

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO)

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Federal Awarding Agency Name: U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service

Funding Opportunity Title: Conservation Collaboration Grants or Agreements Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Announcement for Program Funding - KANSAS

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NRCS-KS-CCGA-20-GEN0010791

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number (also known as Assistance Listing):

- 10.902 Conservation Technical Assistance
- 10.912 Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- 10.924 Conservation Stewardship Program
- 10.931 Agricultural Conservation Enhancement Program
- 10.069 Conservation Reserve Program

Funding Opportunity Announcement Summary

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), an agency under the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), is announcing the potential availability of grants and agreements in Kansas for the purpose of leveraging NRCS resources, addressing local natural resource issues, encouraging collaboration and developing state and community level conservation leadership. A total of up to \$4 million is available for FY 2020 for projects as identified in Section A of the Full Announcement in the Related Documents tab of this opportunity.

Proposals are requested from city or township governments, county governments, Native American tribal governments (federally recognized), nonprofit organizations, other than institutions of higher education, public and state-controlled institutions of higher education, special district governments, and state governments for competitive consideration of grant or agreement awards for projects between 1 and 3 years in duration.

Key Dates

Applicants must submit their applications via Grants.gov by 11:59 pm Eastern Time May 31, 2020. For technical issues with Grants.gov, please contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts. Proposals in possession of Kansas NRCS will be scored as they are received and, if eligible, added to a ranking list of projects for funding consideration. The State Conservationist will make the final selection.

Federal Funding Floor and Ceiling Amounts

The funding floor for this opportunity \$100,000, and the funding ceiling is \$2,500,000. The funding floor means the minimum agreement funding amount for the Federal share per agreement awarded. The ceiling is the maximum agreement funding amount for the Federal share per agreement awarded.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The authorizing statutes and regulations for this opportunity are:

Agricultural Conservation Enhancement Program: Food Security Act of 1985, Title XII, Part Subtitle D, Section 1237, Public Law 99-198, as amended by Agricultural Act of 2014, Title II, Part Subtitle D, Section 2301, Public Law 113-79, 128 Stat. 731 -744, 16 U.S.C 3865 - 3865d (CFDA No. 10.931).

Conservation Reserve Program: 16 U.S.C. 3831-3836, 7 CFR 704, 7 CFR 1410; Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, P.L.107-171 (CFDA No. 10.069).

Conservation Stewardship Program: 16 U.S.C. Section 3838 (CFDA No. 10.924).

Conservation Technical Assistance: 16 U.S.C. 590a-590f, 590q, 7 CFR part 610 (CFDA No. 10.902)

Environmental Quality Incentives Program: Federal Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, P.L. 104-127, as amended; Food Security Act of 1985, Subtitle D, Title XII, 16 U.S.C. 3830 et seq.; Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, P.L. 107-171 (CFDA No. 10.912)

The purpose of Conservation Outreach Grants or Agreements is to leverage NRCS and partner resources to assist historically underserved farmers and ranchers and assist farmers and ranchers to improve, restore or maintain natural resources that:

1. Improve soil health.
2. Improve water quality.
3. Provide habitat for local wildlife species of concern.
4. Improve the environmental and economic performance of working agricultural lands.
5. Assist communities and groups to build and strengthen local food projects that provide healthy food and economic opportunities.

Emphasis will be placed on projects that:

1. Build technical capacity to implement Farm Bill Conservation Programs.

2. Build technical capacity of NRCS and partner field conservation employees.
3. Build the capacity of local partners to develop and implement effective projects.
4. Leverage non-Federal resources to achieve positive natural resources conservation outcomes.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimated Funding

The total amount of Federal funding the agency expects to award through this opportunity is \$4 million.

2. Start Dates and Performance Periods

Projects may be between 1 and 3 years in duration. Applicants should plan their projects based on a project start date of September 15, 2020.

3. Type of Federal Award

The agency plans to award a grant, cooperative or contribution agreement pursuant to this opportunity.

4. Number of Awards

The agency expects to make up to 10 award(s).

5. Procurement Contracts

The agency does not expect to award procurement contracts associated with this opportunity.

