California Department of Food and Agriculture
2019 Climate Smart Agriculture - Technical Assistance Funding
Frequently Asked Questions
Updated August 21, 2019

General Questions

1. What is the maximum grant award per technical assistance provider?

An organization may be the lead applicant on only one technical assistance application. If the organization is applying for funding to support one Climate Smart Agriculture incentive program, they may request up to $60,000. If they organization is applying for funding to support two Climate Smart Agriculture incentive programs, they may request up to $120,000.

2. What is the grant term?

The grant term with awarded technical assistance providers will be three years from the start date of the grant agreement. CDFA anticipates that grant agreements will begin in December 2019 or January 2020. Work cannot begin before the grant agreement start date.

3. Can funding from this 2019 Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance RFP be utilized to assist awardees of previous CSA funding cycles (e.g., 2018 SWEEP, 2017 HSP)?

The 2019 CSA TA RFP is for funding to assist the awardees and applicants of the 2019 AMMP and HSP programs. Past technical assistance RFPs did not cover implementation assistance, but resources do exist for these awardees through a partnership with University of California:
http://ciwr.ucanr.edu/Programs/ClimateSmartAg/TechnicalAssistanceProviders/

4. When will CDFA hold another Request for Proposals for Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance?

CDFA will hold a solicitation for proposals for the Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance Funding each time there is a budget appropriation to the Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP), Healthy Soils Program (HSP), or State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP). Assembly Bill 2377 (Irwin, 2018) requires that the Department set aside a percentage of each appropriation to these programs for technical assistance. For this reason, the technical assistance funding will run parallel with the Climate Smart Agriculture programs. Technical assistance providers that receive funding from this 2019 RFP will provide assistance to applicants and awardees of the 2019 AMMP and HSP appropriation. If more funding is appropriated to the programs in 2020, a new CSA TA RFP will be held and those awarded TAPs will provide assistance to the 2020 CSA program applicants and awardees.

5. What are the program requirements regarding providing assistance to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers?

Assembly Bill 2377 requires that CDFA ensure that a minimum of 25% of the technical assistance funds are expended in the provision of assistance to Socially Disadvantaged

Farmers and Ranchers (defined by the Farmer Equity Act of 2017). CSA TA applicants will explain the strategy for spending 25% of the award to meet this requirement within the Workplan: Section 4. Statement of Need. If this requirement can not be met by the applicant, the applicant must provide a justification. The Budget Worksheet does not require that costs be broken down to show this 25% partition of funds.

6. May a technical assistance provider provide assistance over more than one region?

CSA TA applicants may determine their service area or, if the organization has territorial boundaries, they may restrict their service area to their territory.

Eligibility

1. Are universities other than the University of California Cooperative Extension eligible to apply for funding?

AB 2377 (2018) authorized the administration of this technical assistance program and specified eligible recipients as "resource conservation districts, the University of California Cooperative Extension, and nonprofit organizations". Universities other than University of California Cooperative Extension, may be eligible in the non-profit category, if applicable, or as a collaborator with another eligible organization applies as the lead applicant.

2. Can multiple technical assistance applicants/recipients provide assistance to the same CSA applicants and awardees?

This scenario may be allowed. Each technical assistance proposal must clearly describe in the work plan and statement of needs the extent, purpose and/or necessity of the work to allow technical reviewers to clearly understand the situation when evaluating the proposals. If some overlap is expected with another organization's activities or outreach, this should be clarified in the workplan.

3. Can an organization be eligible for technical assistance funding and also be eligible to apply and receive funding one of the Climate Smart Agriculture programs?

CDFA has two categories of the Healthy Soils Program and the Alternative Manure Management Program, 1) incentives, which serves commercial farmers and ranchers, and 2) demonstration, which funds outreach organizations in collaboration with farmers. The technical assistance funding being made available through this Request for Proposals is only made available to assist applicants and awardees of the incentive programs. For this reason, an organization may be eligible for technical assistance funding and still participate in the HSP and/or AMMP demonstration program. A technical assistance provider may not also participate in the HSP or AMMP incentive program.

