Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance Grants
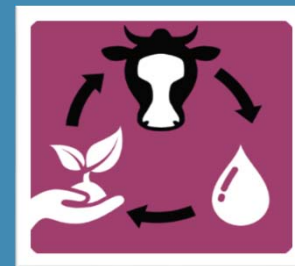
Application Workshop

March 1 & March 4, 2021

CDFA.OEFI_CSA_TA@cdfa.ca.gov

Agenda

Welcome

CDFA Review of Program Guidelines
- Background Information
- Program Requirements

Demonstration of Application Process
- Application Portal
- Workplan and Budget Template

Question and Answer Session

Purpose

- Assembly Bill 2377 (2018) established the technical assistance program

- Provide technical assistance to individual farmers and ranchers who are interested in applying for or have received incentive awards from CDFA's CSA Healthy Soils Program (HSP) and State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP) programs

Funding and Eligibility

Eligible Organizations: Resource Conservation Districts, Non-Profits, University of California

Proactive Solicitation

- HSP and SWEEP are identified in the January **proposed budget** for funding in calendar year 2021.
- HSP
  - $15 M proposed for "early action" funds
  - $15 M proposed for 2021-2022 budget
- SWEEP
  - $20 M proposed for "early action" funds
  - $20 M proposed for 2021-2022 budget
- No less than 5% of any allocated HSP and SWEEP funds will be made available for technical assistance to farmers and ranchers over three years.

Funding is Contingent

Budget negotiations are ongoing

CDFA will adjust climate smart agriculture technical assistance funding award depending on final state allocations to HSP and SWEEP in calendar year 2021.

Anticipated Timeline

TAP Grant Process		HSP and SWEEP Incentive Grant Process
February 24, 2021	CDFA releases TAP Request for Applications solicitation	TAP grant contract and execution of grant agreements must be complete with CDFA prior to assisting Farmers and Ranchers with their applications
March 22, 2021 by 5 PM	TAP Applications due	
April 2021	CDFA technical review and scoring of applications	
April 2021	Awards for TAPs announced by CDFA	
May through June 2021	Establishment of contracts and execution of grant agreements with TAP awardees	
May 2021	CDFA led HSP and SWEEP specific training for TAPs	
June and July 2021	TAP contracts finalized and awardees can provide support for CDFA CSA incentive programs (contingent on funding allocations)	CDFA announces funding allocations for CSA HSP and SWEEP and grant solicitation request from Farmers and Ranchers

Technical Assistance Maximum Award

- The total maximum grant award for one CSA HSP or SWEEP program is $60,000 over three years.

- The total maximum grant award will be $240,000 over three years to support two incentives solicitations for HSP and SWEEP appropriated funds during calendar year 2021.All time frames indicated on next slide are estimated and contingent upon funding.

- This technical assistance RFP does not include Alternate Manure Management Program (AMMP) technical assistance funding. A separate AMMP solicitation will be made available if funding is allocated to AMMP in 2021.

Technical Assistance for Potential Incentive Program Solicitations	Estimated Time Period of Application Technical Assistance*	Maximum Request for this Solicitation
HSP Incentive Solicitation 1 (contingent upon funding)	June through August 2021	$60,000
HSP Incentive Solicitation 2 (contingent upon funding)	December 2021 through February 2022	$60,000
SWEEP Incentive Solicitation 1 (contingent upon funding)	June through August 2021	$60,000
SWEEP Incentive Solicitation 2 (contingent upon funding)	December 2021 through February 2022	$60,000
Total Request for this Technical Assistance Solicitation		**$240,000**

Restrictions

- TAPs that receive grant awards may not charge fees to provide technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who wish to apply for HSP and/or SWEEP funding. Outreach materials prepared by the grant recipient must indicate that the assistance is free, and no fees or costs will be imposed on the farmer or rancher.

- Grant recipients may not require farmers and ranchers to include specific proprietary products or favored contractors and other service providers when assisting in project design.

- A TAP may not be the lead applicant for more than one technical assistance grant award per CSA program. Multiple organizations can partner on a single application. CDFA encourages statewide cooperation among regional TAPs.

Requirements

Must prioritize assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SDFRs) and farms and ranches that are 500 acres or less

- "Socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher" means a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. "Socially disadvantaged group" means a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. These groups include all of the following: (1) African Americans (2) Native American Indians (3) Alaskan Natives (4) Hispanics (5) Asian Americans (6) Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

AB 2377 requires that CDFA expend 25% of technical assistance funds for SDFR assistance

Prioritize assistance to AB 1550 Priority Populations

- Requirement of California Climate Investments

- More information and map of Priority Populations at:

https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/cc/capandtrade/auctionproceeds/communityinvestments.htm

Requirements

- TAPs must declare all conflict(s) of interest including sponsorship or funding by any corporation that may profit from CDFA's CSA incentives programs.

- Grant recipients must attend CDFA-hosted annual meetings. These meetings focus on providing feedback and continuous improvement of CDFA's CSA incentives programs. One in-person meeting is anticipated unless remote meetings are necessary.

- Grant recipients are required to conduct pre- and post-award activities during the grant agreement term as described below.

