



HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM

The Healthy Soils Program (HSP) is administered by the Office of Environmental Farming & Innovation, a division of the California Department of Food and Agriculture

What is the Healthy Soils Program?

The Healthy Soils Program (HSP) promotes the development of soil health on California's farmlands and ranchlands through conservation management practices using three grant types:

- The **HSP Demonstration Grants** fund on-farm demonstration projects that promote and display conservation management practices, collect data, and assess the potential of innovative practices in California.
- The **HSP Incentive Grants** provide financial incentives directly to farmers and ranchers.
- The **HSP Block Grant Pilot** facilitates financial assistance to farmers and ranchers through regional block grant administrators while building these organizations' technical assistance capacity.

Farmers and ranchers can apply for grant funds through the **HSP Incentive Grants** and the **HSP Block Grant Pilot** administrators to implement eligible practices.

What are the program benefits?

The program funds on-farm projects that achieve net GHGs reductions to combat climate change, improve soil health, and provide other co-benefits.

- Soil health provides the listed benefits and ultimately improves the resilience of agricultural lands, laying the foundation of sustainable productive agriculture.
 - Reduce soil erosion
 - Maximize water infiltration
 - Increase soil water-holding capacity
 - Increase belowground biodiversity
 - Improve nutrient cycling
 - Reduce money on inputs
- Herbaceous/woody cover plantings improve biodiversity, air quality and other co-benefits.

What are the eligible practices?

The eligible practices vary depending on agricultural system. There are 23 for croplands, 11 for orchards/vineyards, and 8 for grazing lands. The most popular practices are Compost Application, Cover Crop and Hedgerow Planting. For a list of eligible practices by agricultural system, please visit the program website by scanning the QR code.

What funding is available ?

In the 2023-24 funding round, the available funding for on-farm projects was about \$11 million through HSP Incentive Grants. About \$50 million has been made available through the HSP Block Grant Pilot.

Where to find HSP funding?

CDFA encourages stakeholders to subscribe at <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CADFA/subscriber/new> to receive email notifications for program updates including future funding opportunities.

Interested applicants should check the HSP Block Grant website for the list of the HSP Block Grant Recipients and their service counties to apply for on-farm projects.

Where to find technical assistance?

Technical assistance is available to farmers and ranchers free of charge to help with grant application, language services, and project implementation guidance. Check out a list of technical assistance providers on the HSP Incentive Grants website.

- Technical Assistance Providers funded through the CDFA Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance Program
- Community Education Specialists through CDFA and UCANR partnership

Visit www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthysoils or Email cdfa.HSP_Tech@cdfa.ca.gov for more information.



HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM TESTIMONIALS

Recipient Testimony 1

"We received HSP Incentive grant funding in 2019 for planting cover crops in our walnut orchards. Through the 3-year implementation, we observed increased water infiltration speed and volume both with rainfall and sprinkler irrigation; easier/earlier/cleaner access with tractors and workers following rain/irrigation events; much less soil cracking and soil movement when ground is dry; reduced pesticide sprays, and reduced weed pressure exponentially. We slowly increased the cover-cropped acreage each year, until we seeded every single block last fall. We will continue to grow cover crops without funding." - Drew Cheney, the operation manager at Machado Family Farms.



Recipient Testimony 2

"I planted hedgerow with the HSP grant funding. Now the plants (*Achillea millefolium*, *Arctostaphylos* spp, *Salvia*, etc.) are mature and provide multiple benefits. The beautiful blossoms attract native pollinators. We see more and a greater variety of birds and wildlife. Because of various perennial native plants, I believe that the soil microbiome has been diversifying." - Amy Lofting, 2017 HSP Incentives Grant Recipient.



Recipient Testimony 3

"We feel that applying the compost to the orchard had significant benefits. We see the trees in much better shape and greening in relation to the previous year. We also had much better weed control on the berm area around the trees." - Juan Medrano, 2021-22 HSP Incentive Grant Recipient.



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Healthy Soils Program
and the Office of
Environmental Farming
& Innovation