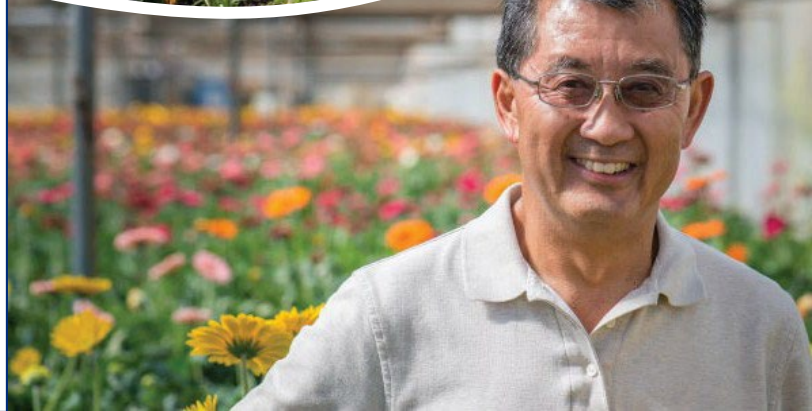




United States
Department of
Agriculture



Fiscal Year 2023
Equity in Conservation Outreach Cooperative
Agreements

Notice of Funding Opportunity
USDA-NRCS-NHQ-ECO-23-NOFO00012222

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY INFORMATION

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

Title: FY 2023 Equity in Conservation Outreach Cooperative Agreements

Number: USDA-NRCS-NHQ-ECO-23-NOFO0001222

Assistance Listing: This program is listed on [Sam.gov](https://sam.gov) under 10.938.

The System for Award Management (SAM) is an official U.S. Government web-based application that collects, validates, stores, and disseminates business information about the Federal Government's trading partners to support contract awards, grants, and electronic payments.

Summary

The primary goal of this outreach opportunity is for NRCS, in collaboration with partners, to expand conservation assistance to historically underserved producers and underserved communities and to provide opportunities for students to pursue careers in agriculture, natural resources, and related sciences. In this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO), NRCS requests proposals addressing priority areas listed under “Program Description” in this NFO (see section A).

Projects should support outreach activities that encourage diverse and inclusive participation in NRCS programs and introduce conservation planning and climate smart practices to protect farmland ecosystems, watersheds, and wildlife habitat in geographical areas of underserved communities ranging from rural agriculture to urban and small acreage producers.

This NFO is being released prior to appropriation and apportionment of funds for fiscal year 2023. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or an appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

The NRCS's Outreach and Partnerships Division provides leadership to ensure that access to all programs and services is fair and equitable, with attention given to reaching historically underserved producers and underserved communities.

This a noncompetitive NFO restricted to the eligible applicants listed in section C.1. NRCS has determined that noncompetitive awards under this NFO are in the best interest of the Government and necessary to accomplishing the goals of the program to provide outreach and technical assistance to historically underserved producers and underserved communities.

Key Dates

Applicants must submit their applications by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on 4/27/2023 in an email sent to sm.fpac.nrcs.dcwa2.opd_applications@usda.gov.

For inquiries about the NFO requirements, contact the Federal awarding agency (see section G of this NFO). Please limit questions to clarifying specific information contained in this NFO (such as dates, page numbers, discrepancies, etc.). Questions related to eligibility or the merits of a specific proposal will not be addressed.

A minimum of three webinars will be available for potential applicants. Webinar information will be posted to the following website <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/partner-with-us/outreach-and-partnerships/equity-in-conservation-cooperative-agreements-2023>.

Required Action	Timeframe
Obtain a Tax Identification Number/Employer Identification Number (TIN/EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service	Refer to Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Website for applicable timeframes. Not applicable for entities applying as individuals.
Obtain a Unique Entity Identification (UEI) Number	Refer to SAM.gov for applicable timeframes. Not applicable for entities applying as individuals.
Register with SAM.gov	Refer to SAM.gov for applicable timeframe. Not applicable for entities applying as individuals.
Submit proposals for Equity in Conservation Outreach Cooperative Agreement	02/27/2023 - 04/27/2023
Applicants notified of selection	5/30/2023
Applicants notified of non-selection	5/30/2023

Federal Funding Floor and Ceiling Amounts

The estimated funding floor for this opportunity is \$100,000, and the estimated funding ceiling is \$1,000,000. The funding floor is the minimum agreement funding amount for the Federal share for each awarded agreement. The ceiling is the maximum amount of agreement funding for the Federal share for each awarded agreement. These numbers refer to the total agreement amount, not a specific budget period.

