

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

AGENCY: Natural Resources Conservation Service, Commodity Credit Corporation

ACTION: NOTICE

Conservation Innovation Grants Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 Announcement for Program Funding

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.912

**SUMMARY:** The New Jersey State Office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS-NJ), an agency under the United States Department of Agriculture, is announcing availability of Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies. Applications are accepted from all 50 States, Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands), and the Pacific Islands Area (Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) for projects located entirely within New Jersey. NRCS-NJ anticipates that the amount available for support of this program in FY 2012 will be approximately **\$216,000**. Applications are requested from eligible governmental or non-governmental organizations or individuals for competitive consideration of grant awards for projects between 1 and 3 years in duration.

Funds will be awarded through a two-phase competitive grants process that will include (1) a pre-proposal process and (2) a full proposal process. The full proposal process will only be open to applicants whose pre-proposal applications are selected by NRCS-NJ. Both phases are described in this announcement, but **only pre-proposals are being solicited at this time**.

This notice identifies the objectives, eligibility criteria, and application instructions for CIG projects. Applications 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. NRCS will request a full proposal package only from those applicants selected in the pre-proposal phase.

**DATES:** Applications for the pre-proposal phase must be received at the NRCS-NJ State Office by 4 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on **March 2, 2012**.

Notification of selected pre-proposal applications will be announced by **March 21, 2012**. Selected applicants will then be required to submit a full proposal package to the NRCS-NJ State Office by 4 p.m. EST on **April 27, 2012**.

**ADDRESSES:** Applications sent via hand-delivery, express mail, overnight courier service or regular mail must be sent to the following address: Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Innovation Grants Program, 220 Davidson Avenue 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Somerset NJ 08873.

Applications sent electronically must be sent to Christine.Hall@nj.usda.gov.

For more information contact:

Christine Hall  
New Jersey CIG Program Manager  
220 Davidson Avenue 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Somerset NJ 08873

Phone: (732) 537-6057

Fax: (732) 537-6095

E-mail: Christine.Hall@nj.usda.gov

## SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

### I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

#### A. Legislative Authority

The Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program was authorized as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) [16 U.S.C. 3839aa-8] under 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 production. CIG projects are expected to lead to the transfer of conservation technologies, management systems, and innovative approaches into NRCS policy, technical manuals, guides, and references, or to the private sector. CIG does not fund research projects. Projects intended to test hypotheses do not qualify for a CIG grant. CIG is used to apply or demonstrate previously proven technology. It is a vehicle to stimulate development and adoption of conservation approaches or technologies that have been studied sufficiently to indicate a high likelihood of success, and that are a candidate 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.

A two-phase evaluation process will be utilized for applications submitted under this notice. The first phase requires the applicant to submit a pre-proposal. Applications will be evaluated by NRCS-NJ staff under the bulleted topics identified by the applicant (see section I.D). Applications 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.

NRCS-NJ will accept applications for single or multi-year projects, not to exceed 3 years, submitted by from eligible entities including federally recognized Indian tribes, State and local units of government, and non-governmental organizations and individuals. Applications are accepted from all 50 States, the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands), and the Pacific Islands Area (Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) for projects located entirely within New Jersey.

NRCS-NJ will only request a full proposal package from those applicants selected in the pre-proposal process. Complete applications received by applicable deadlines will be evaluated by a technical peer review panel based on the Criteria for Application Evaluation identified in the application instructions in section VI.B.

Full proposal applications will be forwarded to a technical peer review panel. The peer review panel will make recommendations for project approval to the NRCS-NJ 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, field testing, evaluation, implementation, and monitoring of:

- Conservation adoption approaches or incentive systems; or
- Promising conservation technologies, practices, systems, procedures, or approaches; or
- Environmental soundness with goals of environmental protection and natural resource enhancement.

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

- Make use of a proven technology or a technology that has been studied sufficiently to indicate a high probability for success;
- Demonstrate and verify environmental (soil, water, air, plants, energy, and animal) effectiveness, utility, affordability, and usability of conservation technology in the field;
- Adapt conservation technologies, practices, systems, procedures, approaches, and incentive systems to improve performance and encourage adoption;
- Introduce conservation systems, approaches, and procedures from another geographic area or agricultural sector;
- Adapt conservation technology, management, or incentive systems to improve performance; and
- Demonstrate transferability of knowledge.