6. Eligibility of Renewal or Supplemental Project Applications

Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are not eligible to compete with applications for new Federal awards. An application for renewal means an application submitted to continue an existing agreement that meets the objectives and requirements of this NFO. An application for supplementation of an existing project means an application to add components to an existing agreement so that it would meet the objectives and requirements in this NFO.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Applicants and applications must meet eligibility criteria by the application deadline to be considered for award. Eligible applicant type is determined by the implementing program statute. Applicant entities identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or excluded from receiving Federal contracts and certain Federal assistance and benefits will not be considered for Federal funding, as applicable to the funding being requested under this Federal program (2 CFR 200.205(d)).

Eligibility for this opportunity is limited to the following entity types

- City or township governments
- County governments
- Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)
- Nonprofit organizations, other than institutions of higher education
- Public and State-controlled institutions of higher education
- Special district governments
- State governments

Refer to section D of this opportunity announcement for required documentation supporting eligibility status.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

There is not a specific match amount required. However, applications will be evaluated in part on the relative contribution of non-Federal resources to the project. Cost sharing may be achieved with contributions of cash, services, materials, equipment, or third-party in-kind contributions.

Matching funds must be secured at the time of application. Proposals must include written verification of commitments of matching support (including both cash and in-kind contributions) from third parties.

Additional details about cost sharing or matching funds/contributions is located at 2 CFR 200.306.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

1. Address to Request Application Package

All standard forms necessary for this opportunity announcement are included in the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) opportunity package. Applicants may request paper copies of materials by contacting Gaye L. Benfer, Assistant State Conservationist for Management and Strategy, at 785-823-4508 or by written request mailed to gaye.benfer@usda.gov.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

To be considered for funding under this opportunity, an application must contain:

a. Proposal

Each page must be on numbered 8½” x 11” white paper that has one-inch margins. The text of the application must be typed in New Times Roman, no smaller than 12 font, be single

spaced, and will not exceed 7 pages. Letters of support and required official forms are not included in the page restriction.

Proposals that fail to comply with the required content and format will not be considered for funding. **Material exceeding stated page limits and/or formatting structure will not be considered.** Proposals must include all required forms and narrative sections described below. Incomplete and/or noncompliant proposals will not be considered.

Proposals must be divided into the following sections and are limited to the number of pages stated per section:

- I. Summary: 250 words maximum (1/2 page)
- II. Introduction: One (1) page maximum
- III. Needs Assessment: One (1) page maximum
- IV. Program Objectives: One (1) page maximum
- V. Methods: Two (2) page maximum plus Deliverables Table
- VI. Budget: One (1) page maximum
- VII. Evaluation: 250 words maximum (1/2 page)

I. **Project Summary:** (*First page of grant application. 1/2 page maximum.*) A good summary will provide a frame of reference for the reviewer as they begin the review process. It should be clear, concise, and interesting. The summary should be one to three paragraphs long and include the Project Title. The summary should include one or two sentences about each of the following: the applicant organization, the need motivating the request as defined in Section I.B. the project start and end dates, the measurable outcomes and methodology, other organizations that will be involved, and the project total cost, funds already obtained, and the amount requested in this proposal.

II. **Introduction:** (Letters of Support, federally required forms, and one (1) page narrative maximum.) This section should introduce your organization to the reviewer and lend credibility to your organization's ability to successfully manage a federal agreement. The response should be succinct, offer a good balance between quantitative and qualitative information, and be free of unnecessary verbiage. It should include a brief history of the organization, including its mission statement and goals, important past events or accomplishments, a description of your clientele, including demographic information, organizational funding sources. Describe your history of successfully managing these federal and non-federal agreements, including meeting and complying with reporting requirements, submitting final acceptable technical reports, and reporting on progress made in achieving the results under those agreements

III. **Needs Assessment:** (One (1)-page maximum.) The problem statement, or needs assessment, is critical to the success of your application. It is the justification for your proposal and should focus on the condition that your proposal will address. Use care to ensure your proposal make no unsupported assumptions. Your Needs Assessment should demonstrate the tie-in to the organizational mission and goals, describe the issue or problem, and the history of, and need for, the proposed innovation, provide statistical

and authoritarian evidence that clearly supports the need identified in the proposal and supports a high probability for success, and make a compelling case for the project funding based demonstrated client needs.

