

2023 Healthy Soils (HS) – Demonstration Program Frequently Asked Questions

General

1. Are recipients who were awarded previously through HSP funding eligible to apply for 2023 HSP funds?

Yes, grant recipients awarded previous HSP funding are eligible, if the new grant application does not affect the same fields and Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) as the previously funded project. Grant recipients must apply for a new project with different APNs, new fields on previously funded APNs, or new practice(s) on previously funded fields/APNs. Additionally, past performance, including timely completion of projects and submission of all required documentation and data during and after project completion, will be considered during the review process. See [2023 Healthy Soils Demonstration Program Request for Grant Applications \(RGA\)](#) page 27.

2. Who would constitute a cooperator and/or a collaborator for a project?

The primary applicant for HSP Demonstration Projects must be one of the following: not-for-profit entities, University Cooperative Extensions, Federal and University Experiment Stations, city and community colleges, Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs), California Native American Tribes. Any other organizations who would work in the project are considered cooperators and/or collaborators, and can include but are not limited to, growers and university collaborators.

3. Are cities / local government entities eligible for Healthy Soils Demonstration Program?

Eligible applicants include not-for-profit entities, University Cooperative Extensions, Federal and University Experiment Stations, city and community colleges, Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs), California Native American Tribes.

4. If a farmer is interested in collaboration in a HS Demonstration Program, who should they contact?

The farmer needs to reach out to any of the organizations eligible to be lead applicants for the HS Demonstration Program. These include the eligible entities listed above.

5. What is the difference between Type A and Type B projects?

Type A Demonstration Projects are for specified practices for which a CARB-approved GHG quantification methodology is not currently available and implementation standards are not established either. There are also additional requirements for Type A projects which include (1) statistically sound experimental design (randomization and replication) (2) Measuring GHG emissions and crop yield from each Treatment and Control plots/fields.

6. Why is the APN required for the grant?

Assessor's Parcel Numbers or APNs are the primary mechanism by which CDFA tracks the implementation of practices on a farm. Therefore, this information is necessary and could be made available publicly, consistent with [CARB Funding Guidelines](#).

7. How do California Native American Tribes farming on tribal land find their APN if they do not pay federal taxes?

[CDFA HSP RePlan Tool](#) automatically generates APNs for addresses entered in the tool. Applicants can also check with their local county assessor's office for this information.

8. Can a qualified entity apply for two demonstration projects on the same farm in order to demonstrate practices on two different crop types?

No. More than one farm may be included in a single application; however, the same farm cannot be listed on multiple applications.

9. Can one farm receive a HS Demonstration Program grant as well as a HS Incentives grant?

Applications may be eligible but must include different practices on distinct APNs. The same practices on same fields would not be funded through both grant programs. Applicants cannot use HS Demonstration Projects grant funds as cost share for HS Incentives projects, and vice-versa.

10. The RGA mentions "CDFA will award a maximum of two applications submitted by the same applicant, but each application should be for a unique project." Is there a limit on the number of applications an organization can submit?

There is no limit on how many applications an organization can submit. However, only a maximum of two applications can be awarded to the same organization.

11. If additional external funding is secured, can a non-eligible practice also be implemented as part of the project? For example, a no-till and 4R nitrogen project?

Yes, an applicant may include a non-HSP eligible practice, but the HSP funds only cover costs for implementation of HSP- eligible practice(s).

12. Are letters of support required to be submitted?

If the project includes cooperators and/or collaborators, a letter of support is required from each of cooperators and/or collaborators.

13. Will there be any feedback/questions with applicants during the administrative review or will any applications that do not pass administrative review be automatically declined for funding?

CDFFA is unable to provide feedback to applicants during the review period. Applications that do not pass administrative review will be automatically declined and applicant will be notified. Applicants may appeal disqualification based on the process outlined on [2023 Healthy Soils Demonstration Program RGA](#) pages 28-29.

14. Can you give an example of timing in which 3 soil samplings would be covered (initial test and 2 follow up samplings)?

Soil organic matter content test results are required (1) prior to practice implementation, (2) one year after the practice was implemented for the first time (3) two years after the practice was implemented for the first time, and (4) three years after the practice was implemented for the first time. Exact time for soil sampling depends on which practice an applicant has selected and when he/she starts to implement the practice. Only expense incurred within the grant term will be reimbursed.

GHG Reduction Estimation

1. For Type A Projects, how will GHG reduction estimation to be determined?

The estimation of Carbon Sequestration and GHG Estimation Report are not currently available in the COMET-Planner for practices classified under “Eligible Practices for Type A Projects”. Applications that implement these practices are not required to submit the CDFA HSP COMET-Planner Report. Applicants must provide as part of their application, a detailed plan and methodology to collect GHG data, and an estimated GHG calculations as applicable in their application. This information must be based on best-available peer-reviewed scientific publications.

Project Design and Implementation

1. What is the difference between a project site map and a project design schematic? Do I need to submit both?

A project site map is a report generated by using [CDFA HSP RePlan Tool](#) which allows applicants to locate and draw their project fields on a map. There may be information that cannot be included in the CDFA HSP RePlan Tool, including, but not limited to, identification of control fields, labeling of detailed treatments or data metrics to be collected. In such cases, an additional project design schematic may be necessary and must be included in the online application in addition to the required CDFA HSP RePlan Report attachment.

2. For replications of Treatment (T) and Control (C), is there a minimum acreage for each treatment/control? Is there a size requirement for fields T and C?

