
Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)
Fiscal Year 2016
Announcement for Program Funding
(USDA-NRCS-CIG-16-01 Proposals)

March 21, 2016
12:00 pm EST

To join the meeting:

<https://usdanrcs.adobeconnect.com/r59ozreswug/>

Meeting Name: 2016.03.21 – CIG

Funding Opportunity

The fiscal year 2016 Announcement for Program Funding (APF) for CIG was published on March 7, 2016.

The APF is available at:

- www.grants.gov, and
- <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/cig>

Authority

CIG was authorized as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) under:

- Food Security Act of 1985,
- Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002,
- Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, and
- Agricultural Act of 2014.

Description

CIIG is a *voluntary competitive program*:

- to stimulate the *development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies*
- to leverage Federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production

Program Purpose

- The purpose is to demonstrate potentially innovative technology and/or approaches.
- CIG does not fund research, with the exception of on-farm conservation research.
 - Not for Bench or Basic phases
 - Maybe for Application phase
 - Okay for Commercialization phase

Eligibility Information

Applicant Eligibility

Under CIG, EQIP funds are used to award competitive grants to:

- non-federal governmental
- non-governmental organizations
- federally-recognized Indian tribes
- individuals

Eligibility Information

- State governments
- County governments
- City or township governments
- Special district governments
- Public and State controlled institutions of higher education
- Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)
- Public housing authorities/Indian housing authorities
- Native American tribal organizations
- Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Private institutions of higher education
- Individuals
- For profit organizations other than small businesses
- Small businesses
- Private businesses
- Corporations

Eligibility Information

Applications are accepted from:

- all of the 50 United States,
- the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands),
- the Pacific Islands Area (Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands), and
- Washington, DC

Eligibility Information

Project Eligibility

- To be eligible for CIG, projects must involve producers who meet the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) eligibility requirements.
- Participating producers are not required to have an EQIP contract.

Eligibility Information

To participate in EQIP financial assistance, an individual/farmer or agricultural entity must meet the eligibility requirements in 7 C.F.R. 1466.6.b.1-3 which include the following:

- Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation compliance provisions
- Be a agricultural producer
- Have control of the land for the term of the proposed contract period (unless an exception is made by the Chief in the case of land administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Indian lands, or other instances in which the Chief determines that there is sufficient assurance of control)

The applicant must also be in compliance with adjusted gross income requirements in 7 C.F.R Part 1400:

- The average adjusted gross income of the individual, joint operation, or legal entity may not exceed \$900,000

*Many of the verification documents will require that the producer have current records established with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) or require that the producer establish new records.

Eligibility Information

Matching Funds

- Applicants must provide non-Federal funding (matching funds) for at least 50 percent of the project cost (minimum 1:1 ratio for each federal dollar requested).
- Funds used to meet this matching requirement may come from any combination of cash and in-kind resources.
 - In-kind: Volunteer time; Donated property; Donated land

Eligibility Information

Matching Funds (Examples)

- Total Project Cost: \$200,000
 - CIG Contribution: \$100,000
 - Applicant's Contribution: \$100,000
- Total Project Cost: \$4,500,000
 - CIG Contribution: \$2,000,000
 - Applicant's Contribution: \$2,500,000
- Total Project Cost: \$1,000,000
 - CIG Contribution: \$500,000
 - Applicant's Contribution: \$500,000
 - Cash: \$350,000
 - In-kind: \$150,000

