are located on WMBP website at https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/programs/farmbill/?cid=nrcseprd362686.

A. Under the Wetland Mitigation Banking Program (WMBP), NRCS funding can be used for—

- Development of the mitigation banking instrument.
- Identification of suitable mitigation sites and performance of functional assessments to determine the available credits and a credit release schedule.
- Market research and contracting for mitigation activities.
- Land surveys, permitting, and title searches.
- Design and formulation of mitigation plans.
- Restoration, enhancement, or creation of wetland mitigation bank sites in accordance with NRCS conservation practice standards.
- Tracking and management of wetland mitigation data.
- Direct administrative costs associated with implementing the project.
- Indirect costs of the awardee, as described in section IV(F)(1) of this notice.

See section IV(F) of this notice for more details of unallowable costs.

B. Drafting a Budget and Budget Narrative

1. Budget Narrative—Two Parts:

- A table totaling all major budget line items (the major line items on the SF 424A are: salary, fringe, travel, supplies, equipment, contractual, construction, other, and indirect costs) by year. The table includes subcategories listed below each line item, giving a clear breakdown of project costs. The table should contain both Federal and non-Federal portions of the project budget.
- A written narrative that aligns with the budget table. It should provide descriptive details on the items listed in the table for both the Federal and non-Federal portion of the table.

2. Level of Detail:

A budget narrative outlines project details sufficient to allow reviewers to evaluate the integrity of the proposed spending and clarifies project intent. The level of detail for each line item may vary, but applicants should consider the following:

- Personnel.—The description should include the general function or major tasks of each major team member and their time commitment to the project. There should be a total cost listed for each project team member by year. If a project contributor has not yet been hired, the position title can be provided in lieu of a name. If available, details on cost should be included such as percent of effort, rate of pay, and estimated hours.

- Fringe Benefits.—This should appear separate from personnel in the budget. The fringe benefit rate for everyone receiving benefits and how it was calculated should be provided alongside the total amount of funds provided per year to that individual.
- Travel.—This should include the reason for the travel, the team members expected to travel, and the major costs (transportation, lodging, meals or per diem, etc.) associated with each type of travel should be outlined. Derivation of costs estimates should be provided (e.g., Federal General Services Administration per diems, university guidelines, etc.).
- Supplies.—The general supply categories that will be charged should be listed. Smaller supplies (e.g., workshop printouts and markers) need not be broken down by individual units but larger supplies should be described with unit cost and intended use.
- Equipment.—This includes only tangible personal property over $5,000 per unit with a lifetime over 1 year. Within this narrative, explain the reason for purchasing/renting any equipment. If equipment will be purchased, describe the type of equipment and supplier, what it will be used for, who will be allowed to use it, why it is needed, and how long it will be used. The project should also identify what will be done with the equipment once the project is over. If rented, the rental cost must be justified. Specific 2 CFR 200 provisions apply to equipment that equals or exceeds $5,000 in value.
- Contractual.—If contractors will be doing multiple tasks for the award, separate line items should be used. If a contractor will serve one project function, is not considered part of the project team, and will not require a subcontract a simple description of the contracted work is sufficient. Be sure to identify the name of the contractor, the method of procurement, and the scope of work for the services if not in the proposal narrative.
- Other.—This is a general line item that covers expenditures that do not fit in other categories. This is where subawards should be placed. Be sure to identify individual costs and provide sufficient description to justify the costs.
- Indirect.—The Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) or *de minimis* rate should be identified.
- Program Income.—If the awardee plans to accrue income from grant-supported activities this program income must be estimated.

3. Additional Guidance:

- Sub-budgets are not required for contractors or subawardees. Please give details on the contractor or subawardee costs in the "Contractor" section of the budget. Be sure to identify and include separate NICRA paperwork and percentages when a contractor's rate differs from the awardee's rate.
- Budget narratives should not include information included in other parts of the proposal.
- While drafting the budget, keep in mind that an agreement amendment is not required for post-agreement budget changes of 10 percent or less (of the total project budget, Federal and non-Federal portions). However, all budget changes do require notice to NRCS contacts and submittal of updated budget documents as necessary.
- All figures in the budget must be rounded to the nearest dollar.

Sample budget table—a downloadable Excel spreadsheet of this sample budget table is available here:

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/programs/farmbill/?cid=nrcseprd362686.

