

2023 Florida Conservation Innovation Grants

Priorities: Urban Agriculture, Water Conservation,
Soil Health and Carbon Sequestration



Florida Opportunity #USDA-NRCS-FL-CIG-23-NOFO000 | 302

5/17/2023



Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agenda

Welcome and Opening Remarks

- Nathan Fikkert, Acting State Conservationist

Introduction to Conservation Innovation Grants

- Hilary Barnhart, Assistant State Conservationist - Partnerships

Overview of Resource Priorities & Concerns

- Nathan Fikkert, Acting State Conservationist

EQIP Eligibility Requirements

- Hilary Barnhart, Assistant State Conservationist - Partnerships

Application Process and Requirements

- Denise Liggett, Management Analyst - Partnerships

Closing Remarks

- Hilary Barnhart, Assistant State Conservationist - Partnerships

Introductions:

- Please enter your name, title, organization and email address in the chat box

Opportunity for Questions at End of Each Section:

- Enter the question into the chat box
- Raise hand
- Participating by phone only:
 - To provide a comment or ask a question, you can select *6 to unmute your line

**** Please note that call is being recorded and will be made available**

**** By attending this webinar, you consent to being included**

Housekeeping.....



Welcome !

Opening Remarks

Nathan Fikkert, Acting State Conservationist

Introduction to Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

Hilary Barnhart

Assistant State Conservationist – Partnerships & Initiatives



Conservation Innovation Grants

- Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) are competitive grants that drive public and private sector innovation in resource conservation. CIG projects inspire creative problem-solving that boosts production on farms, ranches, and private forests - ultimately, they improve water quality, soil health and wildlife habitat.
- Three main types:
 - Classic (national)
 - On-Farm Trials (national)
 - State





Classic & On-Farm Trails CIG

- Deadline:TBD – (late spring / early summer)
- Priorities:TBD
- Eligible entities:TBD
- Funding available:TBD
- Cost-share required:TBD
- See below link for updates:
 - <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/cig/>



State CIG Overview

- Deadline: July 14, 2023
- State CIG Priorities: Urban Agriculture, Water Conservation, Soil Health and Carbon Sequestration
- Eligible Applicants:
 - All U.S.-based non-Federal entities (NFE) and individuals are eligible to apply for projects carried out in Florida.
- Total available: \$1,000,000
 - Individual Award floor: \$50,000
 - Individual Award ceiling: \$250,000
- Cost-share:
 - Applicants contribute 1:1 match. HU applicants may provide 25% of total project costs.
- Project can be between 1-3 years in duration



Overview of Dates / Timeline





Questions ?

Overview of Resource Priorities & Concerns

Nathan Fikkert

Acting State Conservationist

Urban Agriculture

- NRCS serves all types of agricultural producers – large to small, conventional to organic, rural to urban. As American agriculture continues to grow in new directions, NRCS conservation assistance is growing along with it. Urban farms come with unique conservation challenges and opportunities. NRCS conservation activities can support urban farmers in their efforts to produce local, healthy, and sustainably grown food for their communities. Current urban ag-appropriate NRCS practices help improve soil health, address irrigation and water conservation needs, help farmers with weeds & pest management, and promote the establishment of high tunnels to extend the growing season.
- NRCS requests proposals that demonstrate innovations in the conservation of natural resources in urban agricultural contexts.



Urban Agriculture

- Resource Concerns
 - Sediment, Nutrient and Pesticide Loss
 - Soil Quality Limitations
 - Pest Pressure
 - Source Water Depletion
 - Storage and Handling of Pollutants
- Possible Conservation Practices
 - Integrated Pest Management
 - Nutrient Management
 - Irrigation Systems
 - Irrigation Water Management
 - High Tunnels
 - Cover Crop



Water Conservation

- Water conservation is the most important action we can take to sustain our water supplies, meet future needs, and reduce demands on Florida's water-dependent ecosystems such as springs, rivers, lakes, and wetlands.

- NRCS Florida is accepting proposals that improve water quality, reduce irrigation usage, and improve soil water holding capacity by implementing innovative ideas and practices.