National Component

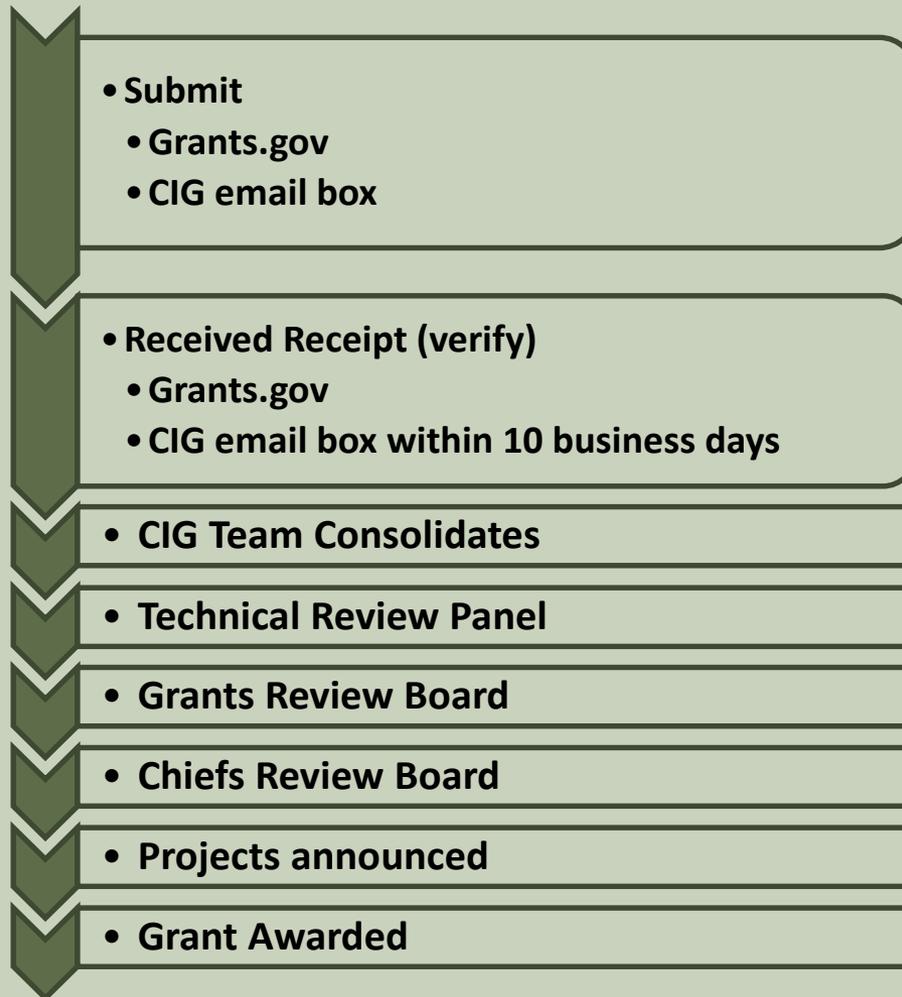
In fiscal year 2016, NRCS is making \$20 million available to support CIG.

In addition, the maximum award amount for any project will not exceed \$2 million. CIG will fund single and multiyear projects, not to exceed three years.

FY 2016 CIG Categories

1. Historically underserved producers, veteran framers or ranchers, or organizations comprised of or representing these individuals or entities
2. Improve/protect ground and/or surface water quality
3. Conservation Finance

FY 2016 CIG Process Flow Chart



Proposal Information

- Review APF
- Application Form: SF-424 - Application for Federal Assistance
- Project Executive Summary
 - The identified funding category will determine which technical panel will review the proposal
 - Include the topic(s) for consideration
 - If your project is selected, the Project Executive Summary will be the basis for NRCS publicity about the grant.
 - One paragraph description in non-technical language of the issue/problem and how the project addresses it innovatively through its objectives.
 - Write the summary with the public in mind as your audience.
- Project Description
 - EQIP Eligible Producer Participation
- Assessment of Environmental Impacts

Assessment of Environmental Impacts

V. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION FOR FULL PROPOSALS.

4. **Assessment of Environmental Impacts:** Will implementation of the proposal have physical, chemical or biological impacts on the environment? If so, describe in general terms what they will be and how extensive they will be. The description of the potential environmental impacts must address **beneficial and adverse impacts** of the proposed action. The length of the description should be commensurate with the complexity of the project proposed and natural environmental resources impacted directly, indirectly, 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. Natural environmental resources include **soil, water, air, plants, and animals**, as well as other **resources protected by law**, regulation, Executive Order, and agency policy.

