

2024 HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM INCENTIVE GRANTS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR GRANT RECIPIENTS

Detailed below are commonly asked questions and answers grantees might encounter while working on their grant. These topics are elaborated below, but key items to keep in mind are:

- Start work after your grant term start date.
- Get in touch with your CDFA HSP grant manager – ask questions early and often!
- You can request 1 advance payment at the beginning of the grant.
- Make sure practices are implemented in line with the grant agreement.
- Any changes must be approved by CDFA prior to being implemented or there is a risk of not being reimbursed.
- HSP reimburses for practices successfully completed **and** verified by CDFA staff.
- Reimbursements after verification can take 45-90 days. Payments are in the form of physical checks mailed to the address grantees provided during the grant execution process.

1. **Q. Who at CDFA should I contact if I need help?**

A. You should receive an introduction email from a CDFA HSP team member who will be your project manager. Please contact your project manager for any questions you have. In case your project manager is out of office, and you need assistance right away, send an email to cdfa.HSP_Tech@cdfa.ca.gov, and one of the HSP team members will reach out to you promptly.

2. **Q. When can I start to implement my project?**

A. Please check the start date in the Grantee Introduction Email you received after your grant agreement was executed. To confirm this start date, please check the first page of your executed agreement – bottom right has the date when CDFA signed your grant agreement and #2 on the top has grant term start date - the later date between the two will be your official start date. If you are unsure, please ask HSP staff to confirm the date. Any work that occurs before the start date is **NOT** reimbursable.

Please make sure to follow the implementation timeline in the work plan table of your grant agreement. You may also read the [Grant Award Procedures Manual \(2024 HSP Incentives Program\)](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthyssoils/docs/2024_HSP_Incentives_Grant_Awards_Procedures_Manual.pdf) for further guidance. It is available at https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthyssoils/docs/2024_HSP_Incentives_Grant_Awards_Procedures_Manual.pdf.

3. **Q. How can I receive 25% advance payment if I have an issue of low cash flow?**

A. To request an advance payment, please complete the [Advance Payment Request form](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/forms/docs/Form2.1.1.AdvancePaymentRequest.pdf) by using this link <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/forms/docs/Form2.1.1.AdvancePaymentRequest.pdf>. Adobe will walk you through the form and it will automatically be sent to CDFA once completed. Some notes on advanced payment:

- i. Advance payment request must not exceed 25% of the total grant award.
- ii. It may take up to 45-90 days from the date when CDFA approves the advance payment request for you to receive an advance payment.
- iii. Advance payment would be offset according to HSP's payment rates and would not cover any additional cost incurred to implement a practice(s).
- iv. Advance payment can be requested only once to begin practice implementation.

4. **Q. If I am ready to start project implementation, what should I do first?**

A. After you have confirmed your grant term has started, the first step is to take soil sample(s) from the fields/APNs prior to implementing any practices and send samples to a soil analytic laboratory to test soil organic matter content.

- i. Number of soil samples taken should match the amount in the work plan of your grant agreement.
- ii. If you need help regarding how to take soil samples or where to send them for analysis, please read CDFA's Soil Sampling Protocol for Soil Organic Matter Content at this link:

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https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthysoils/docs/HSP_SoilSampling.pdf.

- iii. **Make sure to label soil sample bag(s) clearly using the same field name/APN number as in your RePlan report.** If more than one composite soil sample(s) are taken from the same field, add the location for each sample in the label. The grantee does not need to take or submit pictures of the soil sampling process.
- iv. Keep a record on where your first soil sample(s) are taken and take samples from the approximately same locations in future years.
- v. Find a CDFA recommended soil test laboratory near you at https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthysoils/docs/CDFA_RecommendedSoilsLabs.pdf and contact them prior to sending your soil samples to the laboratory. If you prefer having tests done in another laboratory not in the list of CDFA recommended soil test laboratory, make sure that the laboratory uses standard methodology for soil organic matter (or soil organic carbon) analysis.
- vi. It is recommended that you send your soil samples to the same laboratory during the grant term. This helps reduce errors in the sample analysis process and your soil test results from year to year are comparable.
- vii. If you need help, please reach out to any of the HSP Technical Assistance Providers (see 8 below).

