

California Department of Food and Agriculture
Climate Smart Agriculture - Technical Assistance Funding
Frequently Asked Questions
March 15, 2021

General Questions

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

If the organization is applying for funding to support one Climate Smart Agriculture incentive program appropriation, they may request up to \$60,000. This technical assistance grant solicitation is to support as many as four appropriations of funding that were included in the Governor's proposed January budget (two allocations for the Healthy Soils Program and two allocations for the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program). If an organization is applying for funding to support all four appropriations, they may request up to \$240,000 (\$60,000 per appropriation).

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 June 2021. Work cannot begin before the grant agreement start date.

3. How many technical assistance projects will CDFA fund from this solicitation?

The number of technical assistance grants awarded will depend on the funding appropriations made to the Healthy Soils Program (HSP) and State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP) in the 2021 calendar year. A minimum of 5% of the total allocations will be made available for technical assistance funding. CDFA may award more than 5% of the total allocations for technical assistance.

4. Are technical assistance applications that include both HSP and SWEEP program considered independently (i.e. awarded for one and not the other CSA program)?

Yes, CDFA may consider the workplan, budget, and qualifications for HSP and SWEEP technical assistance separately. Depending upon the amount of funding available, the number of applications for technical assistance funds, and the qualifications, workplan and budget submitted for HSP and SWEEP technical assistance, CDFA may offer an award that is less than the request.

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 an organization be eligible for technical assistance funding and be eligible to apply and receive funding from 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 farmers in collaboration with an outreach organization. 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.

3. Who is eligible to apply for technical assistance funding?

Resource Conservation Districts, non-profit organizations and the University of California Cooperative Extension are eligible to apply.

Application Procedures

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

An applicant may apply for funding for one Climate Smart Agriculture program or for two (i.e., State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program and/or Healthy Soils Incentive Program). To apply for funding for two programs only one application is needed. Within the application portal the applicant may select one or both programs and answer the required questions that are associated with their selection.

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 and Budget Worksheet for each Climate Smart Agriculture Program and resumes. The Workplan and Budget template can be found on CDFA's technical assistance webpage at <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/technical/index.html>.

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, click "Save Draft".

4. If an organization wishes to apply for technical assistance funding for both HSP and SWEEP how many applications will they submit?

Only one application is needed to apply for both HSP and SWEEP technical assistance funding. Applicants will complete a separate Workplan and Budget workbook for each program and these will be uploaded in the application portal.

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 sufficiently 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. How many individual farmers and ranchers are technical assistance providers expected to assist?

The applicant organization for technical assistance funding may make this estimate based upon the award cap, the organizations capacity, resources, and strategy. CDFA does not have a minimum requirement for the number of individuals that TAPS must assist.

3. 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, supplies needed to assist SWEEP awardees with irrigation system evaluation or design.

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.

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.

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. Does an organization need to provide assistance statewide?

Organizations may work within their service area or provide assistance at the statewide level. Applicants will define their service area within the application. CDFA will consider geographic coverage of technical assistance when selecting technical assistance awards.

7. Must an organization provide one-on-one technical assistance, or can the grant solely fund other activities (e.g. webinars, workshops, and case study development)?

One-on-one technical assistance to farmers and ranchers is a required objective for technical assistance providers. The Workplan and Budget template provides some guidelines on which program objectives are required and which are optional. Other activities, besides one-on-one assistance are allowed, but one-on-one assistance is required.

8. What level of expertise is expected or required for a HSP or SWEEP technical lead?

CDFA has not set minimum qualifications for technical leads. Lead individuals must demonstrate their expertise through their experience, coursework, trainings etc. to the technical reviewers of the climate smart agriculture technical assistance application.

9. In 2021, will the CDFA's HSP Incentive program be a first-come, first-served solicitation (similar to 2020)?

CDFA anticipates that upcoming 2021 HSP incentive program solicitations will be first-come, first-served (similar to the 2020 application period).

10. What is the allowable indirect rate?

Non-profits and Resource Conservation Districts may claim an indirect cost rate of 20 percent of total direct costs. University of California applicants may claim the established indirect cost rate with CDFA. These indirect rates are built into the Workplan and Budget templates.

11. If an organization is funded, but then has less requests for one-on-one technical assistance than expected and budgeted, can technical assistance funding be used for general climate smart agriculture technical assistance?

Several optional objectives have been indicated as allowable in the Request for Grant Proposals (pages 7-8). These optional objectives are also indicated on the Workplan and Budget template and have been included to provide flexibility to technical assistance grant awardees.