### **D. New Jersey Competition**

For FY 2012, NRCS-NJ will consider offering CIG in the following areas: Nutrient Management, Energy Conservation, Soil Health, and Wildlife.

Pre-proposals that demonstrate the use of innovative technologies and/or approaches to address at least one bulleted topic listed below will be considered. Pre-proposals must identify the most appropriate bulleted topic the innovation/technology is addressing. While NRCS-NJ is interested in receiving proposals for each bulleted topic below, special interest is placed on receiving proposals that address topics identified as a “Priority Need.” Additional topics (not listed below) may be considered at the State Conservationist’s discretion. If an additional topic is proposed for the State Conservationist’s consideration, it must be identified as such in the pre-proposal.

#### ***1. Nutrient Management***

- **Priority Need:** Demonstrate and quantify the optimal combinations of nutrient source, application rate, placement, and application timing (4 Rs), as measured by impact on nutrient use efficiency and yield for one or more of the following: corn, soybeans, wheat, vegetables, and/or hay/pasture. Demonstrations are encouraged that show how these optimal combinations change for one or more of the following comparisons: irrigated vs. non-irrigated management, tillage vs. reduced tillage systems, manure-amended vs. non manure-amended systems, and/or organic vs. conventional production systems.
- Demonstrate feed management, or adoption of new or novel feedstuffs or additives, and quantify their impact on manure nutrient content.

- 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. Examples may include: technologies that help growers deal with excess manure by means of exports or other value added products that generate income for the grower; and quantifying the impacts of innovative technologies that decrease nitrogen and phosphorus losses from the field (e.g., biofilters, wetland restoration, drainage water management).
- Demonstrate and quantify the effectiveness of bundling conservation measures to avoid, control, and trap nutrient losses from the field.
- Demonstrate and quantify the effectiveness of Enhanced Efficiency Fertilizer products; including inhibitors, delayed release products, or biological solutions; on yield and nutrient use efficiency.
- Demonstrate technologies which can improve cost efficiency of transporting manure nutrients from regions of dense populations of animal agriculture operations to areas with low densities of animal operations that have demand for manure nutrients.

## 2. *Energy Conservation*

- **Priority Need:** Evaluate and demonstrate renewable energy systems (e.g. hydropower, solar, and/or wind) that displace fossil fuel energy and meet on-farm energy needs, while increasing energy efficiency and/or reducing environmental contaminants (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions).
- Develop and/or demonstrate innovative implementation systems to achieve greater use of energy audits that address cropland, buildings, and equipment.
- Demonstrate the use of immediate feedback devices such as smart meters and their effect on increasing energy conservation and efficiency in the farming sector.
- Evaluate and demonstrate energy savings through adaptive management grazing systems that utilize grazing techniques that reduce the need for making and feeding hay, while also using manures and legumes rather than synthetic fertilizers. Deliverables should include energy lifecycle comparison of grazing and haying systems.
- Evaluate and demonstrate energy savings through adaptive management cropping systems that utilize crop rotations that include legumes and grasses in long term no-till systems that will increase nutrient cycling through enhanced soil biological activity.
- Develop and demonstrate innovative planning and decision aids to assess potential impacts of small on-farm renewable energy systems on wildlife and wildlife habitats and that can be used to identify appropriate sites to avoid or minimize potential adverse impacts.

## 3. *Soil Health*

- **Priority Need:** Demonstrate and quantify the impacts of cover crops, crop rotations, tillage and/or soil amendments on soil chemical, physical, and/or biological properties and their relationships with nutrient cycling, soil water availability, and plant growth.
- **Priority Need:** Demonstrate and quantify the rate of increase in available soil water holding capacity as a function of soil properties, management practices (e.g. tillage, amendments, crop residue inputs), and/or climate.
- Demonstrate innovative seeding methods of cover crops and multiple species cover crop mixes to allow for earlier establishment and increased biomass production.