Proposal Checklist

NRCS expects applicants to read the entire NFO prior to submitting their proposal to ensure that they understand the program's requirements. The following proposal checklist provides the required and optional documents to complete a proposal package.

Application packages are required to include the following:

- Project Proposal Application Template
 - Ensure that all required information listed in the template is included and does not exceed 15 pages of written text, excluding the budget details and narrative. Tables must be limited to the budget section.
 - Ensure that the project excludes unallowable costs and activities according to the funding restrictions noted in section D.
 - Applicants must submit the Project Proposal Application Template as a PDF or as a Microsoft Word document. Handwritten proposals will not be accepted.
- Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) signed by digital signature (an electronic, encrypted stamp of authentication on digital information) or ink signature
- Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
- Assurances – Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B), for individual entity type only
- Grants.gov Lobbying Form (also called the Certification of Lobbying Form)

If applicable, packages may also be required to include the following documents:

- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)

Federal Financial Assistance Training

The funding available through this NFO is Federal financial assistance. Grants 101 Training is highly recommended for additional education on Federal financial assistance. The training is free and available to the public at <https://www.cfo.gov/grants-training/>. It consists of five modules covering each of the following topics: (1) laws, regulations, and guidance; (2) financial assistance mechanisms; (3) uniform guidance administrative requirements; (4) cost principles; and (5) risk management and single audit. FPAC agencies also apply Federal financial assistance regulations to certain non-assistance awards (e.g., non-assistance cooperative agreements).

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APPENDIX A - Instructions for Completing SF424

APPENDIX B – Instructions for Completing SF424A

APPENDIX C – Budget Narrative Guidance

APPENDIX D – Project Proposal Application Template

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Legislative Authority

The authorizing statutes and regulations for this opportunity are the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act - Conservation Technical Assistance Program (16 U.S.C. §§ 590a-f and 590q).

2. About the Agency

NRCS serves as the lead USDA agency for natural resource issues on private lands. The agency works at the local level to provide technical and science-based assistance to individual farmers and ranchers in the 50 states and U.S. territories (Virgin Islands and Pacific Basin). The information provided through the following links highlights the different aspects of the programs administered by NRCS, as well as the technical processes used by NRCS to identify natural resource concerns and the conservation practices used to treat those concerns.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/conservation-technical-assistance>

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/farm-bill>

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/resources/guides-and-instructions/field-office-technical-guides>

3. Program Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of Equity in Conservation Outreach Cooperative Agreements is to leverage NRCS and partner resources by developing community-led conservation projects so that historically underserved producers and underserved communities will be able to access NRCS programs and services and learn of potential career opportunities in agriculture, natural resources, and related sciences.

Through this NFO, eligible applicants may propose projects that engage historically underserved producers and underserved communities equitably and offer access to opportunities through outreach activities that:

- promote NRCS programs through education or demonstration of conservation practices;
- develop community conservation partnerships that encourage historically underserved producers to plan and protect farmland ecosystems, watersheds, and wildlife habitat in geographical areas of underserved communities;
- inform small scale or urban agriculture producers about participation in conservation programs; and
- support education on, planning for, and adoption of conservation practices that are climate smart.

Applicants are encouraged to showcase the local environmental and economic value of adopting conservation measures through various methods, such as training and demonstrations.

Eligible applicants should consider outreach that is mutually beneficial to both the communities and NRCS, such as partnerships that incorporate local needs and prioritize conservation investments. Such outreach should increase awareness of NRCS programs, services, and career opportunities in agriculture and natural resources conservation within historically underserved producers and underserved communities.

