

## APPLICATION and SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### A. How to Obtain Application Materials

The announcement for the Vermont CIG funding opportunity can be found on the following websites: <http://www.grants.gov> and <http://www.vt.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CIG/index.html>.

All Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standard forms necessary for CIG submission are posted on the following website: [Grants.gov - Forms Repository](#). An application package checklist and project summary sheet are included in Part VIII of this announcement. Standard forms, samples of certain completed forms, as well as editable versions of the checklist and summary sheet are on the Vermont NRCS website.

### B. Application Content and Format

Applications are required to contain the content, format, and information set forth below in order to receive consideration for funding. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of NRCS or others as to the relative merits of the project described in the application. If submitting applications for more than one project, submit a separate application for each project. Applicants may submit either a written application accompanied by an electronic copy on compact disc (CD) or an electronic application via email or through Grants.gov.

Applications should be formatted for and printed on 8½” x 11” white paper. The text of the application should be in a font no smaller than 12-point, single-spaced, single-sided, with one inch margins. *Applications that fail to comply with the required content and format will not be considered for funding.*

Applications must include all required forms and narrative sections described below. *All forms and narrative sections must be properly completed* (e.g., fill out *all* sections of Standard Form (SF) 424A and other forms). Incomplete applications will not be considered.

1. **Cover Sheet:** Applicants must use SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance as the cover sheet for each project application. SF-424 can be downloaded from [Grants.gov - Forms Repository](#), [Vermont state CIG](#) or obtained from the Vermont NRCS State Office.
2. **Project Summary Sheet:** Applicants must submit a Project Summary Sheet (no more than three pages in length) that includes the listed information. A template for the Project Summary Sheet is in Part VIII.B.
  - a. Project title
  - b. Project director name and contact information (including e-mail)
  - c. Names and affiliations of project collaborators
  - d. Project purpose
  - e. Project deliverables/products
  - f. Project area/location
  - g. Project start and end dates (Anticipated start date is September 1, 2012)
  - h. CIG category (Water Quality, Wildlife, or Energy), or category and topic
  - i. Declaration of Previous CIG Project
  - j. Declaration of EQIP eligible producer involvement

- k. Declaration of Beginning or Limited Resource Farmer or Indian Tribe
- l. Total project cost and Federal funds requested

3. **One-Page Abstract:** Include a one-page, non-confidential technical summary that describes the work to be undertaken and the expected outcome and benefits. The technical summary should take into account the priorities and evaluation factors described in this solicitation.
4. **Project Description:** The description must include the following information and is limited to 12 pages in length. It should provide a clear description of the work to be undertaken and how it will be accomplished, and provide sufficient information for the reviewers to evaluate the application in accordance with the merit review criteria listed in Part V.B.
  - a. **Project background:** Describe the history of, and need for, the proposed innovation. Provide evidence that the proposed innovation has been studied sufficiently to indicate a good probability for success of the project.
  - b. **Project objectives:** Be specific using qualitative and quantitative measures, if possible, to describe the project's purpose and goals. Describe how the project is innovative.
  - c. **Project methods:** Describe clearly the methodology of the project and the tools or processes that will be used to implement the project.
  - d. **Location and size of project or project area:** Describe the location of the project and the relative size and scope (e.g., acres, farm types and demographics, etc.) of the project area. Provide a map, if possible.
  - e. **Producer participation:** Estimate the number of producers involved in the project, and describe the extent of their involvement (EQIP eligible producers must be involved in the project).
  - f. **Project action plan and timeline:** Provide a table listing project actions, timeframes, and associated milestones through project completion. Anticipated start date is September 1, 2012.
  - g. **Project management:** Give a detailed description of how the project will be organized and managed. Include a list of key project personnel, their relevant education or experience, and their anticipated contributions to the project. Failure to disclose ongoing, completed, or funded projects in a category similar to that for which CIG funds are being requested could lead to termination of a CIG award. Explain the level of participation required in the project by government and non-government entities. Identify who will participate in monitoring and evaluating the project.
  - h. **Project deliverables:** Provide a list of specific deliverables and products for the project. This should include but is not limited to a final report and a new technology or innovative approach factsheet.
  - i. **Benefits or results expected and transferability:** Identify the results and benefits to be derived from the proposed project activities, and explain how the results will be measured. Identify project beneficiaries (i.e., agricultural producers by type, region, or sector; rural communities; and municipalities). Explain how these entities will benefit. In addition, describe how results will be communicated to others via outreach activities.

j. Project evaluation: Describe the methodology or procedures to be followed to evaluate the project, determine technical feasibility, and quantify the results of the project for the final report.