Note #1: Please be aware that applications for *projects with potentially adverse impacts to natural resources may need to be modified* in order to achieve acceptable and beneficial levels of environmental impact. NRCS may choose not to select projects that cannot be modified.

Note #2: Please be aware that National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 review and consultation by NRCS State or Area Office with consulting parties (such as the pertinent State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and federally recognized Tribes) may be required prior to the implementation of conservation practices and/or activities for their potential to affect cultural resources.

NRCS Environmental Evaluation Worksheet

soil, water, air, plants, animals, and energy resource considerations.

RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS (Optional) Field Inventory Guide Sheet		Client/Plan Information:
Identify the resource concern(s) that need to be addressed and the assessment tool(s) used for the evaluation.		
SOIL	Erosion <input type="checkbox"/> Sheet, Rill & Wind Erosion <input type="checkbox"/> Concentrated flow <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive bank erosion from streams, shorelines or water conveyance channels <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
	Quality Degradation <input type="checkbox"/> Subsidence <input type="checkbox"/> Organic matter depletion <input type="checkbox"/> Compaction <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration of salts or other chemicals <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ Assessment tools, Problems & Notes: _____	
WATER	Excess / Insufficient Water <input type="checkbox"/> Excess (Ponding, flooding, seasonal high water table, seeps, and drifted snow) <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient (Inefficient moisture management) <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient (Inefficient use of irrigation water) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	Quality Degradation <input type="checkbox"/> Excess nutrients in surface and ground waters <input type="checkbox"/> Pesticides transported to surface and ground waters <input type="checkbox"/> Excess pathogens and chemicals from manure, bio-solids or compost applications <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive salts in surface and ground waters <input type="checkbox"/> Petroleum, heavy metals, and other pollutants transported to receiving water sources <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive sediment in surface waters <input type="checkbox"/> Elevated water temperature <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
	Assessment tools, Problems & Notes: _____	
AIR	Quality Impacts <input type="checkbox"/> Emissions of Particulate Matter (PM) and PM Precursors <input type="checkbox"/> Emissions of Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) <input type="checkbox"/> Emissions of Ozone Precursors <input type="checkbox"/> Objectionable odors <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
Assessment tools, Problems & Notes: _____		
PLANTS	Degraded Plant Condition <input type="checkbox"/> Undesirable plant productivity and health <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate structure and composition <input type="checkbox"/> Excessive plant pest pressure <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire hazard, excessive biomass accumulation <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
Assessment tools, Problems & Notes: _____		
ANIMALS	Inadequate Habitat for Fish and Wildlife <input type="checkbox"/> Habitat degradation <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	Livestock Production Limitation <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate feed and forage <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate livestock shelter <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate livestock water <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
	Assessment tools, Problems & Notes: _____	
ENERGY	Inefficient Energy Use <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment and facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Farming/ranching practices and field operations <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
Assessment tools, Problems & Notes: _____		

Assessment of Environmental Impacts

J. Natural Resources and Historic Property Review Requirements

1. 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 Federal actions that may have environmental effects. 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 if there will be actions with potential to affect the environment 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, Technical 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 pay for the preparation of the appropriate NEPA document** (e.g., Environmental Assessment 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.

Historic Preservation/Cultural Resources Compliance

J. Natural Resources and Historic Property Review Requirements (Continued)

2. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 and its implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800), and other related authorities, require federal agencies to determine if a project has the potential to cause an effect to historic properties and, if yes, if they are adverse and how the effects may be addressed. This **NHPA review and compliance** in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA and implementing regulations at 36 CFR Part 800 **must be completed by NRCS** and may not be delegated. This compliance process includes consultation with SHPOs, Tribes, THPOs, NHOs, and the appropriate preservation community regarding identification, evaluation of NRHP eligibility, evaluation of effects, **and if the effects are adverse**, treatment. This **treatment may include avoidance or other forms of mitigation** of adverse effects. This mitigation will occur **after the grant is awarded but before it is implemented**.