4. Can an organization be both a lead on a technical assistance application and a partner or contractor on a separate technical assistance application?

Yes. An organization may be the lead organization on only one application but may be listed as a partnering organization on other applications. If an applicant is the lead on

one application and a partner on another application, there should not be duplication of activities. Each application must outline separate activities and budgets.

Application Procedures

1. How does an organization apply for technical assistance funding for more than one CSA program (i.e., AMMP and HSP)?

An applicant may apply for funding for one Climate Smart Agriculture program or for two (i.e., Alternative Manure Management Program and/or Healthy Soils Incentive Program). To apply for funding for two programs only one application is needed. The applicant must clearly explain on the workplan template how both CSA programs will be served and include separate workplan tables (Section 6: Project Activities and Timelines) for the two CSA programs outlining the objectives and activities that will be done to assist applicants/awardees.

2. What attachments are required to be submitted with the application?

Applicants are required to complete the online application questionnaire and to attach a Workplan, Budget Worksheet, Statement of Qualifications, and resumes. The Workplan template, Budget Worksheet, and Statement of Qualifications template can all be found on CDFA's technical assistance webpage at https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/technical/index.html and within the application portal.

3. Is an applicant able to save an application as a draft even if all the required questions are not completed?

Yes, an applicant may save their application at any time after the application is initiated. To save the application, scroll to the bottom of the application questions and click "Save Draft".

Workplan and Budget

1. What percentage of the budget should be made available to the various technical assistance activities?

Technical assistance applicants may evaluate the need for technical assistance activities and explain objectives and associated activities in the work plan. Applicants who provide detailed and accurate work plans and budgets will be evaluated more competitively during review. After a technical assistance grant agreement is executed there is some flexibility for line-item shifts to the budget, upon approval of CDFA.

2. What are examples of allowable costs in provision of technical assistance to applicants (pre-CSA award) and to awardees (post-CSA award)?

When providing technical assistance to CSA *applicants* the following are examples of allowable costs: translation of materials; development of developing educational, culturally-relevant, and multi-lingual materials about Climate Smart Agriculture practices, such as videos, illustrated guides, and training; workshop venue rental fees; design or engineering costs associated with the preparation of a CSA application; travel associated with farm site visits; assisting CSA applicants in obtaining required application supporting documentation; assisting applicants with obtaining bids associated with CSA applications; training provided to CSA applicants regarding the

practices or technologies they intend to implement as part of the CSA application; baseline soil sampling for HSP applications.

When providing technical assistance to CSA *awardees* the following are examples of allowable costs: time spent assisting awardees with permitting; time spent arranging for shared or rented equipment or labor necessary to complete the CSA project; travel associated with farm visits; provision of training and in-field assistance of CSA awardees regarding the practices or technologies they implement as part of the CSA application; years 2-3 soil sampling for HSP awardees; assisting CSA awardees with reporting and invoicing procedures.

3. Are conference registration or conference booth fees allowable costs for technical assistance providers?

Conference registration fees and/or booth fees may be allowable costs if the expense is well-justified in the CSA TA applicant's Workplan. These costs may be justified if they are part of an outreach or technical assistance strategy. The conference should be relevant to the CSA program that is being outreached and the participation in the conference should extend to sharing information about the CSA program or providing consultation to potential CSA applicants at the conference.

4. What are examples of unallowable costs?

The following are examples of unallowable costs: meals provided to farmers during workshops or other events; the payment of compliance fees (e.g., permitting or environmental reports) on behalf of CSA applicants or awardees; hosting or attending field days that are not directly related to CSA application assistance; assisting farmers and ranchers with conservation planning (e.g., Carbon Farm Plans, Conservation Plans); costs associated with site preparation in the implementation of a CSA project; costs typically covered by a CSA grant program, such as the HSP Demonstration Projects; out-of-state travel by experts or others.