**5. Additional Information:** Bibliographies and/or resumes (not to exceed two pages per person), and references.

**6. Assessment of Environmental and Social Impacts:** Describe and assess the anticipated environmental effects of the proposed project. The description of the potential environmental and social impacts must address all potential beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action. A full description and assessment of the potential impacts to all potentially impacted environmental resources must be disclosed. One line or short descriptions of environmental impacts are not acceptable. The length of the analysis should be commensurate with the complexity of the project proposed and the environmental resources impacted either directly, indirectly (later in time), or cumulatively. Where possible, information on environmental impacts should be quantified, such as number of acres of wetlands impacted, amount of carbon sequestration estimated, etc. Environmental resources include soil, water, air, plants, and animals, as well as other specific resources protected by law, Executive Order, and agency policy. These resources are outlined in the NRCS Environmental Evaluation Worksheet, NRCS Conservation and Planning Application (CPA) form 52, which is available at: [NRCS-CPA-52](#). The NRCS CPA-52 form can be used as a guide for the scope of environmental information that should be prepared for this section of the application. In addition to describing impacts, applicants are required to assess the significance or degree of potential environmental impact of the proposed project on environmental resources. Applicants may consult with the NRCS Environmental Liaison concerning the scope of what should be addressed in this section of the application. A list of the Environmental Liaisons can be found on the following website: [Environmental Liaison](#)

*Note: Please be aware that applications for projects with potentially adverse impacts may need to be modified in order to achieve acceptable and beneficial levels of environmental impact. If projects cannot be modified, then there is a potential during the screening process that the application may not be selected.*

**7. Budget Information:** The budget portion of the application consists of three parts described below.

**a.** Standard Form (SF) 424A Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs: Fill in all spaces as appropriate. Section B, Item 6, column 1 should reflect the NRCS funds and Column 2 should reflect the cost share funds. If your cost share is from multiple sources you may show that in the remaining columns of Item 6. This form is the summary budget for the project.

**b.** Detailed Budget Description: Specific item by item breakdown of the totals provided in Item 6 of the SF-424A should be provided. This detail should show what individual costs were added together to arrive at the totals presented in each of Object Class Categories on the SF-424. The format of this information should be readable in 8.5 by 11 printable pages. It may be in a chart, spreadsheet, table,



donation, and (5) a statement that the donor will pay the cash contribution during the grant period.

*In-kind match:* "In-kind" refers to non-cash contributions of goods or services made by third party individuals or organizations to support projects. Examples of in-kind include work done by unpaid volunteers and donations of supplies, facilities, or equipment. In-kind contributions must be necessary to accomplish program activities and are verifiable.

For any third party in-kind contributions, a separate pledge agreement is required for each contribution, signed by the authorized organizational representatives of the donor organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) the name, address, email, and telephone number of the donor, (2) the name of the applicant's organization, (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made, (4) a good faith estimate of the current fair market value of the third party in-kind contribution, and (5) a statement that the donor will make the contribution during the grant period.

*The sources and amounts of all matching support from outside the applicant organization should be summarized on a separate page and placed in the application immediately following the summary of matching support (matching support means a budget narrative broken down by year).*

The value of applicant contributions to the project will be established in accordance with the applicable cost principles. Applicants should refer to [OMB Circulars](#) for additional guidance on cost principles that apply to their entity, and for other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

**10. Declaration of Previous CIG Project:** Identify involvement in any previously awarded CIG projects related to this proposal and any of its principal investigators. Detail the purpose, outcomes to date, and how this new proposal relates to the previous award. Also identify any federal funds requested or received from other sources (non-CIG) for the same or a similar project.

**11. Declaration of EQIP Eligibility:** Applicants must include a statement indicating that the proposed project will involve EQIP eligible producers. Applicants must make a declaration in writing that they, or parties involved in the project, are eligible for EQIP (if EQIP eligible producers are not involved, the proposal will be considered ineligible). The declaration must describe and certify the level of involvement by EQIP eligible producers.

**12. Declaration of Beginning or Limited Resource Farmer or Indian Tribe:** If an applicant wishes to be eligible for the in-kind contribution exception, applicant must make a declaration in writing of their status as a Beginning or Limited Resource Farmer or Indian Tribe, or a community-based organization comprised of or representing these entities.

- 13. Certifications:** All applications must include a signed SF-424B - Assurances, Non-construction Programs. SF-424B may be found at: [Grants.gov - Forms Repository](http://www.vt.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CIG/index.html) , <http://www.vt.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CIG/index.html> , or the Vermont NRCS State Office. Applicants, by signing and submitting an application, assure and certify that they are in compliance with the following from 7 Code of Federal Register (CFR):
- a. Part 3017, [Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension \(Non-procurement\)](#);
  - b. Part 3018, [New Restrictions on Lobbying](#); and
  - c. Part 3021, [Governmentwide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace \(Financial Assistance\)](#).
- 14. DUNS Number:** A Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. CIG applicants must obtain a DUNS number. Information on how to obtain a DUNS number can be found at: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.
- 15. Required CCR Registration:** The Central Contractor Registry (CCR) is a database that serves as the primary Government repository for contractor information required for the conduct of business with the Government. This database is used as a central location for maintaining organizational information for organizations seeking and receiving grants from the Government. CIG applicants must register with the CCR. To register, visit <http://www.ccr.gov>. Allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration.