#### 4. *Wildlife*

- **Priority Need:** Develop planning and decision aids to assess and maximize wildlife habitat value on land used to grow biofuel crops.
- **Priority Need:** Demonstrate new techniques and/or technologies for monitoring and evaluating wildlife habitat both on site and via remote sensing.
- **Priority Need:** Develop regional, crop-specific guidance providing the vegetative species, landforms, and necessary acreage to support appropriate populations of managed and wild pollinators per unit area of pollinated crops (i.e., describe the components of the landscape).
- Demonstrate and quantify the impacts of grazing as a habitat management tool.
- Develop and/or demonstrate fish screen, fish passage, and other fish related technology and criteria for native aquatic species of conservation concern.
- Develop planning guidance for the selection of streambank treatment options based on site conditions, including watershed context, landscape management legacy, and geomorphic potential/trajectory.
- Demonstrate the effectiveness and document the economics of alternate pest control methods in agricultural crops to protect pollinators and their habitats (e.g., ground application versus aerial application of pesticides, provision of habitat for “beneficial” insects).
- Demonstrate and quantify the effects of NRCS-recommended pollinator habitat seed/plant mixes on pollinator habitat.
- Document the benefits to other wildlife species of improving pollinator habitat.
- Demonstrate effective methods of establishing and maintaining the most beneficial pollinator-friendly plant materials for specific regions of New Jersey.
- Evaluate the following NRCS conservation practice standards using a large diversity of flowering plants in order to quantify and demonstrate the revised practice standard benefits to pollinators: 332-Contour Buffer Strips, 342-Critical Area Planting, 393-Filter Strip, 391-Riparian Forest Buffer, 311-Alley Cropping, 380-Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment, and/or 580-Streambank and Shoreline Protection.
- 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.
- Develop region-specific and crop/orchard-specific plans that address the nesting and foraging needs of crop/orchard-specific pollinators.
- Demonstrate and quantify the impacts of innovative forest management techniques as a habitat management tool.

## II. FUNDING AVAILABILITY

### A. New Jersey Competition

NRCS-NJ anticipates that the amount available for support of this program in FY 2012 will be approximately **\$216,000**.

CIG will fund single and multi-year projects, not to exceed 3 years (anticipated project start date of **September 1, 2012**). Funds will be awarded through a nationwide competitive grants process. The maximum award amount for any project will not exceed **\$75,000** in FY 2012.

### III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

CIG applicants must be a federally recognized Indian tribe, State or local unit of government, non-governmental organization, or an individual.

#### A. Matching Funds

Selected applicants may receive CIG grants of up to 50 percent of their total project cost. CIG recipients must match the USDA funds awarded on dollar-for-dollar basis from non-Federal sources with cash and in-kind contributions. Of the applicant's required match (50%), a minimum of 25 percent of the total project cost must come from cash sources; the remaining 25 percent may come from in-kind contributions (such as equipment or project personnel).

**Matching funds must be secured at time of application.** Applications should include written verification of commitments of matching support (including both cash and in-kind contributions) from third parties. Additional information about matching funds can be found at the following link: 2 CFR 215.

#### B. 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-NJ 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 USDA programs (EQIP, Agricultural Management Assistance, Conservation Security Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, etc.) because that would be a duplicate payment.

#### C. 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. Additional information regarding EQIP eligibility requirements can be found at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/>. Participating producers are not required to have an EQIP contract.

A person or legal entity will 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 not less than 66.66 percent of the average adjusted gross income of the person or legal entity is average adjusted gross farm income (7 CFR Part 1400).

A person who is determined ineligible for USDA program benefits under the Highly Erodible Land Compliance and Wetland Compliance 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 NJ's EQIP Eligible Practices List at [www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov)).

The grantee is responsible for providing all technical assistance required to successfully implement and complete the project. NRCS-NJ 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. PRE-PROPOSAL**

###### **1. How to Obtain Materials**

The announcement for this CIG funding opportunity can be found on the following web sites: [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and <http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/index.html>.

