2019 CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS

2019 Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance Grants is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide program that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment — particularly in disadvantaged communities.

Request for Proposals

Release Date: July 30, 2019
Applications due: August 30 by 5:00 p.m. PT

Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation
1220 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
CDFA.OEFI_CSA_TA@cdfa.ca.gov

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BACKGROUND

AB 2377 (Irwin, 2018) requires the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to establish a technical assistance grant program to provide funds to technical assistance providers to assist the applicants of three Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) programs: The Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP), the Healthy Soils Program (HSP) and the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP).

AMMP provides provide financial incentives to dairy and livestock operators to implement non-digester manure management practices that reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

HSP Incentives Program provides financial incentives to California growers and ranchers to implement conservation management practices that sequester carbon, reduce atmospheric GHGs, and improve soil health.

SWEEP provides financial incentives for California agricultural operations to invest in irrigation systems that reduce GHG emissions and save water.

FUNDING & DURATION

Assembly Bill 74 (The Budget Act of 2019) appropriated funding from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) to CDFA for Climate Smart Agriculture programs, including technical assistance. The CSA Technical Assistance Grant is designed to provide technical assistance to individual farmers and ranchers who are interested in applying for or have received funds from three of CDFA's CSA programs: AMMP, HSP, and/or SWEEP.

- AMMP, along with Dairy Digester funding, received $34 million in the 2019-20 budget. No less than 5% of the AMMP allocated funds will be used for the technical assistance program to provide technical assistance to dairy and livestock operations for three years.

- The HSP received $28 million in the 2019-20 budget. No less than 5% of these funds will be used for the technical assistance program for farmers and ranchers for three years.

- SWEEP did not receive funding in the 2019-20 budget. Therefore, this technical assistance RFP will not include SWEEP technical assistance funding and the provided funding will be limited to technical assistance funding for AMMP and HSP only.

Grant funds may not be expended prior to execution of the grant agreements for awarded projects, or after the completion of the grant agreement term. At least 25% of the grant

funds must be used to provide outreach and technical assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers[1].

Funding Distribution for CSA Program(s)

Applicants may provide technical assistance for one or two CDFA CSA program(s), i.e. AMMP and/or HSP:

- The total maximum grant award for one CSA program is $60,000 over three years.
- The total maximum grant award for two CSA programs is $120,000 over three years.

CDFA reserves the right to offer an award different than the amount requested.

ELIGIBILITY

The following entities are eligible to apply for the 2019 CSA Technical Assistance Grants: Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs), University of California Cooperative Extension, and non-profit organizations. Entities applying for CSA Technical Assistance Grants, hereafter referred to as Technical Assistance Providers or TAPs, must have demonstrated technical expertise in the implementation of agricultural practices and technologies supported through AMMP and HSP.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

TAPs that receive grants, (i.e., grant recipients) may not charge fees to provide technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who wish to apply for AMMP and HSP funding. Outreach materials prepared by the grant recipient must indicate that the assistance is free, and no additional fees or costs will be imposed on the farmer or rancher.

Grant recipients may not require farmers and ranchers to include specific proprietary products or favored contractors and other service providers when assisting in project design.

TAPs must declare all conflict(s) of interest including sponsorship or funding by any corporation that may profit from CDFA's CSA incentives programs.

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[1] "Socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher" means a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. "Socially disadvantaged group" means a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. These groups include all of the following: (1) African Americans (2) Native American Indians (3) Alaskan Natives (4) Hispanics (5) Asian Americans (6) Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

A TAP may not be the lead applicant for more than one technical assistance grant award per CSA program. Multiple organizations can partner on a single application. CDFA encourages statewide cooperation among regional TAPs.

Grant recipients must prioritize assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SDFRs), and farms and ranches that are 500 acres or less. Additionally, grant recipients should also prioritize assistance to Severely Disadvantaged Communities[2] (SDACs) or AB 1550 Priority Populations[3].