Water Conservation

- Resource Concerns
 - Sediment Transported to Surface Water
 - Pesticides Transported to Surface & Groundwater
 - Nutrients Transported to Surface & Groundwater
 - Inefficient Irrigation Water Use
- Possible Conservation Practices
 - Conservation Cover
 - Cover Crop
 - Microirrigation
 - Irrigation Water Management
 - Riparian Forest Buffer



Soil Health

- Soil health, also referred to as soil quality, is defined as the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans.
- NRCS Florida is seeking proposals that demonstrate and quantify impacts of soil health promoting practices and management systems (e.g., no-tillage, cover crops, and crop rotations) on improving soil moisture, water infiltration, and soil water holding capacity coupled with an analysis of resulting production impacts on yield, yield variability, and economics of crop production across a range of soils, cropping systems, and climates.



Soil Health

- Resource Concerns-
 - Pest Pressure
 - Soil Quality Limitations
 - Wind and Water Erosion
 - Concentrated Erosion
- Possible Conservation Practices
 - Cover Crop
 - Conservation Crop Rotation
 - Residue Management/No Till



Carbon Sequestration

- Carbon dioxide is absorbed by trees, plants, and crops through photosynthesis and stored as carbon in biomass of tree trunks, branches, foliage, roots, and soils.
- Florida NRCS is accepting proposals that show improvement in the process of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere with innovative practices focused on carbon sequestration.



Carbon Sequestration

- Resource Concerns
 - Plant Productivity and Health
 - Degraded Plant Condition
 - Organic Matter Depletion
 - Soil Quality Limitations
- Possible Conservation Practices
 - Forest Stand Improvement
 - Tree/Shrub Establishment
 - Nutrient Management
 - Brush Management
 - Soil Carbon Amendment



State CIG Proposals

- **All proposals must address at least one resource concern category listed below:**
 - Air Quality Emissions
 - Aquatic Habitat
 - Concentrated Erosion
 - Degraded Plant Condition
 - Field Pesticide Loss
 - Sediment, Nutrient, and Pesticide loss
 - Fire Management
 - Inefficient Energy Use
 - Plant Productivity & Health
 - Pest Pressure
 - Salt Losses to Water
 - Soil Quality Limitations
 - Source Water Depletion
 - Storage & Handling of Pollutants
 - Terrestrial Habitat
 - Weather Resilience
 - Wind & Water Erosion



Questions ?

EQIP Eligibility Requirements

Hilary Barnhart

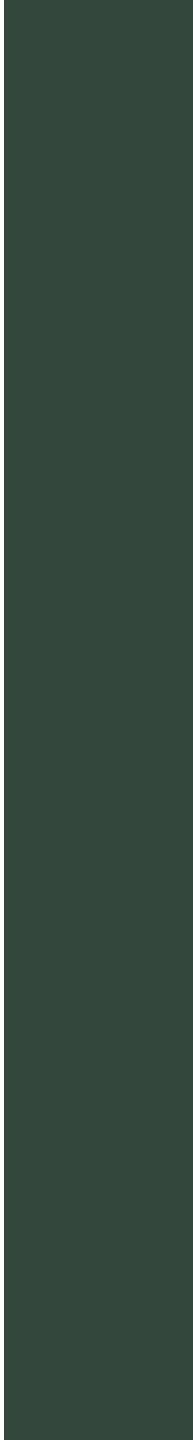
Assistant State Conservationist – Partnerships & Initiatives



EQIP-eligible producers

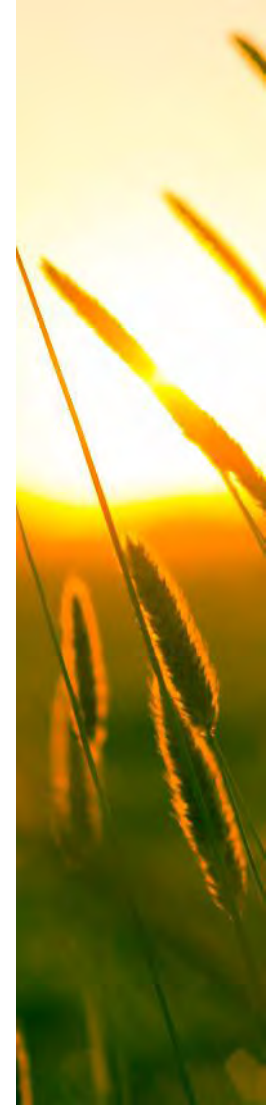
(Environmental Quality Incentives Program)

