CDFA HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM

CDFA Healthy Soils Program Draft Solicitation Workshop

September 17, 2021

Outline

- Proposed Updates to the HSP for Future Rounds:
  - Updates to Program Requirements:
    - Updates applicable to both HSP Incentives Program and HSP Demonstration Projects
    - Updates specific to the HSP Incentives Program
    - Updates specific to the HSP Demonstration Projects
  - Updates to the online application submission tools – applicable to both HSP Incentives Program and HSP Demonstration Projects.

Proposed Updates to the HSP

- **Eligibility and Exclusions:**
  - Practices must be implemented on the same total acreage throughout the term of the grant agreement.
  - Individuals/entities receiving grant funds must be located in CA.

- **Program Requirements**:
  - Projects proposing to implement Cover Crops may not claim post-termination cover crop residue as mulching practice with natural materials.
  - Crop trees may not be planted exclusively under permanent woody cover practices.
  - Non-Overlapping Practices:
    - Reduced-till or no-till cannot overlap with permanent herbaceous and woody cover practices (Conservation Cover, Contour Buffer Strips, Field Border, Filter Strip, Forage and Biomass Planting, Grassed Waterway, Herbaceous Wind Barrier, Riparian Herbaceous Cover, Vegetative Barrier, Alley Cropping, Hedgerow Planting, Multi-story Cropping, Riparian Forest Buffer, Tree/Shrub Establishment, Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment).
    - Range Planting cannot overlap with mulching.

Proposed Updates to the HSP

- **Project Verification**:
  - Clarified that project verification may be conducted remotely through phone, video conferencing, emails.
  - Project Verification Requirements have been updated to reflect submission of 3-5 geotagged photographs as part of documentation for project verification.
  - For practices that involve planting of milkweed species to establish monarch butterfly habitat, clarification added to specify plant species and minimum percentage in plant mixes.
  - For mulching practice, clarified that materials used must be produced off-site.

Proposed Updates to the HSP Incentives Program

- **Payment Rates**:
  - Updated to be consistent with 2021 California NRCS EQIP payment schedule.

- **CDFA HSP COMET-Planner Tool**:
  - Project Budget calculation in CDFA HSP COMET-Planner Tool:
    - Applicants able to enter tons of compost to allow an accurate calculation of project budget
    - Applicants get error message if project total exceeds the maximum allowable grant amount ($100,000)

Proposed Updates to the HSP Demonstration Projects

- **Eligibility:**
  - Clarified that AmeriCorps, California Conservation Corps or a certified local community conservation corps are eligible to apply under non-profit entities
  - Practices must be implemented on the same total acreage throughout the term of the grant agreement.

- **Project Types:**
  - Type A: May only include "Practices for Demonstration and Data Collection" that are *not* currently included under the HSP Incentives Program and CDFA HSP COMET-Planner Tool.
  - Type B: May only include practices that are currently included under the HSP Incentives Program and CDFA HSP COMET-Planner Tool.

Proposed Updates to the HSP Demonstration Projects

- **Outreach Requirements:**
  - Clarify that field days may be conducted via virtual meeting or webinar platforms in situations where in-person field days are not possible, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - Clarified that minimum number of farmers and ranchers for outreach must be California based.
  - Clarified that farmer/rancher conferences or meetings, if used to meet outreach requirements, must be California based.
- **Templates**
  - Workplan and Budget were separate templates; now combined into single streamlined Excel-based template file.

Proposed Updates to the HSP Demonstration Projects

- **Review and Evaluation Process**
  - CDFA to assess applicants' past grant performance in determining if a new project will receive funding.
  - Projects receive a score out of 100 after technical review.
  - Past performance points are deducted out of the technical review score to receive a final score.
  - Detailed criteria: Pages 31- 32 of HSP Demonstration Projects Draft RGA.
  - Points deducted for various performance lapses, including but not limited to not implementing project as proposed, not meeting outreach or reporting requirements, lack of communication regarding project changes or lack of overall progress in project.
  - If a project receives 30 or more negative points, it would not be considered for funding.

Proposed Updates to the HSP Online Application Tools

- **CDFA HSP RePlan Tool:**
  - Update of map layers specific to AB 1550 Priority Populations
  - Update of list of non-overlapping practices and spatial enforcement (i.e., applicant will get error message if selects non-overlapping practices on same field)
  - Automated calculation of acres of pollinator-friendly species planted for applicable practices.
  - Automated calculation of co-benefits from applicable practices consistent with the CARB Co-Benefits Quantification Methodology and Calculator Tool
  - Update of applicable acreage for practices implemented in orchard and vineyard rows in consultation with subject matter experts from UCANR and CalPoly
    - Cover crop, conservation cover, reduced-till and no-till
    - 70% for orchards and 60% for vineyards

Proposed Updates to the HSP Online Application Tools

- **CDFA HSP RePlan Tool:**
  - Automated determination of a project providing benefits to AB 1550 Priority Populations, eliminating up to 3 questions from the HSP application
    - Determination requires three steps:
      1. Project must be located within the boundaries of a disadvantaged community census tract, low-income community census tract, ½ mile of a disadvantaged community and within a low-income community census tract: CalEnviroScreen 3.0 map layers integrated into the CDFA HSP RePlan Tool
      2. Project must address a need (alternative approach): List of Common Needs identified by CARB Funding Guidelines include reduction in exposure to criteria air pollutants.
      3. Project must provide a benefit: CARB Co-Benefits Calculator, integrated in CDFA HSP RePlan tool, can calculate net reduction in criteria air pollutants achieved by a project.

Proposed Updates to the HSP Online Application Tools

- **CDFA HSP RePlan Tool:**
  - Practice requirements will be displayed on the project's RePlan output and included in the grant agreement – easier reference for the grant recipient.
  - Results generated from CDFA HSP RePlan Tool will be automatically entered into the HSP electronic application hosted on the Wizehive application platform
- **CDFA HSP COMET-Planner Tool**:
  - Update of data tables and software coding that would speed up the tool

Proposed Updates to the HSP Online Application Tools

- **CDFA HSP Electronic Application Platform (Wizehive)**:
  - Results generated from CDFA HSP RePlan Tool will be automatically entered into the HSP electronic application hosted on the Wizehive application platform
    - Eliminates manual entry and upload of PDF report
  - CDFA and future grant recipients able to manage their grants through the electronic system, providing streamlined functions and communication with CDFA

How to Submit Comments

Comments due by: 5:00 p.m. PT on September 23, 2021

Comments must be sent via email to CDFA.HSP_tech@cdfa.ca.gov

Thank you!

Questions?

Contact us:
CDFA.HSP_Tech@cdfa.ca.gov