Senate Bill (SB) 535 (DeLeón, Chapter 830, Statutes of 2012) established statutory requirements that a minimum of 25 percent of California Climate Investments is allocated to projects that provide benefits to disadvantaged communities, and of that 25 percent, a minimum of 10 percentage points is allocated to projects that are also located within disadvantaged communities. Assembly Bill (AB) 1550 (Gomez, Chapter 369, Statutes of 2016), amended these requirements by increasing the percent of funds for projects located in disadvantaged communities from 10 to 25 percent and added a focus on investments in low-income communities and households. Collectively, these communities are referred to as 'priority populations'. AB 1550 investment minimums apply to the overall appropriations of monies from the GGRF, not the individual agency programs. However, all California Climate Investments programs including Climate Smart Technical

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[2] Per SB-5 (Prop 68), "Severely disadvantaged community" means a community with a median household income less than 60 percent of the statewide average and can be identified through the Community FactFinder tool: https://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities

[3] AB 1550 Priority Populations as applicable to California Climate Investments include Disadvantaged Communities identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) as the top 25% most impacted census tracts in CalEnviroScreen 3.0 , and Low-income Communities and Households, defined as the census tracts and households, respectively, that are either at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income, or at or below the threshold designated as low-income by the California Department of Housing and Community Development's (HCD) 2016 State Income Limits. For more information and mapping tool, visit https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/capandtrade/auctionproceeds/communityinvestments.htm.

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Assistance are encouraged to maximize benefits to disadvantaged communities, low-income communities and low-income households.

Priority populations can be identified using the mapping tools provided by CARB at https://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/capandtrade/auctionproceeds/communityinvestments.htm.

Grant recipients must attend a CDFA hosted annual meeting for providing feedback and continuous improvement of CDFA's CSA incentives programs.

Grant recipients are required to conduct pre- and post-award activities during the grant agreement term as described below.

Pre-award activities refer to tasks or activities conducted prior to receipt of a 2019 AMMP or HSP grant by a farmer or rancher, and include technical assistance provided to farmers and ranchers for application preparation and submission. These activities may further include but are not limited to outreach and education about the CSA programs, project planning and design.

- Grant recipients must assist farmers and ranchers in gathering and preparing AMMP and/or HSP application materials, including use of GHG Quantification Methodologies (QMs) and calculator tools, and other program-specific tools as applicable.

- Grant recipients will be required to provide internet and computer access to farmers and ranchers for preparation of their AMMP and/or HSP applications. Assistance must be made available to farmers and ranchers throughout the year since multiple CDFA CSA solicitations may be made during the term of the CSA Technical Assistance grant.

- Conducting workshops is not required but encouraged. If choosing to conduct workshops, details such as date, time, location, languages in which assistance will be provided, and, name and contact information of the workshop lead person must be provided to CDFA two weeks before the workshop. This information will be posted on CDFA's program specific websites and will be publicly available as a resource for those seeking technical assistance. If multiple CSA programs are part of the same workshop, CDFA may request a breakdown of the activities and personnel costs for each program.

Post-award activities refer to tasks or activities conducted after a farmer or rancher has been awarded a 2019 AMMP or HSP grant and include but are not limited to ongoing assistance provided to farmers and ranchers with project implementation, project coordination, information gathering and continued education of CSA-relevant topics.

Providing ongoing outreach and technical assistance to AMMP and/or grant recipients must include, at a minimum:

- Contacting awarded farmers and ranchers in the organizations' region and indicating the organizations' role as a post-award technical assistance resource.

- Assisting farmers and ranchers with all activities related to on-farm implementation of project activities including but not limited to working with service providers for installation manure management equipment, and implementation of healthy soils practices.

- Assisting in potential Scope of Work or Budget revisions for on-farm project(s).

- Offering and providing assistance to farmers and ranchers for invoicing, matching funds coordination and reporting to CDFA. Such assistance may include a variety of activities including but not limited to annual report submission for AMMP recipients, and, gathering receipts and records of plant species selected, compost analysis reports and soil testing for HSP recipients.

- Providing on-demand annual follow-up with farmers and ranchers for their technical assistance needs. For example, assisting in evaluation of alternative choices and availability of allowable plant species for HSP projects.