The priority areas that NRCS will consider for this NFO are:

- a. Addressing local natural resource issues.** Outreach activities should support an understanding of the NRCS planning process and program implementation and provide opportunities for historically underserved producers to meet their conservation needs.
- b. Promoting potential conservation career opportunities.** Outreach should promote career opportunities in conservation by recruiting students from underserved communities or who attend minority-serving institutions including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, 1862 Tribal Colleges and Universities, 1890 and 1994 Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Asian American/Pacific Islander Serving Institutions. Introduce the principles and benefits of natural resources conservation through education and build an understanding of careers in agriculture, natural resources conservation, and related employment that builds the future of sustainable farming by preparing a diverse, next generation of producers and conservationists.
- c. Promoting the adoption of climate-smart conservation.** Outreach should assist historically underserved producers with understanding the support available through NRCS financial and technical assistance programs to help producers mitigate the impacts of extreme weather events through climate-smart conservation practices.
- d. Encouraging conservation in small-scale and urban agriculture.** Outreach should promote partnerships that improve NRCS's ability to connect with historically underserved producers and underserved communities on small acreage and increase their participation in NRCS conservation programs that meet the community's needs for sustainable food production.
- e. Developing conservation leadership skills and opportunities.** Outreach should inform historically underserved producers and underserved communities of leadership programs that will develop community leaders able to help NRCS with identifying local natural resource issues and community conservation priorities, as well as advance NRCS's ability to incorporate underserved community priorities into its implementation of NRCS conservation programs.

4. Definitions

- a. **Conservation Practice.** A specific treatment, such as a structural or vegetative measure or management technique, commonly used to meet specific needs for planning and implementing conservation. The specific standards and specifications developed for conservation practices are contained in the appropriate NRCS Field Office Technical Guide, which is based on the National Handbook of Conservation Practices.
- b. **Historically Underserved Producers.** A person, joint operation, legal entity, or Indian Tribe that is recognized as a beginning farmer or rancher, socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher, limited resource farmer or rancher, or veteran farmer or rancher (7 CFR §§ 1466.3 and 1470.3).
- c. **Beginning Farmer or Rancher.** A farmer or rancher who has not operated a farm or ranch for more than 10 consecutive years and who will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch. In the case of a contract with an individual or individual with the immediate family, material and substantial participation requires that the individual provide substantial day-to-day labor and management of the farm or ranch, consistent with the practices in the county or state where the farm is located.
- d. **Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher.** A farmer or rancher who has direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than the current indexed value in each of the previous 2 years and who has a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous 2 years.
- e. **Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher.** A farmer or rancher who is a member of one or more of the following groups whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of that group without regard to their individual qualities.
- American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - Hispanic

Also see <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/underserved-farmers-ranchers>.

- f. **Veteran Farmer or Rancher.** A farmer or rancher who has served in the Armed Forces (as defined in 38 U.S.C. § 101(10)), was released from service under conditions other than dishonorable, and (1) has never operated a farm or ranch, (2) has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years, or (3) is a veteran (as defined in section 101 of that title) who has first obtained status as a veteran (as so

defined) during the most recent 10-year period. The term “Armed Forces” are the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard, including the reserve components thereof.

- g. Technical Assistance Services.** Services that provide technical expertise, information, training, education, and the tools necessary for a producer to be able to successfully implement, operate, and maintain plans for the conservation of natural resources on land active in agricultural, forestry, or related uses. The term includes technical services provided directly to farmers, ranchers, and other eligible entities, such as conservation planning, technical consultation, and assistance with design and implementation of conservation practices.
- h. Resource Concern.** A specific natural resource issue or problem that represents a significant concern in a state or region and is likely to be addressed through the implementation of conservation practices by producers according to NRCS technical standards.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Estimated Funding

The Federal funding agency expects to award up to \$70 million through this opportunity. However, the agency retains the discretion to award a larger or lesser amount.

This NFO is being released prior to appropriation and apportionment of funds for fiscal year 2023. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or an appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

2. Start Dates and Performance Periods

Projects may be between 1 and 3 years in duration. Applicants should plan their projects based on an estimated project start date of 9/29/2023.

3. Number of Awards

There is no commitment by NRCS to make a specific number of awards.

4. Type of Award

a. Type of Federal Award

The agency plans to award cooperative agreements pursuant to this opportunity. The agency will be substantially involved in the work performed under the agreement and will undertake the following activities:

- Suspending work if specifications or work statements are not met
- Reviewing and approving one stage of work before another may begin

- Reviewing and approving substantive provisions of proposed subawards or contracts beyond existing Federal policy
- Collaborating or participating jointly with recipient
- Monitoring project to direct or redirect the work because of interrelationships with other projects and related impacts
- Overseeing agency requirements that limit recipient discretion
- Reviewing and approving key personnel
- Directing agency operational involvement or participation during the activity

b. Procurement Contracts

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

c. Eligibility of Renewal or Supplemental Project Applications

Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are eligible. 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 is 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 or 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 § 200.206(d)).