FEDERAL BUDGET					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	
Personnel	$60,000	$60,000	$60,000	$180,000	
Name of team member	$45,000	$45,000	$45,000	$135,000	
Name of team member	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000	$45,000	
Fringe	$21,000	$21,000	$21,000	$63,000	
Permanent staff	$21,000	$21,000	$21,000	$63,000	
Travel	$3,360	$3,360	$3,360	$10,080	
Bank site visits	$3,000	$3,000	$3,000	$9,000	
Overnight trips	$360	$360	$360	$1,080	
Equipment	$0	$30,000	$0	$30,000	
GPS handheld units	$0	$15,000	$0	$15,000	
Monitoring wells	$0	$15,000	$0	$15,000	
Contractual	$25,000	$100,000	$50,000	$175,000	
Contractor Name	$25,000	$75,000	$50,000	$150,000	
Contractor Name	$0	$25,000	$0	$25,000	
Construction	$0	$80,000	$0	$80,000	
Structure installation	$0	$50,000	$0	$50,000	
Vegetation planting	$0	$30,000	$0	$30,000	
TOTAL	$109,360	$294,360	$134,360	$538,080	68%

NON-FEDERAL BUDGET					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	
Personnel	$60,000	$60,000	$60,000	$180,000	
Name of team member	$45,000	$45,000	$45,000	$135,000	
Name of team member	$15,000	$15,000	$15,000	$45,000	
Fringe	$21,000	$21,000	$21,000	$63,000	
Permanent staff	$21,000	$21,000	$21,000	$63,000	
Other	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000	$15,000	
Property maintenance	$5,000	$5,000	$5,000	$15,000	
TOTAL	$86,000	$86,000	$86,000	$258,000	32%

SAMPLE BUDGET NARRATIVE

APPLICANT NAME
Project Title
PROJECT TOTAL: $XXX
Federal Portion: $XXX
Non-Federal Contribution: $XXX

A. FEDERAL BUDGET:

1. Personnel

Tom Smith, Project Director, full time, 50 percent paid by Federal funds, will manage the project and complete all project reporting and reimbursement requests, lead development of the banking instrument, assist with contract management, baseline data collection and assessment, wetland design and modeling.
Year 1: $45,000; Year 2: $45,000; Year 3: $45,000.

Mary Johnson, Project Coordinator, 50 percent time (6 calendar months) for 3 years, 50 percent paid by Federal funds. Responsibilities will include construction plan preparation, construction stakeout & oversight.
Year 1: $15,000; Year 2: $15,000; Year 3: $15,000.

Total Personnel: Year 1: $60,000; Year 2: $60,000; Year 3: $60,000.

2. Fringe Benefits

Fringe benefits paid by Federal funds is 50 percent. Fringe benefits rate is 35 percent for permanent staff.

3. Travel

Funds are requested to support personnel travel to bank sites. Estimated 5,000 miles (mi) per year at the Federal travel rate. .
Year 1: $3,000; Year 2: $3,000; Year 3: $3,000.

Funds are requested for overnight hotel stays near the bank sites at the State hotel rate of $90 per night, 4 times per year (yr) ($360/yr).
Year 1: $360; Year 2: $360; Year 3: $360.

Total Travel: Year 1: $3,360; Year 2: $3,360; Year 3: $3,360.

4. Equipment

Funds are requested for the equipment required for the development of a sites. This includes the purchase of GPS handheld units ($15,000). Funds are also requested for ground water monitoring wells ($15,000). Total Equipment: Year 1: $0; Year 2: $30,000; Year 3: $0.

5. Supplies– none

6. Contractual

Contract with Company XYZ ($150,000). Contractor will deliver topographic surveys, boundary surveys, cultural resources assessments, and legal services.
Year 1: $25,000; Year 2: $75,000; Year 3: $50,000.

Contract with Attorney Jane Doe, Esq. ($25,000)
Attorney will assist with execution of conservation easement for mitigation banking site(s).
Year 1: $0; Year 2: $25,000; Year 3: $0.

Total Contractual: Year 1: $25,000; Year 2: $100,000; Year 3: $50,000.

7. Construction

Funds are requested to cover construction for wetland restoration activities on a minimum of 50 acres. Construction expenses include structure installation and vegetation planting.
Total Construction: Year 1: $0; Year 2: $80,000; Year 3: $0.

8. Other – Subaward for $5,000 to organization XYZ to conduct outreach to historically underserved landowners

B. NON-FEDERAL BUDGET:

1. Personnel

Tom Smith, Project Director, full time, 50 percent paid by non-Federal funds, will advise the project team, assist with baseline data collection and assessment, wetland design and model.
Year 1: $45,000; Year 2: $45,000; Year 3: $45,000.

Mary Johnson, research biologist, 50 percent time (6 calendar months) for 3 years, 50 percent paid by non-Federal funds. Responsibilities will include construction plan preparation, construction stakeout and oversight.
Year 1: $15,000; Year 2: $15,000; Year 3: $15,000.

Total Personnel: Year 1: $60,000; Year 2: $60,000; Year 3: $60,000.

2. Fringe benefits

Fringe benefits paid by non-Federal funds, 50 percent. Fringe benefits rate is 35 percent for permanent staff.

3. Equipment - None

4. Supplies - None

5. Contractual - None

6. **Construction -** None

7. Other Costs

Other costs include general property maintenance that will be performed on the bank.
Total Other: Year 1: $10,000; Year 2: $11,000; Year 3: $11,000.

Subaward for $5,000 to organization XYZ to conduct outreach to historically underserved landowners