REVIEW, IDENTIFICATION, EVALUATION AND TREATMENT

Proposal Information

- Review APF
- Application Form: SF-424-Application for Federal Assistance
- Project Executive Summary
- Project Description
- Assessment of Environmental Impacts
- Budget Information: SF-424A-Budget Information
- Indirect Costs
- Matching

Budget Information: SF-424A

BUDGET INFORMATION - Non-Construction Programs

OMB Approval No. 0348-0044

SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY

Grant Program Function or Activity (a)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (b)	Estimated Unobligated Funds		New or Revised Budget		
		Federal (c)	Non-Federal (d)	Federal (e)	Non-Federal (f)	Total (g)
1. Conservation Innovation Grants	10.912	\$	\$	\$ 271,174.76	\$ 271,877.07	\$ 543,051.83
2.						0.00
3.						0.00
4.						0.00
5. Totals		\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 271,174.76	\$ 271,877.07	\$ 543,051.83

SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES

6. Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY					Total (5)
	(1)	Federal	(2)	Non-Federal	(3)	
a. Personnel	\$	113,778.00	\$	128,613.50	\$	\$ 242,391.50
b. Fringe Benefits		47,786.76		54,018.00		101,804.76
c. Travel		36,100.00				36,100.00
d. Equipment				90,975.00		90,975.00
e. Supplies		18,010.00		600.00		18,610.00
f. Contractual		37,500.00				37,500.00
g. Construction						0.00
h. Other		18,000.00				18,000.00
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a-6h)		271,174.76		274,206.50	0.00	545,381.26
j. Indirect Charges						0.00
k. TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6j)	\$	271,174.76	\$	274,206.50	\$ 0.00	\$ 545,381.26
7. Program Income	\$		\$		\$	\$ 0.00

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Standard Form 424A (Rev. 7-97)
Prescribed by OMB Circular A-102

Previous Edition Usable

Proposal Information

- List of Letters of Support
- *Declaration of Previous CIIG Projects Involvement* and Past Performance
- Declaration of Historically Underserved and Veteran Farmers or Ranchers
- Documentation of Submission to State Conservationist(s)
- Certifications: SF-424B - Assurances-Non-Construction Programs
- Additional Pre-award Requirements
 - DUNS Number
 - SAM

Key Points

See NRCS as your customer

- Innovative Technology or Approach
- Transferability
- Benefits Agricultural Producers who Partner with NRCS
- Clear deliverables
- Final product is useable by NRCS

Start early, plan to submit early

CIG Webpage

- Check the CIG Webpage for updated information and announcements
- Links to the APF and Grants.gov
- Click on “Applicants” button for applicant specific information

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/cig>

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Conservation Innovation Grants

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) are competitive grants that stimulate the development and adoption of innovative approaches and technologies for conservation on agricultural lands. CIG uses Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds to award competitive grants to non-Federal governmental or non-governmental organizations, American Indian Tribes, or individuals. Producers involved in CIG funded projects must be EQIP eligible.

Through CIG, NRCS partners with public and private entities to accelerate technology transfer and adopt promising technologies. These new technologies and approaches address some of the Nation's most pressing natural resources concerns. CIG benefits agricultural producers by providing more options for environmental enhancement and compliance with Federal, State, and local regulations.

2016 CIG Funding Opportunity

National Competition

NRCS is piloting a concentrated approach for awarding CIGs to address the nation's top natural resource priorities. This new approach allows NRCS to aggressively impact the natural resource areas of critical concern. The CIG focus for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 is **Water Quality and Conservation Finance**.

In keeping with NRCS's mission of "Helping People Help the Land", 10 percent of CIG funding will be set aside for projects benefiting historically underserved producers, farmers or ranchers who are military veterans, or organizations comprised of or representing these individuals.

The application period is now **open through May 10, 2016**. Please review the **2016 CIG Announcement for Program Funding (APF)** for application requirements.