Eligibility for this opportunity is limited to the following SAM entities:

- Individual
- Native American tribal governments (Federally Recognized)
- Native American tribal government (State Recognized)
- 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)

- g. Private nonprofit institutions of higher education
- h. Public and state-controlled institutions of higher education
- i. Conservation districts

2. Other

Any award made pursuant to this NFO will be made to a single entity. Applicants that apply as “partnerships” or other similar groupings must clearly describe the relationship between the applicant and the “partner” parties. In all but exceptional cases, an awardee or sub-awardee relationship must be reflected in the award.

An applicant organization may **not** submit more than one application for different projects or that propose different approaches. In the case of applications submitted as revisions or corrections to a previously submitted application under this NFO, the agency will consider the last application submitted prior to the established deadline.

Awards made pursuant to this NFO are not Farm Bill producer contracts; therefore, the awards themselves are not limited by the payment limitations in 16 U.S.C. Chapter 58. However, any agricultural producers receiving a payment through participation in a project awarded under this NFO must meet the eligibility requirements of 7 CFR Part 12 and 7 CFR Part 1400 and have control of the land involved for the term of the proposed award period.

3. Cost Sharing or Matching

There is no cost sharing or matching requirement for this opportunity. There is no advantage to applicants who voluntarily provide a match.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Electronic Application Package

Applicants interested in applying to this NFO must submit their application through email to sm.fpac.nrcs.dcwa2.opd_applications@usda.gov; the agency will not accept applications submitted any other method including through Grants.gov or to any other email address. All required documents must be attached in a single email, but do not need to be combined in one attachment. Please state that you are applying to the FY 2023 Equity in Conservation Outreach NFO. Applicants are urged to submit early.

2. To Request Application Package

All information necessary to apply for this opportunity is included in the [Grants.gov](#) opportunity announcement.

3. Content and Form of Application Submission

The agency may choose not to consider applications that are incomplete or that fail to comply with the required content, format, and page limits.

To be considered for funding under this opportunity, an application must contain the following documents.

a. Project Narrative

Each page must be numbered and have 1-inch margins, be formatted single spaced, and be typed in a standard typeface (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial, Courier) with no smaller than 12-point font. The project narrative must not exceed 15 pages excluding the budget details and narrative. This page limitation only applies to the project narrative. The template for the project proposal application in Appendix D must be used and includes the following items:

- (1) Institutional background. Describes the applicant institution in terms of its location, demographics, mission, relationship to the service area and past successes in the project area.
- (2) Problem statement/needs assessment. Documents the problem or need with hard data, linking it to the funding source's goals and priorities, and identifies the situation that is causing concern and why it is happening.
- (3) Program goals and objectives. Identifies anticipated outcomes and benefits in measurable terms and projects how the situation is expected to change as a result of the award.
- (4) Methods/implementation. Describes the activities that directly support achieving the objectives (a timeline may be included in this section as well as a description of staffing needs).
- (5) Evaluation plan. Presents a plan for rating the success of the project at interim points and at the end of the project.

If your proposal will include information collection from non-Federal sources, ensure the collection meets the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act. Surveys of individuals or entities are generally prohibited without prior approval from the Office of Management and Budget. For additional guidance about allowable and unallowable activities, please visit the following website: <https://pra.digital.gov/do-i-need-clearance/>.

b. Application Form

Use Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance, to apply. See the instructions for completing the SF-424 that are located at the end of this document.

c. SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs

Fill in all spaces on the SF-424A, as appropriate. Section B, item 6, column 1 should reflect the agency funds. This form is the summary budget for the project and should

include the full project totals on pages 1 and 2. See the instructions for completing the SF 424A that are located at the end of this document. Refer to Section D of this opportunity for information regarding indirect costs.

