Block Grant Pilot Program

POTENTIAL FRAMEWORK FOR HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM (HSP) AND STATE WATER EFFICIENCY AND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (SWEEP)
Listening Session Agenda

Welcome and Background

Introductions from CDFA

Presentation of Block Grant Concept

Discussion Questions and Additional Feedback
Organizations apply to CDFA to be BGR.
After they are awarded, they perform outreach and select on-farm projects. BGR will propose how they will select the on-farm projects.
Listening Session

Prepare Draft Request for Grant Applications

Public Comment Period

Review of Feedback

Plan for Receiving Feedback
Potential Benefits:

- Enable greater administrative efficiencies and overcome resource constraints
- Response to feedback from stakeholders on current program structure
- Address farmer equity with greater program flexibility and Technical Assistance opportunities
- Regional support networks for farmers and ranchers
- Capacity building through local partnerships
Funding Proposal

- Total funds available: ~$40 M HSP and ~$50 M SWEEP
- Separate solicitations for SWEEP & HSP
- Funding Cap per organization: $5 Million
  - Limit on administrative expenses
  - Minimum award of $2 M
- Funding Cap per on-farm grant:
  - $100,000 for HSP
  - $200,000 for SWEEP
- Grant Terms:
  - 4 Years for HSP
  - 3 Years for SWEEP
Managing partnerships
Disbursing the funding to farmers and ranchers
Selecting on-farm projects
Tracking project progress
Tracking of expenditures
Tracking of reporting metrics
Completing invoicing and reporting

Examples of Administrative Costs
Technical Assistance

- Cap of $100,000 per year for 3 years (per AB 2377)
- TA Providers are non-profits, RCDs, UCCE
- Fulfill the requirements of AB 2377
  - Prioritize farms and ranches of 500 acres or less
  - 25% of funding to support SDFRs
- TA providers can be recipients of the block grant funds or they could be contracted by the recipients of the block grant funds.
- Examples of TA activities: outreach, developing plans with producers, gathering documentation, coordinating with vendors, facilitating communication with BGR, providing training or support to the growers during implementation
Potential Eligibility

**Applicant Organization**

- California-based non-profits organizations
- RCDs,
- Irrigation Districts,
- GSAs,
- Air Pollution control districts,
- Universities and ag colleges, Land Trusts
- Tribes

- Partnerships - Community education specialists, agricultural cooperatives

**On-Farm Grant Beneficiaries**

- Farmers and ranchers including ag operations associated with Tribes, non-profits, urban farms, community gardens
Potential Requirements

- Technical Assistance Required (AB 2377 (2018))
- Controls for Conflicts of Interest
- No charges for services
- Every block grant awardee commit to at least 25% of support to SDFRs
- Prioritize and track projects that benefit AB 1550 Priority Populations, SDFRs
Evaluation Criteria

- Qualifications
- Partnership
- Merit and Feasibility of Workplan
- Statement of Need
- Geographic Consideration
- Equity and multilingual services
- Budget
On-Farm Projects

Block Grant Recipient Identifies Projects

- Perform outreach – required
- Propose a process to prevent conflict of interest
- Identify projects through a process that can be competitive or non-competitive
- Provide CDFA with Project Summary and Benefit Quantification

CDFA Confirm Requirements Met & Eligibility

- Review APN and fields
- Review if one grant per solicitation cycle
- Review eligible practices
- Review benefit quantification

Practices

- Adopt existing HSP practices and payments
- Custom SWEEP projects - OEFI to track water and GHG strategies
Reporting Requirements

Ongoing communication, as on-farm projects are enrolled

• On-farm summary for projects entering program, GHG calcs (&water savings), project design and letter of commitment from growers

Quarterly Progress Report

• TA metrics and expenditures
• Admin activities
• On-farm project close outs

Final Report

• Total Practice Metrics
• Total Equity Metrics
Payment Process

Advances and Reimbursements

Block Grant Recipients will:

- Receive up to 25% advance payments with justification
- Multiple advances may be requested
- Submit invoices at least quarterly, no more than monthly
Discussion Questions

Are block grants a concept that appeals to you? Would you apply to be a block grant recipient?

How do we make sure to address geographic distribution and make sure that funds make it to regions of California without existing organizations with capacity?

How would recipients propose to identify and select the farmers to work with? (competitive application or another type of process such first-come, first-served)

What conflicts of interests should we safeguard against or how can we prevent cronyism (which could be unintentional)?

What else should CDFA take into account when considering block grant frameworks?