Applications for CIG projects must be submitted through **Grants.gov** or with a PDF to nrcscig@wdc.usda.gov.

State Competition

The CIG state component emphasizes projects that benefit a limited geographical area. Participating states will announce their funding availability for CIG competitions through their state NRCS offices. For additional information about State CIG competitions, please contact your State NRCS office or search for the latest postings here.

CIG at a Glance

- Authorized by: 2002 Farm Bill
- First Grants Awarded: 2004
- Annual Funding Average: \$20 Million
- Total Grants Awarded since 2004 (national component): 634
- Total CIG Funding since 2004: \$237 Million

Additional Resources

- 2015 CIG Awards (PDF, 135 KB)
- CIG Fact Sheet (PDF, 280 KB)
- CIG Congressional Report (PDF, 916 KB)
- Top 10 CIG Stories (PDF, 1.3 MB)

Program Contact

nrcscig@wdc.usda.gov
Mike Bennett, CIG Program Manager (202) 720-1895
Mellany Cotton, Program Analyst (202) 720-7412

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CIG Applicants Page

- Sample Documents
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Additional Resources

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/programs/financial/cig/?cid=stelprdb1046235>

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For Applicants

Applicants Sample Documents

The sample documents provided below are to assist applicants in developing the project description and budget presentation for the CIG application. These samples are provided as guides; they are not required formats; they simply show how budget information can be presented. Please carefully read the first page of each document for further details about budget format.

Project Description

- > CIG Project Description Sample A (PDF, 275 KB)
- > CIG Project Description Sample B (PDF, 669 KB)

Budget

- > CIG Budget Sample A (PDF, 2 MB)
- > CIG Budget Sample B (PDF, 2 MB)
- > CIG Budget Sample C (PDF, 6 MB)

Frequently Asked Questions

FY 2016 CIG FAQs (PDF, 79 KB)

Webinar Presentation for Potential Applicants

A Webinar is scheduled for **Monday, March 21, 2016**. In addition to viewing and listening to the presentation you will have the opportunity to type in your questions.

Meeting Name: **2016.03.21 - CIG**
When: **03/21/2016 12:00 PM**
Time Zone: (GMT-05:00) **Eastern Time (US and Canada)**

To join the meeting: <https://usdanrcs.adobeconnect.com/r59ozreswug/>

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- > Test your connection: https://usdanrcs.adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm
- > Get a quick overview: <http://www.adobe.com/products/adobeconnect.html>

Presentation on Successful Grant Writing

Do's and Don'ts of Grant Writing - Gladys Gary Vaughn, USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (PDF, 204 KB)

Application Forms

Application Forms - Click link to access the following forms.

- SF-424 -- Application for Federal Assistance
- SF-424A -- Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs
- SF-424B -- Assurance-Non-Construction Programs

Website Links

- Federal Grants Website
- Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS)
- System for Awards Management (SAM)
- Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)

Grant Regulations

2 CFR Part 200
Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards

Program Contact

nrcscig@wdc.usda.gov
Mike Bennett, CIG Program Manager (202) 720-1895
Melleny Cotton, CIG Program Analyst (202) 720-7412

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

How to Submit

Electronically

- Grants.gov (USDA-NRCS-CIG-16-01)
- CIG email inbox - nrcscig@wdc.usda.gov
 - Email subject naming convention:
FY16 CIG Application Submission – Entity Name
 - Attach PDF Copy

**** Please do not mail paper copies**

Proposal Deadline

May 10, 2016 by 4 pm EST

Contact Information

Program Contact:

Mike Bennett, National CIG Program Manager

Phone: (202) 720-1895

E-mail: Mike.bennett@wdc.usda.gov

Melleny Cotton, National CIG Program Analyst

Phone: (202) 720-7412

E-mail: Melleny.cotton@wdc.usda.gov

Administrative Contact:

Frankie Comfort, Senior Grants and Agreements Specialist

Phone: (202) 720-0242

E-mail: Frankie.comfort@wdc.usda.gov

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