- All CIG projects must involve producers that meet EQIP's eligibility requirements
- The primary CIG awardee does not have to be EQIP-eligible
- Participating producers are not required to have an EQIP contract



EQIP Eligibility Required Forms in FSA

- Form AD-1026, “Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification”
- Form CCC-941, “Average Adjusted Gross Income Certification (AGI)” AGI not to exceed \$900,000
- Form CCC-901, “Farm Operating Plan,” for individuals
- Form CCC-902, “Farm Operating Plan,” for legal entities, and joint operations
- Other eligibility documents may be required



Payment Limitations

CIG *Awardees* are not limited by the payment limitation which imposes a \$450,000 payment limitation for all payments made to persons or legal entities under an EQIP contract entered between FY 2019 and FY 2023.





Duplicate Payments

Direct or indirect payments cannot be made for a practice for which an individual or legal entity has already received funds, or is contracted to receive funds through any USDA conservation program

NRCS requires lead partners to work with local NRCS staff to ensure that all producers receiving a CIG incentive payment are EQIP eligible

Examples of USDA Conservation Programs --

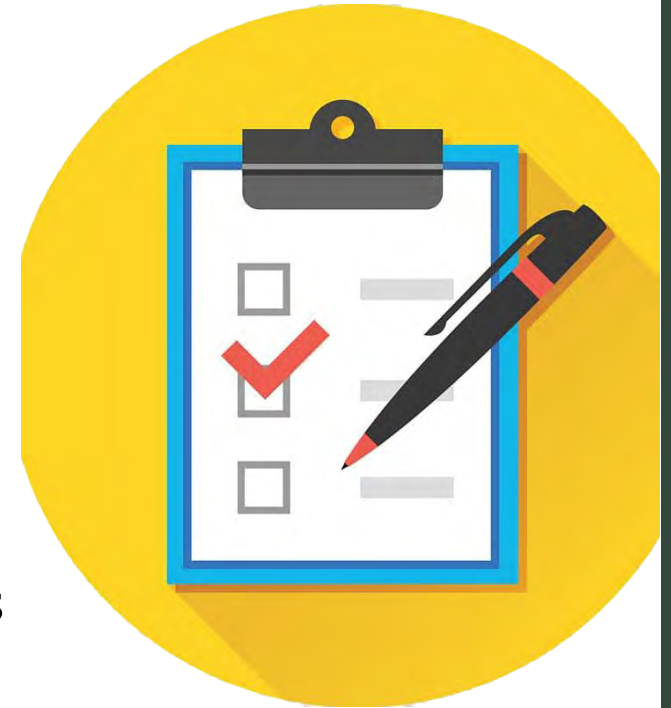
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)



Grantee Certification Requirements

To satisfy the requirements of EQIP eligibility, grantees are required to submit the following as part of their semiannual progress reports:

- A list of all EQIP-eligible producers involved in the project
- The dollar amount of direct and indirect payment (if any) made to each individual producer or entity
- Self-certification indicating that each individual or entity receiving a direct or indirect payment through the project is in compliance with the EQIP eligibility requirements, including adjusted gross income restrictions and highly erodible land compliance and wetland compliance provisions.





Questions ?