In addition to activities listed above, CDFA strongly encourages TAPs to consider activities such as providing CSA-relevant technical training to agricultural operation staff, preparing compelling case studies noting outcomes and benefits of CSA grants to farmers and ranchers, consulting with farmers and ranchers who did not receive funding in previous solicitations and advising them to improve competitiveness of their applications, and, communicating with vendors and/or facilitating discussion between farmer/rancher and vendor, if requested.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

Activity	Tentative Dates*
Application period begins	July 30, 2019
Applications due	August 30, 2019
Review of applications received	September 2019
Announcement of awards	November 2019

Execution of grant agreements for awarded projects	December 2019 – January 2020
CDFA led AMMP and HSP specific training for TAPs	January 2020

*Announcement of application periods for AMMP and HSP may vary and overlap through 2019-20. Exact dates are subject to change.

HOW TO APPLY

The 2019 CSA Technical Assistance Program application must be submitted online. The application materials and a link to application portal can be found at https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/technical/index.html.

CDFA requires information for all entities involved in the CSA Technical Assistance grant agreement, including those that might assist during the solicitation period and/or workshops. The CSA Technical Assistance grant agreement will be between CDFA and the lead TAP organization. The lead organization must ensure that all required and proposed tasks are fully completed.

Note: The maximum page limit for the Workplan, Budget and Statement of Qualifications and resumes is 30 pages, not excluding the Budget Worksheet (excel file).

Workplan
Use the Workplan template (MS Word file) available at
https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/technical/docs/2019_CSA_TA_Workplan_Template.docx

Budget
University of California (UC) and California State Universities (CSU) may claim the established indirect cost rate with CDFA. All other eligible organizations for Climate Smart Agriculture technical assistance may claim an indirect cost rate of 20 percent of total direct costs. University of California and California State Universities may use the Budget template (MS Excel file) designated for UC and CSU available at
https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/technical/docs/CSA_TAG-BudgetWorksheet-UC_CSU.xlsx

All other organizations use the Budget template (MS Excel file) available at
https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/technical/docs/CSA_TAG-BudgetWorksheet.xlsx

The budget template is divided into seven tabs, the first six represent specific categories of costs, and the seventh tab represents the cost summary of the project. Complete each

of the first six tabs as applicable. Information entered in each tab will automatically populate the seventh tab.

Each budget item entered must be accompanied by the CSA program name, Project Objective and Activity number consistent with the Work Plan.

Clearly describe each participating organizations' anticipated expenses, as applicable. All costs must be directly related to and necessary for completion of project. Awarded funds will be paid to the lead organization. The lead organization is responsible for disbursement of funds to other participating organizations and contractors as applicable.

Statement of Qualifications
Use the Statement of Qualifications (MS Word file) available at https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/technical/docs/2019_CSA_TA_SOQ_Template.docx

Resumes
Attach resumes of each key personnel from each participating organization and contractors and indicate the role of each person whose resume is attached. Limit to two pages per resume. Provide in PDF format. Upload all resumes as one attachment into the application portal.

Questions and Answers (Q&A)
General questions regarding the solicitation process may be submitted to cdfa.oefi_csa_ta@cdfa.ca.gov. Responses to all questions received by email will be posted to CDFA's Technical Assistance website according the following schedule:

Questions Received By	Responses Provided By
August 9, 2019	August 16, 2019

August 9, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. PT is the final deadline to submit questions for the 2019 CSA Technical Assistance grant application. To maintain the integrity of the competitive grant process, CDFA is unable to advise and/or provide individuals with any information regarding specific grant application questions during the solicitation process.

REVIEW PROCESS
CDFA will select highest scoring applications for award of grant funds. Applications will be scored based on the Scoring Criteria provided on page 10.

Applications will be reviewed in a two-stage process:

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I. **Administrative Review**

The purpose of the administrative review is to determine whether grant application requirements are met. Grant applications disqualified as a result of the administrative or financial review may be appealed.

During the administrative review, the following will result in the automatic disqualification of a grant application:

- One or more unanswered questions necessary for the administrative or technical review;
- Missing, blank, unreadable, or corrupt content;
- Unusable or unreadable attachments;
- Requests for more than the maximum award amount.