Technical Assistance Pre-Award Activities

Examples of Pre-Award Assistance – see page 6 of Request for Proposals

- Outreach and education about the CSA programs, project planning and design
- Assist in gathering and preparing HSP and/or SWEEP application materials, including GHG calculator tools, and other program-specific tools
- Provide internet and computer access to farmers and ranchers
- Conducting workshops is not required, but encouraged

Technical Assistance Post-Award Activities

Examples of post-award assistance – see page 7 of RFP

- Contacting awarded farmers and ranchers in the organization's region and indicating the organization's role as a post-award technical assistance resource

- Assisting farmers and ranchers with all activities related to on-farm implementation

- Communicating with vendors and/or facilitating discussion between farmer and vendors

- Assisting in Scope of Work revisions, Budget revisions, and/or Line-Item Shift Requests for on-farm projects

- Invoicing, matching funds coordination and reporting

Additional Technical Assistance Activities

To provide flexibility to awardees to utilize grant funding, these additional technical assistance activities (objectives) may be included in the workplan:

- Provide CSA-relevant technical training to agricultural operation staff

- Prepare compelling case studies noting outcomes and benefits of CSA grants to farmers and ranchers

- Consult with farmers and ranchers who did not receive funding in previous solicitations and advise them on ways to improve competitiveness of their applications

Examples of Allowable Costs

- Translation of materials
- Workshop venue rental fees
- Design or engineering costs associated with the preparation of a CSA application
- Travel associated with farm site visits
- Assisting CSA applicants in obtaining required application supporting documentation
- Assisting applicants with obtaining bids associated with CSA applications
- Training provided to CSA applicants regarding the practices or technologies they intend to implement as part of the CSA application
- Baseline soil sampling for HSP applications
- Pump testing services to support SWEEP application

Examples of Unallowable Costs

- Meals provided to farmers during workshops or other events
- The payment of compliance fees (e.g., permitting or environmental reports) on behalf of CSA applicants or awardees
- Hosting or attending field days that are not directly related to CSA application assistance
- Assisting farmers and ranchers with conservation planning (e.g., Carbon Farm Plans, Conservation Plans)
- Costs associated with site preparation in the implementation of a CSA project
- Costs typically covered by a CSA grant program, such as the HSP Demonstration Projects

How To Apply

- CDFA's Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance Grant Program
  - www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/technical/index.html

- Online Application Portal
  - Climate Smart Agriculture TA Application Log in
    - See Appendix A for a preview of the application questions
  - Application Attachments
    - Workplan and Budget Attachment (macro-enabled Microsoft Excel)
    - Resumes for technical assistance leads

- DEADLINE TO SUBMIT IS MARCH 22, 2021 AT 5 PM

Two-Stage Review Process

Administrative Review

The following will result in the automatic disqualification of a grant application:

- One or more unanswered questions necessary for the administrative or technical review
- Missing, blank, unreadable, or corrupt content
- Unusable or unreadable attachments;
- Requests for more than the maximum award amount
- Applications that do not comply with Eligibility or meet Program Requirements and Restrictions.

Technical Review

Projects will be scored based upon the scoring criteria (detail found on page 10)

- Statement of Qualifications – 30 pts
- Workplan – 40 pts
- Budget – 30 pts
- **Total – 100 Pts**

Project Selection

In addition to Application Score, the following will be taken into consideration during the final selection process:

- Geographic Distribution of Technical Assistance Providers
- Past performance (if applicable)

CDFA will prioritize funding the following:

- Proposals that will provide at least 25 percent of all technical assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SDFRs)
- Proposals that will provide technical assistance to farms and ranches that are 500 acres or less.

Award Process

- Award announcement expected in April 2021
- Applicants not selected for funding will receive feedback regarding their applications within 60 days after receiving notification
- Basic Award Information will be posted on the CSA TA webpage
- No work can be completed before a fully executed grant agreement is in place
  - Expected June 2021
  - Awarded organizations must participate in program-specific training expected in May of 2021

Payment Process

- Quarterly Reimbursement Invoicing
  - An invoice template will be provided
  - No more than $100,000 may be reimbursed annually
  - Supporting documents are required to substantiate expenses (e.g., logs of hours, travel, receipts for contractors, supplies)
- 10% will be withheld from reimbursement until submission of final report

Reporting Requirements

- Quarterly Progress Reports will be due at time of invoicing
- Identify tasks and activities accomplished in the reporting period
- Quantifiable metrics, at a minimum
  - Total number of individuals assisted
  - Information of farmer or rancher assisted including, but not limited to, application identification number (PIN) of submitted application.
  - Number of individuals assisted who belong to groups such as SDFRs, AB 1550 Priority Populations and/or farms and ranches 500 acres or less.
- For auditing purposes, recipients are required to maintain detailed technical assistance records on-site.
- May 31, 2024 is the anticipated end of the agreement.

Critical Project Review

CDFA may perform a Critical Project Review and audit during the project term to verify project progress as reported in Progress Reports submitted to CDFA, including number of farmers and ranchers assisted.

- If it is determined by CDFA from the Critical Project Review that at that time the grant project is not meeting and is unlikely to meet certain milestones, CDFA has the right to terminate the Grant Agreement pursuant to the Terms and Conditions of the Grant Agreement.

- If the grant is terminated and has incurred any costs during the term, the Grantee must return any previously reimbursed funds.

- Termination may result in forfeiture by the grantee of any funds retained pursuant to 10 percent retention policy.

- Critical Project Review may be completed through an auditing process

Questions and Responses

- Competitive process
- CDFA cannot provide individual assistance during the application timeframe
- Questions may be submitted to cdfa.oefi_csa_ta@cdfa.ca.gov by March 10, 2021 at 5 PM
- Responses will be posted on the CSA TA webpage on March 15
- Questions and Responses from today's workshop may also be shared through the online posting

Questions?

- CDFA's Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance Grant Program
  - www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/technical/index.html

- Online Application Portal
  - Climate Smart Agriculture TA Application Log in

- Submit Questions by March 10, 5 PM to cdfa.oefi_csa_ta@cdfa.ca.gov