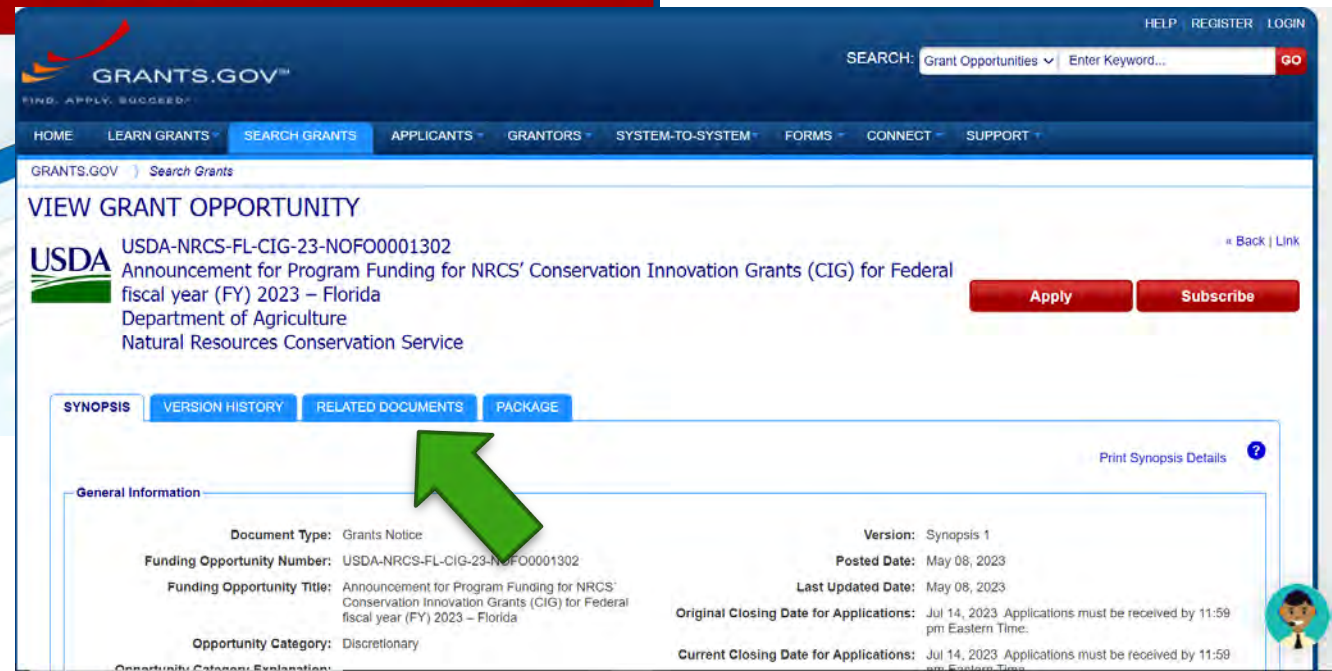
Application Process & Requirements

Denise Liggett

Management Analyst – Partnerships & Initiatives

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO)

- Go to Grants.gov
- Enter USDA-NRCS-FL-CIG-23-NOFO0001302 in the Search field
- Click “Related Documents” tab to find PDF version of NFO





Grants.gov account registration



Applying for an opportunity



Content and form of application submission



Application forms

Application Overview



Application Process

- START EARLY !
- You must have a Grants.gov account to apply for the State CIG.
- Several steps to set-up account

** IMPORTANT NOTE:

For technical issues with Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts.

Steps to Register

1. Obtain a Unique Entity ID (UEI) Number
2. Register with SAM (UEI)
3. Register with Grants.gov
4. Add an Organization Applicant Profile to Grants.gov
5. POC Authorized
6. Profile Role



The screenshot shows the Grants.gov website interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "SEARCH: Grant Opportunities". Below the search bar is a navigation menu with options: HOME, LEARN GRANTS, SEARCH GRANTS, APPLICANTS (highlighted), GRANTORS, SYSTEM-TO-SYSTEM, FORMS, CONNECT, and SUPPORT. The breadcrumb trail reads "GRANTS.GOV > Applicants > Applicant Registration". The main heading is "APPLICANT REGISTRATION". On the left, there is a sidebar menu with two sections: "GRANT APPLICATIONS" (containing "How to Apply for Grants" and "Track My Application") and "APPLICANT RESOURCES" (containing "Workspace Overview", "Applicant Eligibility", "Applicant Registration" (highlighted), "Applicant Training", "Applicant FAQs", "Adobe Software Compatibility", "Submitting UTF-8 Special Characters", and "Encountering Error Messages"). To the right of the sidebar is a large image of the U.S. Capitol building. Below the image is the heading "Organizations Must Register with SAM.gov and Grants.gov". Under this heading, there are two sections: "SAM.gov" and "Grants.gov".