d. Budget Narrative

- (1) In a separate document titled “Budget Narrative,” explain and justify all requested budget items or costs (refer to the budget narrative guidance located at the end of this document). 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 baseline 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. The pages included as the budget narrative do not count toward the page limit.
- (1) Any non-Federal entity (except state and local governments receiving more than \$35 million per year in Federal funding) that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. No documentation is required to justify the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate. As described in [2 CFR § 200.403](#), costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply for at any time.
- (2) MTDC are the costs for all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC exclude equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.
- (3) As required in 2 CFR § 200 Subpart F, “Audit Requirements,” all U.S. states, local governments, Federally recognized Native American tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending \$750,000 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.

e. Grants.gov Lobbying Form, Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

Under Title 31 U.S.C. § 1352, an applicant or recipient must not use any federally appropriated funds (either 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 connected with the award. Submitting an application also represents the applicant's certification of the statements in 2 CFR § 418, Appendix A—Certification Regarding Lobbying. If an applicant or applicant's organization has made or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying, the applicant must also complete and submit the Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) located at 2 CFR § 418 Appendix B. See 2 CFR § 418.110 for more information on when submission of this form is required.

f. Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement

If charging indirect costs upload the NICRA under "Other Attachments" (listed as an optional form) in the Grants.gov Opportunity Application Package.

g. Disclosure of Potential Conflict of Interest

Applicants must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the performance of employees in the selection, award, and administration of Federal awards. No employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a Federal award there is a real or apparent conflict of interest. A conflict of interest would arise if the employee, officer or agent, any immediate family member or domestic partner, or any organization that employs or is about to employ any of the parties referenced, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from an applicant being considered for a Federal award. The standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employees, or agents of the applicant.

If the applicant has a parent, affiliate, or subsidiary organization that is not a state, local government, or Native American tribe, the applicant must also maintain written standards of conduct covering organizational conflicts of interest. An organizational conflict of interest is a relationship with a parent company, affiliate, or subsidiary organization, in which the applicant is unable or appears to be unable to be impartial in conducting a Federal award action involving the related organization.

h. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management

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)), the applicant is required to: (1) be registered in SAM before submitting the application; (2) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (3) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during an active Federal award or when an application or

plan is 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 UEI 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, the agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and may use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

Applicants must obtain an UEI and register in SAM prior to registering with Grants.gov. Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply early for their SAM registration.

To register for SAM, go to <https://www.sam.gov>. The Federal Service Desk is available for registration assistance and can be contacted through the “Help” tab at the previously cited website.

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

4. Submission Dates and Times

Applicants must apply by email to sm.fpac.nrcs.dcwa2.opd_applications@usda.gov. Applications must be received by 11:59 pm Eastern Time (ET) on 4/27/2023. An application submitted after the deadline or a resubmission received after the deadline will not be reviewed or considered (an application is considered on time at 11:59.59 pm ET, but it is late at 12:00 am ET).

The agency will provide an email acknowledgement of receipt to the email address used for submitting the application package. The official date time stamp will be used to determine if the application was received prior to the deadline.

5. Intergovernmental Review

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

6. Funding Restrictions

Funds may not be used to pay any of the following costs unless otherwise permitted by law and approved in writing by the agency 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 award, including time spent applying for this opportunity.
- c. Costs that lie outside the scope of the approved project and 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.
- g. Capital expenditures for general purpose equipment, buildings, and land and for improvements to land, buildings, or equipment that materially increases their value or useful life. See 2 CFR § 200.439 for additional information.
- h. Management fees and profit. Any funds awarded to for-profit entities must be used for reimbursement of award-related direct and indirect costs only.
- i. Meals may be charged to an award only if they are necessary for the performance of the project. For instance, meals (normally only lunch) that are a necessary part of the costs of meetings and conferences (i.e., required attendance for the continuity of a meeting, the primary purpose of which is the dissemination of information) are allowable, as are costs of transportation, rental of facilities, speakers' fees, and other items incidental to such meetings or conferences. Meals consumed while in official travel status do not fall in this category. They are per diem expenses and should be reimbursed in accordance with the organization's established travel policies, which are subject to statutory limitations, or in accordance with Federal travel policies.
- j. Costs normally charged as [indirect costs](#) may not be charged as [direct costs](#) without proper justification and agency approval. Proper justification includes documentation that the costs meet the criteria for allowability (see 2 CFR 200.403). Examples of such costs include rent, utilities, depreciation on buildings and equipment, the costs of operating and maintaining facilities, and general administration and general expenses, such as the salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting.
- k. Salaries that are not commensurate with level of work may not be funded. All costs must be reasonable to be allowable (2 CFR § 200.403). Under 2 CFR § 200.404 a cost is defined as reasonable if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost. Salaries determined not to be reasonable compared to the level of work will be unallowable.