###### **2. Content and Format**

Applications must contain the information set forth below in order to receive consideration for the full proposal phase. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of NRCS or others as to the relative merits of the project described in their application. If submitting applications for more than one project, submit a separate application for each project. Material exceeding stated page limits will not be considered.

- a. Pre-proposal Cover Sheet: (Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance)  
Applicants must use this document as the cover sheet for each project application. Standard Form 424 can be downloaded from [Grants.gov - Forms Repository](http://www.grants.gov).
- b. Project Description: (Two to three pages, with a three-(3) page maximum)  
Applicants must submit a description including the information below.
  1. Project title
  2. Primary area for consideration (refer to page 3)
  3. Project duration (anticipated project start date of **September 1, 2012**)
  4. Project director name, and contact information (including e-mail)
  5. Names and affiliations of project collaborators
  6. Project purpose
  7. Project area/location
  8. Project summary
  9. Project deliverables/products
  10. Description of EQIP eligible producer involvement
- c. Budget Information (Standard Form 424A Budget Information Non-Construction Programs).
  1. Fill in all spaces as appropriate. Section B, Item 6, column 1 should reflect the NRCS funds and Column 2 should reflect the cost share. If your cost

share is from multiple sources you may show that in the remaining columns of Item 6. Applicants must prepare this document to identify budget needs. The SF-424A is available at: [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) - [Forms Repository](#)

2. A one page narrative describing the budget needs and justifying why the budget is appropriate should also be included. This is limited to a 1-page maximum.

**Note:** Please note that we understand these are preliminary figures at this point. If the application is approved for full submission there may be differences once the full details of the budget are developed.

### **3. How to Submit an Application**

Applicants may submit applications electronically by e-mail at the address listed below. Alternatively, applications may be submitted in person or via express mail, overnight courier service, or U.S. Postal Service to the addresses listed below. Applications submitted e-mail must contain all of the elements of a complete package and meet the requirements described above. Applications submitted electronically E-mailed applications must be received by NRCS-NJ on or before the submission deadline of **March 2, 2012**.

**Note:** NRCS is not responsible for any technical malfunctions related e-mailed submissions. Applicants should send their e-mail in advance of the submission deadline to avoid problems.

E-mail address: [Christine.Hall@nj.usda.gov](mailto:Christine.Hall@nj.usda.gov)

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

Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Conservation Innovation Grants Program  
220 Davidson Avenue 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Somerset NJ 08873

Applications submitted by fax will not be considered.

### **4. Due Date**

Pre-proposals must be received in NRCS-NJ State Office by 4:00 p.m. EST on **March 2, 2012**. The applicant assumes the risk of any delays in application delivery. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit completed applications via e-mail, overnight mail, or delivery service to ensure timely receipt.

### **5. Acknowledgement of Submission**

NRCS-NJ will acknowledge receipt of timely applications via e-mail. An applicant who does not receive such an e-mail acknowledgement within 30 days of their submission but believes he/she submitted a timely application must contact the NRCS-NJ program contact below within 30 days. Failure to do so will result in the application not being considered for the second phase of the application process.

CIG Program Contact:  
Christine Hall  
New Jersey CIG Program Manager  
220 Davidson Avenue 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Somerset NJ 08873  
  
Phone: (732) 537-6057  
Fax: (732) 537-6095  
E-mail: Christine.Hall@nj.usda.gov

**6. Withdrawal**

Applications may be withdrawn by written notice at any time before selections are made. Applications may be withdrawn by the applicant, or by an authorized representative.

**7. Review**

Applications will be evaluated by NRCS-NJ staff under the bulleted topic identified by the applicant. Each application will be screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice, including EQIP payment limitations. Incomplete applications will be eliminated from competition and notification of elimination will be mailed to the applicant.

**8. Anticipated Notification**

Applicants will be notified via mail by **March 21, 2012**. Applicants selected for full proposals will be required to submit a full proposal package by **April 27, 2012**.

**V. INFORMATION FOR FULL PROPOSALS** (only for those applicants notified at the end of the pre-proposal review process that their application has been identified for further evaluation).