Organizations Must Register with SAM.gov and Grants.gov

SAM.gov
The System for Award Management (SAM.gov) is a government-wide registry for organizations doing business with the Federal government. SAM.gov centralizes information about grant recipients and provides a central location for grant recipients to change organizational information. Grants.gov uses SAM.gov to establish organizational authority for its users and to provide unique entity identification numbers. SAM registration must be renewed annually.

First, you must register with SAM.gov to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). The UEI is a 12-character alphanumeric identifier assigned to all entities (public and private companies, individuals, institutions, or organizations) to do business with the Federal Government. Organizations will also need to designate an E-Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC). It can take 7-10 business days to fully complete the registration process required for most funding opportunities. There is no fee for registering with SAM.gov.

Grants.gov
After obtaining the UEI for the organization from SAM.gov, you must return to Grants.gov to continue registration. There is no fee for registering with Grants.gov. Your organization's EBiz POC must:

1. Create a Grants.gov account with the same email address as used in SAM.gov for EBiz POC and

Apply for the Opportunity

Create

Create a Workspace

Complete

Complete Workspace

Submit

Submit Workspace

Track

Track Workspace Submission



Content and Form of Application Submission

- Cover Page (1 page max)
 - Applicant Name
 - Project Title
 - Project Duration in years
 - Amount of Federal Funds Requested
 - Amount of Non-Federal Cost-Share Committed
 - Name, phone, email address of applicant's technical contact, and administrative contacts.
 - Geographic location of the project
 - The State Priority that is addressed by the project
 - Estimated number of participating producers
 - Brief description of the focus of the project
 - List any NRCS practice standards that this project could potentially inform



Content and Form of Application Submission

- Project Abstract (1 page max)
- Project Narrative (15 pages max)
- Team Qualifications
- Assessment of Environmental Impacts
- Declaration of previous CIG projects involvement and past performance
- Declaration of Historically Underserved and veteran farmers or ranchers

Application Forms

- SF-424 Application for Federal Financial Assistance
- SF-424A Budget Information
- Budget Narrative
- Cost Share or Matching Funds – Commitment Letters
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate agreement (if applicable)
- Letters of Support

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HOME LEARN GRANTS SEARCH GRANTS APPLICANTS GRANTORS SYSTEM-TO-SYSTEM FORMS CONNECT SUPPORT

GRANTS.GOV > Forms > Forms Repository > SF-424 Family

SF-424 FAMILY

- » Forms Repository
 - » R&R Family
 - » SF-424 Family
 - » SF-424 Individual Family
 - » SF-424 Mandatory Family
 - » SF-424 Short Organization Family
 - » Post-Award Reporting Forms
 - » Retired Forms
 - » Forms Development

NOTE: The PDF forms available on this portion of the site are for sample purposes only and cannot be submitted with your application package. If you are applying for a grant, please complete and submit your application using Grants.gov Workspace.

SF-424 FAMILY FORMS:

Agency Owner	Form Name	Adobe Form	Form Schema	Form Items Description	Form Instructions	GG Version	OMB Number	OMB Expiration
TREAS	ACH Vendor/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment Form	PDF	Schema	FID		2.0	1530-0069	06/30/2022
USDA	AFRI PROJECT TYPE	PDF	Schema	FID		1.0	0524-0039	12/31/2021
Grants.gov	Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)	PDF	Schema	FID	Instructions	4.0	4040-0004	12/31/2022
Grants.gov	Assurances for Construction Programs (SF-424D)	PDF	Schema	FID	Instructions	1.1	4040-0009	02/28/2022
Grants.gov	Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)	PDF	Schema	FID	Instructions	1.1	4040-0007	02/28/2022
Grants.gov	Attachments	PDF	Schema	FID	Instructions	1.2		
Grants.gov	Budget Information for Construction Programs (SF-424C)	PDF	Schema	FID	Instructions	2.0	4040-0008	02/28/2022
Grants.gov	Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)	PDF	Schema	FID	Instructions	1.0	4040-0006	02/28/2022



Questions ?

Email Updates

- Sign up at: <https://www.fl.nrcs.usda.gov/>
- Receive news releases, technical resources, funding opportunity announcements and more

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Closing Remarks

Hilary Barnhart

[https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/
portal/nrcs/site/fl/home/](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/fl/home/)

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