5. Q. What do I need to know to ensure my project implementation meets the program requirements?

A. Please check your grant agreement and ensure to follow the steps listed below.

- i. Review in your grant agreement the project implementation plan and timeline on page one of the Scope of Work and the “Project Implementation Work Plan” within the RePlan report. These outline the practices to be implemented and when to implement them. If you foresee any delays in implementation, notify your CDFA HSP project manager as soon as possible.
- ii. Review the “project implementation work plan table”, and make sure practices are implemented according to what is listed under “practice implementation” and “Payment Scenario”.
- iii. Check the RePlan report for individual practices and carefully read the implementation and verification requirements for each practice in the report. This is also where you will find comprehensive list of items to submit to CDFA for verification.
- iv. Check with your project manager if you have questions or want to make any changes to the agreement. All changes must be approved by CDFA prior to implementation.
- v. If the practices are not implemented following the guidance in the grant agreement, you may risk not being reimbursed, a reduction in reimbursement amount, and/or termination of the grant.

6. Q. What documents are needed for verification of practice implementation?

A. The documents will vary depending on practices you have in the project. Please check the RePlan report in your grant agreement - it lists documents needed for verification. In general, you need to provide to your project manager the following documents for verification:

- i. A laboratory testing report on soil organic matter for soil samples taken from the field/APN(s) prior to practice implementation.
- ii. A copy of receipts for materials purchased (for example, a receipt of compost purchased for compost application, a receipt of cover crop seeds and names of species for cover crop, a receipt of seedlings purchased with number/species name for hedgerow planting).
- iii. For compost application
 - a) An analytical report on compost carbon to nitrogen (C:N) ratio from the composting company.
 - b) A certificate from the composting facility for purchased compost if it is not listed as a CalRecycle certified composting facility on this webpage:

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<https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/Site/Search>.

- c) A composting process log for on-farm produced compost including feedstock, method, dates and temperatures recorded. Please use the [On-Farm Produced Composting Log Template](#).

Specific details for on-farm composting requirements can be found on pg. 16-17 of the 2024 HSP Request for Grant Applications:

https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthyssoils/docs/2024/2024_hsp_incentives_rga2.pdf.

- iv. A farming log recording dates and field activities related to practice implementation. Please check the links below for specific farming log templates.
- v. Photos with geotagging information showing evidence of practice implementation. If you have difficulties taking these photos, ask your CDFA HSP project manager for guidance.

7. Q. What is the process for me to get paid?

A. The process is listed below in chronological order.

- i. Finish implementing the practice(s) in your project for the project year.
- ii. Email your CDFA HSP project manager the implementation documents (see examples in the above question) for verification.
- iii. Your project manager will review the documents and notify you if the practice implementation was verified or if additional documents or clarifications are needed for the verification.
- iv. Within a few weeks after verification is completed, the grant analyst will email you the invoice for the reimbursement for you to sign.
- v. You sign and the invoice and send the signed invoice back to the grant analyst.
- vi. The grant analyst will review and process the invoice. It may take 45-90 days for you to receive the payment from the date when the grant analyst receives the signed invoice.

8. Q. Who do I ask for help for project implementation?

A. You can always contact your CDFA HSP project manager for any questions you have.

If you have questions other than program requirements regarding project implementation, please reach out to CDFA-Funded Technical Assistance Providers and/or University of California Cooperative Extension Climate Smart Agriculture Community Education Specialists in your area, they can help you for free.

Click the links below to find their names and contact information at:

https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/technical/docs/2023_hsp_taps.pdf

<https://ciwr.ucanr.edu/Programs/ClimateSmartAg/TechnicalAssistanceProviders/>.

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Links for important information:

Soil Sampling Protocol for Soil Organic Matter Analysis

https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthysoils/docs/HSP_SoilSampling.pdf

CDFA Recommended Soil Test Laboratories

https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthysoils/docs/CDFA_RecommendedSoilsLabs.pdf

Instructions on How to Take Geotagged Photos

<https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthysoils/docs/InstructionsOnHowToTakeGeotaggedPhotos.pdf>

CalRecycle Certified Composting Facilities by County

<https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/Site/Search>

Links for Practice Implementation Log Templates

On-Farm Composting Log Template

https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthysoils/docs/2024/2024_hsp_incentives_on-farm_composting_log_template.docx

Nutrient Management Implementation Log Template

https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthysoils/docs/2024/nutrient_management_farm_operation_log.docx

Prescribed Grazing Implementation Log Template

https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthysoils/docs/2024/2024_hsp_incentives_prescribed_grazing_log.docx

Reduced Till /No-Till Implementation Log Template

https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthysoils/docs/2024/reduced_till_no-till_farming_log.docx

California Department of Food and Agriculture
Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation
Healthy Soils Program main email: cdfa.HSP_Tech@cdfa.ca.gov