**A. FULL PROPOSAL**

All Office of Management and Budget standard forms necessary for CIG submission are posted on the following web site: [Grants.gov - Forms Repository](http://Grants.gov). An application checklist is available on the CIG Web site: <http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/index.html>.

**1. Content and Format**

Applications are required to contain the content, format, and information set forth below in order to receive consideration for funding. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of NRCS-NJ or others as to the relative merits of the project described in the application. Applicants must submit one original copy of the 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, single-sided, with one-inch margins and page numbered.
- 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.

- a. **Proposal Cover Sheet:** (Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance)  
Applicants must use this document as the cover sheet for each project application. Standard Form 424 can be downloaded from [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) - [Forms Repository](#).
- b. **Project Description:** The description must include the following information and is limited to 12 pages in length.
  1. **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.
  2. **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.
  3. **Project methods:** Describe clearly the methodology of the project and the tools or processes that will be used to implement the project.
  4. **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.
  5. **Producer participation:** Estimate the number of producers involved in the project, and describe the extent of their involvement (all producers involved in the project must be eligible for EQIP).
  6. **Project action plan and timeline:** Provide a table listing project actions, timeframes, and associated milestones through project completion. Anticipated project start date of **September 1, 2012**.
  7. **Project management:** Give a detailed description of how the project will be organized and managed. Include a list of key project personnel and partners 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.
  8. **Project deliverables/products:** Provide a list of specific deliverables and products that will allow NRCS to monitor project progress and payment. In addition to specific deliverable, applications must include the following activities as deliverables:
    - a. Semi-annual reports
    - b. Supplemental narratives to explain and support payment requests
    - c. Final report
    - d. 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 (refer to "CIG Technical Evaluation Criteria")]
    - e. New technology and innovative approach fact sheet
  9. **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, region, or sector; rural communities; and municipalities. Explain how these entities will benefit. In addition, describe how results will be communicated to others via outreach activities.
  10. **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 semi-annual progress report, quarterly financial reports, and a final project report to

NRCS-NJ. Instructions for submitting quarterly reports will be detailed in the grant agreement.

- c. **Assessment of Environmental and Social Impacts:** Describe and assess 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 and assessment of the potential impacts to all 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 resources 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 NRCS-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 the NRCS-NJ Environmental Liaison concerning the scope of what should be addressed in this section of the application. The Environmental Liaison for New Jersey is:

***Gregory Westfall***

*Resource Conservationist  
220 Davidson Ave, 4th Floor  
Somerset, NJ 08873*

Phone: (732) 537-6054  
Fax: (732) 537-6095  
Email: [gregory.westfall@nj.usda.gov](mailto:gregory.westfall@nj.usda.gov)

Additional information on Environmental Compliance can be found on the following web site: [Environmental Liaison](#)

*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, there is potential that during the screening process the application may not be selected.*

- d. **Budget Information:** The budget portion of the application consists of three parts described below.
1. Standard Form (SF) 424A Budget Information- Non-Construction Programs: Fill in all spaces as appropriate. Section B, Item 6, column 1 should reflect the NRCS funds and Column 2 should reflect the cost share funds. If your cost share is from multiple sources you may show that in the remaining columns of Item 6. This form is the summary budget for the project.
  2. Detailed Budget Description: Specific item by item breakdown of the totals provided in Item 6 of the SF-424A should be provided. This detail should show what individual costs were added together to arrive at the totals presented in each of Object Class Categories on the SF-424. The format of this information should be readable in 8.5 by 11 printable pages. It may be in a chart, spreadsheet, table, etc. The information needs to be presented in such a way that the evaluators and NRCS can readily understand what expenses will be incurred to support the project. The breakdown of the federal share and the applicant cost share should be shown separately as in the SF-424A, not combined. This may be on separate

documents or on different sections of the same presentation. Listed below are some suggested items that should be shown in the budget details. These are suggested details and are not inclusive:

- 6a. Personnel; A list of personnel, their salary, hourly rate, hours, % time
- 6b. Fringe Benefits: % of salary, differing rates for different staff
- 6c. Travel: basis for airfare, mileage rate (NTE Federal govt. rate), per diem, hotel, car rental, how many trips, how many days, number of staff
- 6d. Equipment: type of equipment, cost per item, per batch, per load, quantity
- 6e. Supplies: type of supplies, cost per item, per batch, per load, quantity (a general statement such as “office supplies \$3,000” is not acceptable)
- 6f. Contractual; Cost of each subcontract – the total of all subcontracts should be shown on the SF-424, but an itemized budget should be provided for each potential subcontract. The budgets for the subcontracts should follow this same format and be submitted with your proposal.
- 6g. Construction: N/A
- 6h. Other: Cost per item, per batch, per load, quantity

- 3. Budget Narrative: Provide a detailed narrative in support of the budget for the project, broken down by each project year. Discuss how the budget specifically supports the proposed activities. Explain how budget items are essential to achieving project objectives. Justify the project cost effectiveness and include justification for personnel and consultant salaries with a description of duties. In addition to the information above, the subcontractors and consultants must also submit a statement of work. The budget narrative should support the federal funds requested and the cost share.

**e. Indirect Costs**

If you have a current Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement you must:

- a. Submit a copy of the agreement with your application,
- b. Calculate indirect costs based on the total Federal Funds awarded and cannot exceed 15 percent,
- c. Requesting unrecovered indirect costs in the matching funds is not approved.

If you do **not** have a current Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement you may not claim indirect costs in this application.

- f. Matching:** Applications must include written verification of commitments of matching support (including both cash and in-kind contributions) from non-federal third parties.

Cash Match

For any third party cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement is required for each donation, signed by the authorized organizational representative of the donor organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the donor, (2) the name of the applicant organization, (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made, (4) the dollar amount of the cash donation, and (5) a statement that the donor will pay the cash contribution during the grant period.

### In-Kind Match

"In-kind" refers to non-cash contributions of goods or services made by third party individuals or organizations to support projects. Examples of "in-kind" include work done by unpaid volunteers and donations of supplies, facilities, or equipment. In-kind contributions must be necessary to accomplish program activities and are verifiable. For any third party in-kind contributions, a separate pledge agreement is required for each contribution, signed by the authorized organizational representatives of the donor organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the donor, (2) the name of the applicant's organization, (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made, (4) a good faith estimate of the current fair market value of the third party in-kind contribution, and (5) a statement that the donor will make the contribution during the grant period.

The sources and amounts of all matching support from outside the applicant institution must be summarized on a separate page and placed in the application immediately following the summary of matching support (matching support means a budget narrative broken down by year).

The value of applicant contributions to the project will be established in accordance with the applicable cost principles. Applicants should refer to OMB Circulars, Cost Principles that apply to their entity for additional guidance, and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

- g. **Declaration of Previous CIG Projects Involvement:** Identify any previously awarded CIG projects involvement related to this proposal and any of its principal investigators. Detail the purpose, outcomes to date, and how this new proposal relates to the previous award.
- h. **Certifications:** Standard Form (SF) 424B - Assurances, Non-construction Programs. All applications must include this document. The SF-424B may be found at: [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) - Forms Repository or by contacting the State office. Applicants, by signing and submitting an application, assure and certify that they are in compliance with the following from 7 CFR:
  - a. Part 3017, Government wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement)
  - b. Part 3018, New Restrictions on Lobbying
  - c. Part 3021, Government wide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)
- i. **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. CIG applicants must obtain a DUNS Number. Information on how to obtain a DUNS number can be found at: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or by calling 1-866-705-5711. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.
- j. **Central Contractor Registry (CCR) Registration:** The 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 is also 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, go to: <http://www.ccr.gov>. Allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration.

## **2. How to Submit an Application**

Applicants may submit applications to the e-mail address listed below. Alternatively, applications may be submitted in person or via express mail, overnight courier service, or U.S. Postal Service to the addresses listed below. Applications submitted by e-mail must contain all of the elements of a complete package and meet the requirements described above. All applications must be received by the closing date of **April 27, 2012**.