IV. Program Objectives: (One (1)-page maximum.) This section of the proposal should demonstrate project outcomes, not project activities. You should be using language that **supports** *increasing, decreasing or reducing* the problems identified in the needs assessment. Avoid including topics that pertain to *providing, establishing, or developing* a method to address the problem. Your objectives should include at least one objective for each problem identified in the Needs Assessment. Each objective must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and contain a timeline for completion. An example objective would be: *At the end of the 3-day workshop, 70% of participants will demonstrate at least a 30% increase or better in pre/post-test exams.* Be sure to describe how the outcomes will be measured.

V. Methods: (Deliverables Table plus two (2)-page narrative maximum.) Methods, activities and procedures explain to the reviewer the steps that will be taken to complete the objectives identified in the previous section. This section demands clarity and justification in describing how the objectives will be met. Use care to present a reasonable number of activities that can be completed within the grant period. Clearly describe the program client and the program activities, their sequence, and explain your reason for choosing this combination of activities. Provide 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. Explain the level of participation required in the project by government and non-government entities and identify who will participate in monitoring and evaluating the project.

Please note that demonstrating innovative methods will receive additional points during the ranking process.

VII. Budget Information: (SF-424A and one (1)-page maximum narrative.)

Careful planning of your budget will reduce the number of changes needed during the award period. Explain and justify all requested budget items/costs. Detail how the totals on the SF-424A were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. For personnel salary costs, include the base-line salary figures and the estimates of time (as percentages) to be directly charged to the project. Describe any item that under the applicable Federal cost principles requires the agency's approval and estimate its cost. See Instructions for Completing Budget Narrative located in the Related Documents tab of this announcement on Grants.gov. The information needs to be presented in such a way that the evaluators and NRCS can readily understand what expenses will be incurred to support the project. The breakdown of the Federal share and matching funds (if any) should be shown separately as in the SF-424A, not combined. Explain how budget items are essential to achieving project objectives. The budget narrative should support the Federal funds requested and the

applicant's matching funds.

Proposals that include matching funds must include written verification of commitments (including both cash and in-kind contributions) from non-Federal third parties. For third-party contributions, a separate letter of support is required for each contribution, signed by the authorized organizational representative of the contributing organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the contributor, (2) the name of the applicant organization, (3) the title of the project for which the contribution is made, (4) the dollar amount of the contribution, and (5) a statement that the contributor will pay the contribution during the grant period.

The agency may conduct reference checks to ensure that organizations identified are supportive and involved with the project.

Letters of support and are not included in the page restriction.

VII. Evaluation: (One half (1/2)-page maximum.) This section should clarify your objectives, define the ease with which they can be measured, and clearly state the criteria for how success will be measured using quantifiable methods. Your evaluation methods should determine the extent to which the program has achieved its stated objectives and the extent to which the objectives contributed to the program success. Further, your evaluation should determine whether the delivered program was consistent with the initial plan and identify which program activities individually contributed to the effectiveness of the program.

- b. **Application Form:** (Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance) See Instructions for Completing SF 424 located in the Related Documents tab of this opportunity on Grants.gov.
- c. **Standard Form (SF) 424A, Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs.** Fill in all spaces as appropriate. Section B, Item 6, Column 1 should reflect the agency funds, and Column 2 should reflect the applicant's matching funds, if any. This form is the summary budget for the project and should include the full project totals on pages one and two. See Instructions for Completing SF 424A located in the Related Documents tab of this opportunity on Grants.gov.
- d. **Budget Narrative.** In a separate narrative titled "Budget Narrative", explain and justify all requested budget items/costs. Detail how the totals on the SF-424A were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. For personnel salary costs, include the base-line salary figures and the estimates of time (as percentages) to be directly charged to the project. Describe any item that under the applicable Federal cost principles requires the agency's approval and estimate its cost. See Instructions for Completing Budget Narrative located in the Related Documents tab of this opportunity on Grants.gov.

- i. As required in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, Subpart F Audit Requirements, all U.S. states, local governments, federally-recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending \$750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in a fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System.
- ii. Cost sharing/matching must be committed at the time of application submission. Applications must include written documentation showing the amounts and sources of match or cost share (including both cash and in-kind contributions). Cost sharing/match documentation does not count against any applicable page limits
- iii. All applicants are hereby notified of the following:
 - Recipients without an approved indirect cost rate are prohibited from charging indirect costs to a Federal award. (Accepting the 10% *de minimis* rate as a condition of award constitutes establishing an approved rate.)
 - Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award.
 - Recipients are prohibited from shifting unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.
- e. **Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.** Under Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1352, an applicant or recipient must not use any federally appropriated funds (both annually appropriated and continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a grant or cooperative agreement award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is defined as influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress connection with the award. Submission of an application also represents the applicant's certification of the statements in 2 CFR Part 418, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying. If you/your organization have/has made or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with this application AND the Federal share exceeds \$100,000, you must also complete and submit the SF LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities located at 2 CFR 418, Appendix B. See 2 CFR, Subpart 418.110 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

a. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR §25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR §25.110(d)) is required to: (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number) in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. The agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the agency is ready to make an award, it may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