There is no requirement on the size of fields T and C. However, the fields T and C should be same in cropping and management histories and similar in soil conditions. Field size must be large enough to allow field operations and collection of scientifically robust data. CDFA recommends that T and C plots be of the same sizes.

3. Can we do more than one Treatment? For example, 3 replicates of T1, 3 replicates of T2 (for example, a different cover crop), and 3 replicates of Control?

Applicants are welcome to include more than one treatment in their project and must explain this clearly in their application. Applicants must ensure to take into consideration appropriate randomization and minimization of impacts from field variations. For each treatment, a true control must be included.

4. Are replicates required for a HS Demonstration project that has three individual treatments and a control or can a system of stacked practices be used in comparison to a control?

For all demonstration projects, treatments must include single practices compared to a control. For Type A projects, all treatments and controls must be replicated at least three times. Replicates are not required for Type B projects but encouraged. An application including stacked or combined practices are optional and may receive additional consideration during review.

Eligible Agricultural Management Practices

1. Is there a requirement to implement more than one allowable practice? Will implementing more practices be viewed/scored more favorably?

Projects must implement at least one eligible practice and can include as many eligible practices as possible in the project if implementation of those practices is reasonable and feasible. In general, if more practices are included, the GHG reductions achieved would be greater and there the project may be more competitive during review.

2. Can a demonstration project include an existing on-farm compost producer to help showcase on-farm produced compost?

The intent of the HS Demonstration Program is to share information and experiences from practice implementation with more farmers and ranchers, which may increase their adoption on-farm in the long-term. This benefit is best achieved by including farmers and ranchers who are currently not implementing the practice and CDFA strongly encourages including such farmers and ranchers in field days. Other farmers and ranchers who may already be producing and applying compost may additionally be included in outreach and education efforts.

Project Budget

1. Can Federal funds be used as match?

Yes, as long as the funds are to cover costs that will not be covered by the HSP funds (i.e., no double-dipping).

2. Can applicants include their time implementing the project as matching funds?

Yes. Cost sharing can be in the form of matching funds or an in-kind contribution. Matching funds refers to a dollar amount committed to a project from a source other than the HSP. An in-kind contribution is the estimated dollar value of any time, property, or supplies donated to a project.

3. Can an applicant request a 25% indirect cost rate for a subcontractor that has already requested an indirect cost?

Yes. sub-contractor's indirect cost rate for University of California (UC) and California State Universities (CSU) should be limited to their established indirect cost rate with CDFA and 25% for all other organizations.

4. Will Costs of meals/snacks/refreshments be allowed for Demonstration field days?

Costs of meals/snacks/refreshments may be allowed when reasonable and necessary for hosting an official demonstration field day event (excluding travel meal costs). A few basics which are often considered reasonable and appropriate to purchase meals/refreshments include meetings/demonstrations conducted in remote locations, lasted 4+ hours in length, and during extreme weather. Allowable costs should follow [California State Human Resources Policy \(CalHR\)](#) except for awards to the Regents of the University of California (UC) which should follow the established UC policy.

Outreach and Reporting

1. Can the outreach target of 80 unique California-based farmers and/or ranchers be shared between more than one demonstration site? E.g., a farm site field day might attract 50 attendees, while a field day on a remote rangeland site may attract fewer attendees.

As long as both farm and rangeland sites are included in the project, the grantee should be able to count farmer/rancher attendees from events on both sites as their outreach effort. However, if the grantee is co-hosting the field day with another demonstration project, the attendance for the field day should be split between the two projects when reporting to CDFA.

2. Who can be counted as outreach farmer/rancher attendees?

Outreach attendees may include California based farm/ranch owners, their employees including certified crop advisors (CCAs), pest control advisors (PCAs), other key farm advisors as justified, and climate smart agriculture technical assistance providers who are not HS Demonstration Program grant recipients.

3. What should the grantee do for quarterly progress check-in?

The grantee will check their project work plan table in the Scope of Work and report to CDFA if project tasks scheduled in the reporting period have been completed and notify CDFA any potential issues in project implementation. The grantee may submit outreach documents to CDFA as applicable.

4. Will the grantee be required to present at the annual program conference?

All grantees will be required to attend the annual program conference during the grant term and present their project outcomes and deliverables in the project years 2 and 3. Presentation at project year 1 and/or 4 is optional but encouraged. Prior to the conference, CDFA will provide a template for grantees to submit the summary of their presented project outcomes and deliverables to be published in the conference proceedings.

Application Questions

1. Is it necessary for applicants to complete all application documents at the same time when applying?

No, applicants can save what they have entered and come back later to continue as long as they ensure saving their work by clicking "Save Draft" at the top right of the application website. Before clicking "submit", applicants will be able to continue working on the application periodically prior to the solicitation close time.

2. Will applicants receive a confirmation once their application has been submitted?

Yes, applicants will be notified of the receipt of their application through an automated system generated email.

3. Can applicants view, edit, or delete documents once they have been submitted?

No, once your application is submitted, you will **no longer** be able to make any changes. Make sure to do a final proofread before you click "Submit" button.

4. Are there any requirements on browsers or operation systems for the application submission website (AmpliFund)?

To ensure applications and attachments are submitted successfully, CDFA strongly encourages all applicants to comply with the computer system recommendations provided by Amplifund. CDFA cannot guarantee that the Amplifund system will be compatible with other browsers or operating systems. Amplifund recommends that applicants should:

- Use Chrome, Firefox, Edge or Safari;
- Avoid using an iPad, iPhone or similar mobile device;
- Save work often, as the system will time out after a period of time and any unsaved work will be lost.