5. Can an organization apply for funds to assist applicants and awardees of the Healthy Soils Demonstration Projects?

The Climate Smart Agriculture technical assistance funds are not to be used for support of applicants and awardees the Healthy Soils Demonstration Projects.

6. Is it expected that the technical assistance provider awardee take and submit soil samples to the lab for the Healthy Soils Program applicant, or just provide technical assistance during this process?

Laboratory costs for soil organic matter testing for an awardee of the HSP Incentives Program is an allowable cost of the HSP program. CDFA does not require soil sampling at the time of submission of applications to the HSP Incentives Program. Therefore, technical assistance providers may not invoice the laboratory costs of soil organic matter testing as part of technical assistance grant. Technical Assistance Providers may be reimbursed for the cost of supporting activities for soil organic matter testing such as collection of samples in the field for an HSP awardee as a post-award activity. This should be outlined in the Workplan and Budget.

7. Should an applicant budget for one or more than one round of funding of climate smart agriculture program grants per year?

The Climate Smart Agriculture programs are appropriated funding on an annual basis. Depending on the amount of funding and the application response one or more solicitations may occur. During the 2019-2020 fiscal year, CDFA anticipates holding one application period each for the HSP and AMMP.

8. May a technical assistance provider assist a CSA awardee with implementation if the TAP did not assist the awardee in the application phase?

Yes, following the award announcements for the 2019 Healthy Soils Program and Alternative Manure Management Programs, technical assistance providers may provide outreach to and implementation assistance to awardees that they did not assist in the application phase.

9. Should the Workplan objectives be lined out for all three years of the grant?

Yes, Section 6. Project Objectives: Activities and Timeline of the Workplan requires applicants to provide a list of activities that will support all objectives of the technical assistance proposal. These activities will also include an estimated timeline. Activities that are repeated due to annual cycles can be repeated in the table or they can be paired with more than one timeframe indicated in the far-right column of the table.

10. The Budget Worksheet includes a tab for Contractor. Do CSA TA applicants need to identify the specific contractor at the time of application?

The Contractor tab on the Budget Worksheet is the appropriate place to list costs of technical assistance that will be contracted. Examples of these costs include translation, audio or video production related to training or outreach activities or collaborator activities. Whenever possible, the CSA TA applicant should identify the specific contractor, but if the specific contractor is not known then a general description of type of contractor is acceptable.

11. On the Personnel tab of the Budget Worksheet do all the specific individuals involved with the technical assistance need to identified by name?

The Personnel tab of the Budget Worksheet should contain the names of the specific individuals that will provide technical assistance whenever possible. The technical assistance lead must be identified by name and match up with the Statement of Qualifications and Resumes that are provided. If all supporting staff are not known at the time of the application submission, the title of these individuals is sufficient.

12. Can technical assistance providers limit the number of producers served or are they obligated to provide service to all applicants within a specified region?

Technical assistance applicants will estimate the number of producers that can be served with the funds requested, the expertise, and capacity of the organization. Technical assistance providers are not obligated to serve all potential applicants or awardees within their service area.

Training and Annual Meeting Requirements

1. Will CDFA provide any training or resources for project implementation assistance?

CDFA will provide general training on CSA program framework, requirements, restrictions and application procedures before each CSA program solicitation. Other training opportunities or materials have not yet been determined. CDFA will host an annual meeting for technical assistance providers with require attendance. This meeting would provide an opportunity for sharing experiences and training materials amongst technical assistance providers.

2. How many annual meetings should technical assistance funding awardees plan to attend and where will the meetings be held?

Organizations that are awarded technical assistance funds will be required to send a representative to an annual meeting hosted by CDFA each year of the grant term. This meeting will likely be held at CDFA headquarters in Sacramento.