Entities must obtain a DUNS and register in SAM prior to registering with Grants.gov. A description of each is below. Entities are strongly encouraged to apply early for their DUNS number and SAM registration.

Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number: A Dun and Bradstreet DUNS number is a unique, nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. Applicants must obtain a DUNS number. Information on how to obtain a DUNS number can be found at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or by calling 1-866-705-5711.

System for Award Management (SAM) Registration: SAM is the official Federal system that consolidated the capabilities of Central Contractor Registry, Federal Agency Registration, Online Representations and Certifications Application, and Excluded Parties List System. To register, go to: <https://www.sam.gov>. The Federal Service Desk is available for registration assistance and can be contacted via the Help tab at the website listed above.

Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding DUNS or SAM issues.

b. Submission Dates and Times

Applicants must submit applications via Grants.gov. Applications must be received by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on May 31, 2020. Late submissions will not be reviewed or considered. The agency will rely on system generated date and time receipt documentation to determine whether applications meet the

submission deadline. Grants.gov provides an automatic acknowledgement when applications are received.

c. Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.”

d. Funding Restrictions

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:

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

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

Indirect costs limitations:

- a. A non-profit organization or institution of higher education awarded a cooperative agreement will be limited to a 10% indirect cost rate in accordance with the Agency’s annual appropriations act. Other types of entities are not subject to this statutory limitation.
- b. To be eligible to recover any indirect cost under a Federal award, recipients must either 1) have a current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) with a Federal agency that has not expired; or 2) qualify for use of the de minimis rate authorized by 2 CFR 200.414(f). In order to qualify for the de minimis rate, the recipient must have never had a NICRA. A State, local, or tribal governmental department or agency unit that receives more than \$35 million in direct Federal funding is not eligible for the de minimis rate.

- c. Applicants not subject to a statutory limitation, which have a current NICRA must calculate indirect costs using the rate and base specified in their NICRA. A recipient may voluntarily reduce or waive recovery of indirect costs at its sole discretion and must not be encouraged or coerced in any way to do so by the agency. If voluntarily reduced or waived, the recipient may choose to apply any unrecovered indirect costs as part of their cost share or match. Unrecovered indirect cost means the difference between the amount charged to the Federal award and the amount which could have been charged to the Federal award under the recipient's approved negotiated indirect cost rate (2 CFR 200.306(c)). A copy of the applicant's current NICRA must be provided with the application. Indirect costs may not be recovered under an expired NICRA. However, if an applicant with a current NICRA is subject to the statutory limitation, indirect costs must be calculated as follows. First, multiply the NICRA rate by the base stated in the NICRA to arrive at Amount A. Next, multiply the statutory limit of 10% by the total of all direct costs to arrive at Amount B. The lower of Amount A and B is the amount of indirect cost to include on the budget.
- d. Entities that are eligible for the de minimis rate who already have a de minimis rate agreement must use the rate and base specified in the agreement, which is modified total direct costs (MTDC) as defined by 2 CFR 200.68 and also excluding the amount of each subaward exceeding \$25,000. Note that MTDC excludes certain costs from the base to which the rate is applied. A copy of the applicant's de minimis rate agreement must be provided with the application. If a recipient is eligible to use the de minimis rate, but does not have a de minimis rate agreement, use an indirect cost rate of no more than 10% of MTDC when preparing the budget. If selected for award, a de minimis rate agreement will be executed along with the award.