Note: NRCS is not responsible for any technical malfunctions related to e-mailed submissions. Applicants should send their e-mail in advance of the submission deadline to avoid problems.

E-mail address: Christine.Hall@nj.usda.gov

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

Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Conservation Innovation Grants Program  
220 Davidson Avenue 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Somerset NJ 08873

Note: Applicants must submit one signed original copy of each project application. This includes applications submitted via e-mail. Applications submitted by email must send copies of the original signatures with a postmark no later than April 27, 2012. Applications submitted by fax will not be considered.

## **3. Due Date**

Applications must be received at the NRCS-NJ State Office by 4:00 p.m. EST on **April 27, 2012**. The applicant assumes the risk of any delays in application delivery. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit completed applications via e-mail, overnight mail, or delivery service to ensure timely receipt.

## **4. Acknowledgement of Submission**

NRCS-NJ will acknowledge receipt of timely applications via e-mail. An applicant who does not receive such an e-mail acknowledgement within 30 days of their submission but believes he/she submitted a timely application must contact the NRCS-NJ program contact below within 30 days. Failure to do so will result in the application not being considered for the second phase of the application process.

CIG Program Contact:

Christine Hall  
NRCS-NJ CIG Program Manager  
220 Davidson Avenue 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Somerset NJ 08873

Phone: (732) 537-6057

Fax: (732) 537-6095

E-mail: Christine.Hall@nj.usda.gov

## **5. Withdrawal**

Applications may be withdrawn by written notice at any time before selections are made. Applications may be withdrawn by the applicant, or by an authorized representative.

## **6. 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:

- a. Costs above the amount of funds authorized for the project;
- b. Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the grant;
- c. Costs which lie outside the scope of the approved project and any amendments thereto;
- d. Entertainment costs, regardless of their apparent relationship to project objectives;
- e. Compensation for injuries to persons, or damage to property arising out of project activities;
- f. 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,
- g. 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.

## **7. Review**

Applications 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. Complete applications will be evaluated by a technical peer review panel based on the Criteria for Application Evaluation identified in the application instructions in section VI.B.

Applications with technically-based recommendations from the peer review groups will be forwarded to the State Technical Committee.

## **8. Patents and Inventions**

Allocation of rights to patents and inventions shall be in accordance with USDA regulation 7 CFR §3019.36 and 7 CFR §3019.2. 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.

## **9. Environmental Review Requirements**

The Council on Environmental Quality's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations at 40 CFR parts 1500-1508 and the NRCS regulation that implements NEPA at 7 CFR part 650 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 to help NRCS determine the appropriate documentation required to comply with NEPA and NRCS regulations. If the application is selected for funding, the NRCS-NJ Program Contact and NRCS-NJ Environmental Liaison will coordinate with the selected applicant concerning documentation for compliance with NEPA. The selected applicant will be required to prepare and pay for the preparation of the appropriate NEPA document (e.g., Environmental Assessment 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.

## **VI. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION**

### **A. Review and Selection Process**

There are two steps in evaluating full CIG proposals. Proposals will be reviewed by a Technical Peer Review Panel. The Technical Peer Review Panel consists of NRCS-NJ technical specialists, and technical specialists from other appropriately related Federal agencies, and non-Federal agencies. Applications will be reviewed based on the CIG Technical Evaluation Criteria listed in Part VI.B below.

The Technical Peer Review Panel will forward recommendations to the State Conservationist for final review and selection.

### **B. Criteria for Application Evaluation**

Peer review panels will use the following criteria to evaluate project proposals:

#### **Purpose, Approach, and Goals**

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

#### **Innovative Technology or Approach**

- Project is innovative (national, regionally, and local in nature).
- Project conforms to description of innovative projects or activities in proposal request announcement.

#### **Project Management**

- Timeline and milestones are clear and reasonable.
- Project staff has technical expertise needed.
- Budget is adequately explained and justified.
- Experience and capacity to partner with and gain the support of other organizations, institutions and agencies.

#### **Transferability**

- Potential for producers and landowners to use the innovative technologies or approaches.