### **C. How to Submit a Written Application**

Applicants must submit one signed original copy of each project application. Hard copies must be accompanied by an electronic copy on a compact disc (CD). Electronic files must be either Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat (pdf) files. Applications submitted via fax will not be accepted.

If submitting applications for more than one project, submit a separate, complete application package for each project.

The address for hand-delivered applications or applications submitted using mail or overnight courier service is:

Conservation Innovation Grants Program  
c/o Robert Kort  
USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service  
356 Mountain View Drive, Suite 105  
Colchester, Vermont 05446

Contact phone number for hand-delivered applications is (802) 951-6796 x233.

### **D. How to Submit an Application Electronically**

Applicants may submit applications electronically through [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) or to the email address listed below. Applications submitted through [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) or email must contain all of the

elements of a complete application and meet the requirements described above. Instructions for electronically submitting the required standard forms, abstract, narrative, and declarations are posted on [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov). Instructions for adding attachments are available on [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov). Applications submitted electronically are date and time stamped by [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) and must be received by the identified closing date. Emailed applications must be *received* by NRCS before the submission deadline. It is recommended that applicants verify the receipt of emailed applications with the Vermont CIG Program Manager before the application deadline has passed.

Note: Note that NRCS is not responsible for any technical malfunctions or website problems related to [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) or emailed submissions. Applicants should begin the [Grants.gov](http://Grants.gov) process or send their email well in advance of the submission deadline to avoid problems.

Email address: bob.kort@vt.usda.gov

### **E. Application Due Date**

Applications must be received in the NRCS Vermont State Office by 4 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT), on Tuesday, April 17, 2012. A postmark date is NOT a factor in whether a written application is received on time. The applicant assumes the risk of any delays in application delivery. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit written applications via overnight mail or delivery service to ensure timely receipt by NRCS. Applicants submitting an electronic application by email are strongly encouraged to contact the CIG Program Manager before the application deadline to verify its receipt.

### **F. Acknowledgement of Submission**

Applications received by the due date will be acknowledged with an email. If an applicant has not received an acknowledgement within 15 days of the submission, but believes they submitted a timely application, they must contact the NRCS programmatic contact (see Part VII). Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel.

### **G. Withdrawal of Applications**

Applications may be withdrawn by written notice at any time before an award is made. Applications may be withdrawn by the applicant, or by an authorized representative.

### **H. Funding Restrictions**

Awardees may not use unrecovered indirect costs as part of their matching funds.

CIG funds may not be used to pay any of the following costs unless otherwise permitted by law, or approved in writing by the Authorized Departmental Officer in advance of incurring such costs:

- a. Costs above the amount of funds authorized for the project;
- b. Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the grant;
- c. Costs which lie outside the scope of the approved project and any amendments thereto;
- d. Entertainment costs, regardless of their apparent relationship to project objectives;
- e. Compensation for injuries to persons, or damage to property arising out of project activities;

- f. Consulting services performed by a Federal employee during official duty hours when such consulting services result in the payment of additional compensation to the employee; and,
- g. Renovation or refurbishment of research or related spaces; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such spaces; and the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

This list is not exhaustive. Questions regarding the allowances of particular items of cost should be directed to the administrative contact person.

### **I. Patents and Inventions**

Allocation of rights to patents and inventions shall be in accordance with USDA regulation [7 CFR 3019.36](#). This regulation provides that small businesses normally may retain the principal worldwide patent rights to any invention developed with USDA support. In accordance with [7 CFR 3019.2](#), this provision will also apply to commercial organizations for the purposes of CIG. USDA receives a royalty-free license for Federal Government use, reserves the right to require the patentee to license others in certain circumstances, and requires that anyone exclusively licensed to sell the invention in the United States must normally manufacture it domestically.

### **J. Environmental Review Requirements**

The Council on Environmental Quality's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations at 40 CFR parts 1500-1508 and the NRCS regulation that implements NEPA at 7 CFR part 650 require that an environmental review be prepared for actions where the agency has discretion and control. Accordingly, NRCS' financial assistance under the CIG program requires compliance with these regulations. As part of the application packet, applicants are required to provide environmental information pertaining to their project (described further under Part IV.B.6) to help NRCS determine the appropriate documentation required to comply with NEPA and NRCS regulations. If the application is selected for funding, the NRCS program contact and NRCS Environmental Liaison will coordinate with the selected applicant concerning documentation for compliance with NEPA. The selected applicant will be required to prepare and/or pay for the preparation of the appropriate NEPA document (e.g., Environmental Assessment and/or Environmental Impact Statement if required for NEPA compliance). Grant funding cannot be approved until the environmental review requirements demonstrating compliance with NEPA are met.