VIII. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

a. Merit/Technical Criteria

Proposals will be screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete, noncompliant, and/or proposals not meeting the formatting criteria will be eliminated from competition, and notification of elimination will be sent to the applicant. Complete proposals received by applicable deadlines will be evaluated based on the Proposal Evaluation Criteria identified in the instructions in Section IV. Evaluated proposals will be forwarded to the NRCS State Conservationist who will make the final selections. NRCS staff will evaluate complete proposals based on these Proposal Evaluation Criteria (180 points possible):

I. SUMMARY (30 points): The extent to which the summary clearly summarizes the request, is no longer than ½ page, and addresses the following criteria:

1. Identifies the applicant
2. Includes a statement on capability to implement the proposal
3. Includes a statement on problem addressed in the grant
4. Includes a statement on objectives
5. Includes a statement on methods
6. Includes the total cost, funds already obtained, and the amount requested in this proposal

II. INTRODUCTION (20 points): The extent which the proposal describes the applicant's organization, is no longer than 1 page, and addresses the following criteria:

1. Describes the applicant's organizational purposes and goals
2. Describes the applicant's programs and activities
3. Provides evidence of the applicant's accomplishments and qualifications
4. Supports qualifications in the activity areas in which funds are sought (e.g.: research, training, etc.)
5. Describe the capacity to implement the proposal

III. NEEDS ASSESSMENT (25 points): The extent which the proposal describes the need or problem to be solved, is no longer than 1 page, and addresses the following criteria:

1. Relates to purposes and goals of the applicant agency
2. Is of reasonable dimensions – not trying to solve all the problems of the world
3. Is developed with input from clients and beneficiaries
4. Makes no unsupportive assumptions
5. Makes a compelling case
6. Identify focal area(s) within the project area or priority criteria

IV. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES (25 points): The extent which the proposal describes the outcomes and benefits of the grant in measurable terms, is no longer than 1 page, and addresses the following criteria:

1. At least one objective for each problem or need committed to in problem statement
2. Includes when and how outcomes will be measured
3. Describes the population that will benefit
4. Underserved communities will benefit from this project
5. Objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and contain a timeline for completion

V. METHODS (40 points): The extent which the proposal describes the activities to be completed to achieve the desired objectives, is no longer than 2 pages, and addresses the following criteria:

1. Clearly describes program activities that constitute a solution
2. States reasons for selections of activities

3. Activities and outcomes are transferable to other organizations
4. Describes staffing of program and brief staff job descriptions
5. NRCS assistance is minimal for project success
6. Project methodology is innovative
7. Leverages private and/or public-sector partnerships
8. Presents a reasonable scope of activities that can be conducted within the budget, time and resources of the program

VI. BUDGET (25 points): The extent which the proposal describes the cost required to achieve the desired objectives, including personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, in-kind contributions, indirect costs, and requested NRCS financial assistance, is no longer than 1 page, and addresses the following criteria:

1. Is detailed
2. Includes a narrative
3. Contains significant match in the form of cash, non-cash, or in-kind services from applicant and/or contributing organizations
4. Includes NRCS, partner, and other contributions
5. Identify NRCS time and number of staff

VII. EVALUATION (15 points): The extent which the proposal presents a plan for determining the degree to which objectives are met and methods are followed is no longer than 1/2 page, and addresses the following criteria:

1. Presents a plan for evaluating accomplishments of objectives
2. Presents a plan for evaluating and modifying methods over the course of the program
3. Clearly states criteria of success – Describes how will success be measured
4. Define how progress will be reported and technical representative kept informed

b. Risk Criteria

The awarding agency will check SAM to ensure the applicant is not suspended or debarred, which would preclude receiving an award. In addition, prior to making a Federal award with a total Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold (\$250,000), the agency must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (the Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System, FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313 and 2 CFR 200.205(a)).

To further comply with the requirements at 2 CFR 200.205, the agency has established the following risk review process and related standards that an applicant must meet to be considered for award:

- a. **Financial Stability.** The applicant certifies that it maintains adequate financial resources or cash flow to meet its financial obligations on a routine basis and successfully complete any agreement it may be awarded.

- b. Quality of Management Systems and Ability to meet Management Standards prescribed in 2 CFR Part 200. The applicant certifies it has a financial management system adequate to segregate and track federal funds. It further certifies it has adequate systems in place for proper agreement administration; compliance with the standards outlined in 2 CFR Part 200 Section D for procurement, property, and records management; and required financial and performance reporting.
- c. History of Performance. If the applicant has previously obtained Federal financial assistance award, it certifies that it has never failed to materially comply with the Federal award terms and conditions and further that it has never had an award terminated on that basis.