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

**C. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates**

CIG selections are anticipated to be announced by **July 20, 2012**; all agreements are expected to be awarded by **September 1, 2012**. Funds are not awarded, and work may not start until an agreement is signed by both NRCS-NJ and the grantee.

Applicants should plan their projects based on a project start date of **September 1, 2012**.

**VII. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION**

**A. Award Notification**

Applicants who have been selected for funding will receive a letter of official notification from the NRCS-NJ State Conservationist. However, all selections are contingent upon successful completion of the environmental review process and financial review.

**B. Environmental Review Requirements**

Upon notification of selection, the applicant must contact the NRCS-NJ Environmental Liaison to determine the scope and level of NEPA documentation required for the project. The environmental documentation prepared to meet NEPA requirements must be prepared prior to award of grant funds.

Selected applicants may be required to prepare and pay for the preparation of the appropriate NEPA document(s) if an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement is needed. Grant funds cannot be awarded until the environmental review requirements demonstrating compliance with NEPA are met. A list of the NRCS Environmental Liaisons can be found at the following Web address: [Environmental Liaison](#).

**VIII. AGENCY CONTACTS**

CIG Program Contact:

Christine Hall  
 NRCS-NJ CIG Program Manager  
 220 Davidson Avenue 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 Somerset NJ 08873

Phone: (732) 537-6057

Fax: (732) 537-6095

E-mail: Christine.Hall@nj.usda.gov

CIG Administrative Contact:

Carol Parker  
NRCS-NJ State Administrative Officer  
220 Davidson Avenue 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Somerset NJ 08873

Phone: (732) 537-6081  
Fax: (732) 537-6096  
E-mail: Carol.Parker@nj.usda.gov

Additional information about CIG, including fact sheets and frequently asked questions, is available on the CIG web page at: <http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/index.html>

Signed this 19<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2012 in Somerset, NJ.



Donald J. Pettit  
State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service, New Jersey

Attachments

## IX. OTHER INFORMATION

**Important: Applications Missing Any of These Required Items Will Not Be Considered**

**CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS  
NEW JERSEY COMPETITION  
FISCAL YEAR 2012 PRE-PROPOSAL PACKAGE CHECK LIST**

- A. Pre-proposal Cover Sheet:** Submit Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance
- B. Project Description:** Submit a description including the information below (Three (3) pages maximum in length).
  1. Project title
  2. Primary area for consideration (refer to page 3)
  3. Project duration
  4. Project director name, and contact information (including e-mail)
  5. Names and affiliations of project collaborators
  6. Project purpose
  7. Project area/location
  8. Project summary
  9. Project deliverables/products
  10. Description of EQIP eligible producer involvement
- C. Budget Information:** Submit Standard Form 424A Budget Information Non-Construction Programs.
  1. Complete SF-424A
  2. One page narrative

**CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS  
NEW JERSEY COMPETITION  
FISCAL YEAR 2012 FULL APPLICATION PACKAGE CHECK LIST**

- A. Proposal Cover Sheet:** Submit Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance
- B. Project Description:** (12 pages maximum, single-spaced, single-sided, 12 point font)
  - 1. Project background
  - 2. Project objectives
  - 3. Project methods
  - 4. Location and size of project area (include a map if possible)
  - 5. Producer participation
  - 6. Project action plan and timeline
  - 7. Project management
  - 8. Project deliverables/products
  - 9. Benefits or results expected and transferability
  - 10. Project evaluation
- C. Assessment of Environmental and Social Impacts**
- D. Budget Information:** Submit a completed Standard Form 424A (SF-424A) Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs.
  - 1. Complete SF-424A
  - 2. Detailed budget description
  - 3. Budget narrative
- E. Indirect Cost:** If including indirect cost in your budget, submit a copy of your Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement
- F. Matching Information**
- G. Declaration of Previous CIG Projects Involvement.**
- H. Certifications:** Complete Standard Form 424B (SF-424B) Assurances-Non-Construction Programs.
- I. DUNS Number:** 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.
- J. Central Contractor Registry (CCR):** To register, visit [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov). Allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration.

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