APPEAL RIGHTS: Any disqualification taken during the administrative review for the preceding reasons may be appealed to CDFA's Office of Hearings and Appeals Office within 10 days of receiving a notice of disqualification from CDFA. The appeal must be in writing and signed by the responsible party name on the grant application. It must state the grounds for the appeal and include any supporting documents and a copy of the CDFA decision being challenged. The submissions must be sent to the California Department of Food and Agriculture, Office of Hearings and Appeals, 1220 N Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 or emailed to CDFA.LegalOffice@cdfa.ca.gov. If submissions are not received within the time frame provided above, the appeal will be denied.

II. **Technical Review**

Subject matter expert reviewers from state and federal government agencies and academia will serve as technical reviewers. Technical review will be based on the detailed scoring criteria outlined below.

Scoring Criteria

Each CSA program will have its own application and will be scored independently.

Criteria	Maximum Points
1. WORKPLAN • Is an executive summary and project description provided? • Is sufficient information to demonstrate the applicant organizations' capacity to complete the project provided?	40

- Are roles of key personnel from each participating organization clearly described?
- Does the work plan include both pre- and post-award activities?
- Are reasonable estimates of number of farmers and ranchers the TAP proposes to assist in pre- and post-award activities provided?
- Does the work plan provide sufficient details of all activities proposed?
- Does the workplan include one-on-one technical assistance to farmers/ranchers?
- Does the applicant discuss their plan for conducting outreach and soliciting applications for each incentives program they propose to assist with?
- Does the work plan include outreach details of reaching SDFRs, SDACs or AB 1550 Priority Populations?
- Does the application clearly identify how the organization will prioritize assistance for farms and ranches that are 500 acres or less?
- Does the workplan include efforts to provide assistance in multiple languages?
- Is the workplan achievable with the requested budget?
- Does the workplan include workshops/public presentations and the details (e.g. frequency, language, outreach methods) for workshops provided?
- Does the workplan clearly identify the staff person or personnel who will be involved in each task, including alternative or secondary contacts?
- Does the workplan include a detailed reporting and evaluation component?
- Does the work plan clearly indicate the regions that will be served by the applicant?
- Does the Statement of Needs clearly detail the organization's case for serving the region proposed?
- Does the project include partnership or regional coordination among multiple organizations?
- Does the partnership provide technical assistance to a larger base of farmers and ranchers than would be accomplished by a single organization?

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2. BUDGET
 	
   • Does the proposed budget outline all anticipated expenses?
   • Is the budget at or below the maximum requested budget amount for the number of programs they are applying for?
   • Are the costs included in the budget for each task reasonable?
   • Is the Budget consistent with the Work Plan?
   • Is the division of funds between pre- and post-award activities reasonable?
   • Are 25% of the funds allocated for providing assistance to SDFRs? If this target cannot be met, is a detailed and reasonable justification provided?
	30

3. STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS (SOQ)
 	
   • Does the SOQ clearly identify the capacity of the lead applicant organization to serve as a TAP for AMMP or HSP?
   • Has the applicant appropriately explained how the education, work history, and/or technical expertise of key personnel makes them qualified for this role?
   • Do the resumes of individuals listed in the proposal align well with relevant expertise for AMMP or HSP?
	30

Total Points	**100**

The CSA Technical Assistance program strives to ensure statewide distribution of TAPs to support AMMP and HSP applicants. CDFA will fund to the extent feasible, at least one project for each region noted below:

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- **Northern California counties**:
  Del Norte, Siskiyou, Modoc, Humboldt, Trinity, Shasta, Lassen, Tehama, Plumas, Mendocino, Glenn, Butte, Lake, Colusa, Sutter, Nevada, Yuba, Sierra, Sonoma, Napa, Marin, Yolo, Placer, El Dorado.
- **Central California counties**:
  Sacramento, Amador, Alpine, San Joaquin, Calaveras, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Mono, Merced, Mariposa, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, Inyo, Kern.
- **Southern California counties**:
  Ventura, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange, San Diego, Imperial.
- **Central Coastal California counties**:
  Sonoma, Marin, Napa, Solano, San Francisco, Contra Costa, Alameda, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, San Benito, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara.
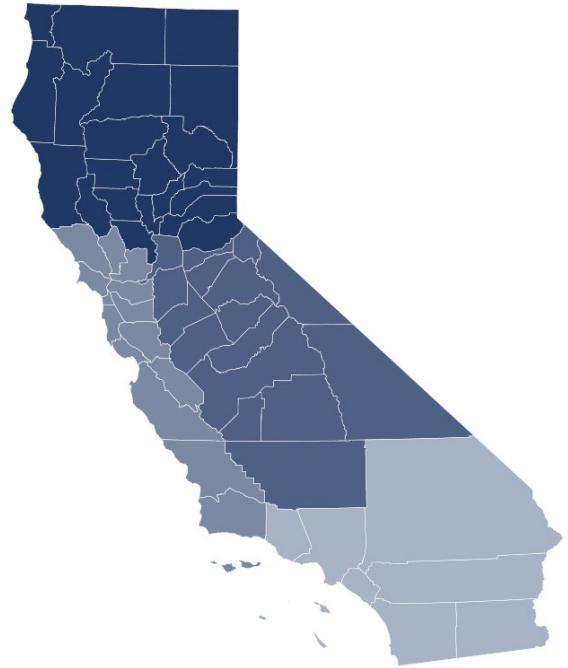
In addition to criteria listed above, CDFA will prioritize funding the following:
- Proposals that will provide at least 25 percent of all technical assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SDFRs).
- Proposals that will provide assistance to farms and ranches that are 500 acres or less.

Past performance of TAPs, if applicable, may be taken into consideration during selection. Past performance may include timely and satisfactory completion of funded activities and reporting requirements.

In case multiple solicitations are made for 2019 CSA Technical Assistance Grants, CDFA may consider funding applicants that have not received funding in previous rounds.

Notification and Feedback
All applicants will be notified regarding the status of their grant applications. Successful applicants will receive specific instructions regarding the award process, including information on invoicing and reporting requirements. Applicants not selected for funding will receive feedback regarding their applications within 60 days after receiving notification.

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CDFA will post basic information on the CSA Technical Assistance web site (https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/technical/) regarding the applications it has received at least 10 days before awarding grant funds. After projects are selected and all funds are encumbered, CDFA will post an updated list within 90 days that identifies status of awarded project applications. Applications will be treated in accordance with Public Records Act requirements and certain information, subject to those requirements, may be publicly disclosed.

GRANT RECIPIENT INFORMATION

Grant Agreement

Applicants with projects selected for award of funds will receive a Grant Agreement package with specific instructions regarding award requirements including information on project implementation and payment process. Once a Grant Agreement is executed, grant recipients can begin implementation of the project. Grant recipients are responsible for the overall management of their awarded project to ensure all project activities are completed no later than March 31, 2023.

Payment Process

CDFA will provide grant recipients with the necessary grant award and invoicing documents. Funds will be allocated on a reimbursement basis. Invoices must be submitted quarterly and include all supporting financial documentation to substantiate expenses. No more than $100,000 may be reimbursed annually. CDFA will withhold 10 percent from the total grant award until a final report is submitted to ensure grant recipients meet all reporting requirements. Invoicing and closeout of all project expenditures must be completed no later than March 31, 2023.

Reporting

Grant recipients must submit detailed quarterly Progress Reports to CDFA identifying tasks and activities accomplished in the reporting period. CDFA will provide a reporting template and schedule to grant recipients. Progress Reports must include, at a minimum:

- Total number of individuals assisted.
- Information of farmer or rancher assisted including but not limited to application identification number (PIN) of submitted application.
- Number of individuals assisted who belong to groups such as SDFRs, SDACs, AB 1550 Priority Populations and/or farms and ranches 500 acres or less.

For auditing purposes, recipients are required to maintain detailed technical assistance records on-site.

Critical Project Review

Grant recipients must agree to a Critical Project Review and audit during the project term to verify project progress as reported in Progress Reports submitted to CDFA, including number of farmers and ranchers assisted. If it is determined by CDFA from the Critical Project Review that at that time the grant project is not meeting and is unlikely to meet certain milestones, CDFA has the right to terminate the Grant Agreement pursuant to the Terms and Conditions of the Grant Agreement. If the grant is terminated and has incurred any costs during the term, the Grantee must return any previously reimbursed funds. Termination may result in forfeiture by the grantee of any funds retained pursuant to 10 percent retention policy. Critical Project Review may be completed through an auditing process.