Submission of an application constitutes certification that an applicant meets these standards.

c. Review and Selection Process

Applications will be screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete, noncompliant, and/or applications not meeting the formatting criteria will be eliminated from competition, and notification of elimination will be sent to the applicant. The agency intends to make a selection and award without conducting any discussions or allowing applicants to correct deficiencies or omissions in their applications. Consequently, they must ensure their applications are complete and accurate. However, while the agency intends to make a selection without contacting applicants, it reserves the right to request applicants to revise their applications to correct deficiencies or omissions identified by the awarding agency. If this is done, the agency will conduct discussions with all applicants and identify deficiencies and omissions and give applicants an opportunity to submit a revised application by a common cut-off date. The agency may also contact individual applicants to clarify certain components of their application.

Merit/technical reviews will be conducted by a technical review board nominated by the approving official. Risk reviews will be conducted by the FPAC Business Center, Grants and Agreements Division. The approving official will make the final award decisions. The approving official for this opportunity is the State Conservationist.

d. Awards Over the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (if applicable)

Notice to applicants:

- i. Prior to making a Federal award with a total Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold (\$250,000), the agency must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (the Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System, FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313 and 2 CFR 200.205(a));

- ii. An applicant may review information in FAPIIS accessible through SAM and comment on any information about it that a Federal awarding agency previously entered;
- iii. The agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR 200.205, Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

e. Anticipated Selection Announcement and Federal Award Dates

The agency anticipates announcing or notifying successful and unsuccessful applicants by July 1, 2020 and expects to have Federal awards in place by September 15, 2020.

IX. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

a. Federal Award Notices

The agency will provide notice that an application has been selected before it actually makes the Federal award. As such, the selection notification is not an authorization to begin performance. Any pre-award costs incurred by the awardee will not be reimbursed. The Notice of Grant and Agreement Award (ADS-093) signed by the authorized agency representative is the only authorizing document and will be provided electronically to the entity's authorized representative for signature.

Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the award decision via letter.

b. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All project funds will be used in accordance with 2 CFR 200 and the General Terms and Conditions; a copy of the General Terms and Conditions may be obtained by contacting the Federal Awarding Agency Contacts listed in this opportunity announcement.

c. Reporting

Reporting will follow the guidelines included in the General Terms and Conditions but will generally include electronic submission of semiannual progress reports, semiannual financial status reports, and final reports.

If the Federal share of any agreement awarded under this opportunity notice may include more than \$500,000 over the period of performance, recipients must also comply with the post award reporting requirements reflected in Appendix XII of 2

CFR Part 200 —Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters.

Applicants that receive awards pursuant to this opportunity and any sub awardees must comply with the reporting requirements described at 2 CFR Part 170, unless an exception applies. Applicants must ensure they have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with those requirements. A list of exceptions can be found at 2 CFR 170.110(b).

X. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

For questions regarding this opportunity, please contact one of the following individuals:

Administrative Contact (Primary Contact)

Name: Kristee Hall
Grants Management Specialist
FPAC Business Center
Mailing Address: 501 West Felix Street, Bldg. 23
Phone Number: (817) 509-3757
Email: Kristee.Hall@usdoj.gov

Program Contact

Name: Gaye L. Benfer
Assistant State Conservationist for Management & Strategy
USDA Awarding Agency
Mailing Address: 760 South Broadway Blvd.; Salina, Kansas 67401
Phone Number: 785-823-4508
Email: gaye.benfer@usda.gov

XI. OTHER INFORMATION

1. Questions regarding this opportunity must be submitted to the Administrative Contact identified above via email with the Opportunity Number in the subject line. Questions must be submitted by April 30, 2020. A questions and answers document addressing all questions will be posted to the Related Documents tab of this opportunity in Grants.gov by May 15, 2020.
2. For technical issues with Grants.gov, please contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts.
3. **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)**
Applications are considered confidential information. Applications are not shared with individuals or entities seeking public disclosure through the Freedom of

Information Act (FOIA) without the consent of the applicant. More specifically, Executive Order 12600 and USDA FOIA regulation 7 CFR Part 1, Subpart A requires the awarding agency to provide notice to applicants that a third party has requested copies of their business information and requires the awarding agency to consult with applicants regarding the releasing their records.

4. Government Obligation

The Federal Government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of this opportunity. Only authorized federal officials can bind the Federal Government to the expenditure of funds.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/filing-program-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer> and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call

(866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.