This list is not exhaustive. For additional information please refer to 2 CFR § 200 Subpart E, Cost Principals.

7. Indirect costs limitations

- a. A non-profit organization or institution of higher education awarded a cooperative agreement will be limited to a 10 percent indirect cost rate in accordance with the

agency's annual appropriations act. The 10 percent indirect cost rate applies to both Federal and non-Federal funds. 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 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). A state, local, or tribal government 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 that have a current NICRA must calculate indirect costs using the rate and base specified in their NICRA. Recipients may voluntarily reduce or waive recovery of indirect costs at their sole discretion and must not be influenced in any way by the agency. 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: (1) multiply the NICRA rate by the base stated in the NICRA to arrive at amount A, then (2) multiply the statutory limit of 10 percent by the total of all direct costs to arrive at amount B. The lower amount (either A or B) is the amount of indirect cost to include on the budget.
- d.** Recipients are prohibited from shifting unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.
- e.** Individual applicants applying for funds separate from a business or non-profit organization they may operate are not eligible to charge indirect costs to their award. If you are an individual applying for funding, do not include any indirect costs in your proposed budget.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Review and Selection Process

In accordance with 2 CFR § 415.1(d), this is a non-competitive NFO restricted to eligible entities listed in section C.1. NRCS has determined that noncompetitive awards under this NFO are in the best interest of the Government and necessary to the accomplishment of the goals of the program to provide outreach and technical assistance to historically underserved producers and underserved communities. NRCS will review each project proposal to ensure that it meets the statutory purpose of the program in accordance with section A, all application criteria are fulfilled in accordance with section D, and all costs are allowable in accordance with the restrictions in section D.6.

Applications will be screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete or noncompliant applications, or applications not meeting the formatting criteria may be eliminated from funding consideration. In that event, the

agency will send notification of elimination to the applicant. The agency intends to select and award without conducting any discussions or allowing applicants to correct deficiencies or omissions in their applications. Consequently, applicants must ensure their applications are complete and accurate by the application deadline. However, while the agency intends to select without contacting applicants, it reserves the right to request applicants to revise their applications to correct deficiencies or omissions it identifies. If this occurs, the agency will conduct discussions with all applicants, identify deficiencies and omissions for all, 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 applications.

If the number of qualified applications received exceeds the available funding, NRCS will prioritize applications based on factors such as entities' experience working with or developing relationships with the populations targeted in this project, capacity and qualifications to accomplish program goals, and demonstrated commitment to promoting racial equality and justice in agriculture. Any qualified applications that do not receive funding will be retained for consideration if additional funding becomes available.

After final award decisions, NRCS may notify the individual listed in block 8f on the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) to clarify or negotiate any revisions if necessary and possible. Failure to provide requested information in a timely manner may result in a project not receiving funding.

Merit and 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 Chief of NRCS.

The approving official may consider furthering programmatic purposes, including geographical dispersion, program balance, or diversity of awards when making final award decisions.

2. Merit Criteria

Applications for this non-competitive NFO will be assessed based on their ability to meet minimum criteria of demonstrating how the project will improve NRCS program delivery through outreach.

The project must meet at least one of the purposes and address one or more NRCS priorities listed in Section A.

Projects will be assessed based on alignment with the following criteria:

- The project's activities and outcomes are aligned with the purpose and priorities of this NFO. The applicant was persuasive and described in detail the project goals, including historically underserved producer groups and underserved

communities that will benefit from the project deliverables, as well as what community needs it will address. The applicant described project objectives that were specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time bound. The project included tangible and realistic outcomes, describing what will be accomplished, who will benefit, and how many people will be reached or engaged.

- The project is focused on a particular historically underserved producer or underserved community, or the intended audience is general in nature. The amount of anticipated participation by historically underserved producers or underserved communities is quantified.
- The applicant describes how the proposal was developed and how stated needs were determined. It is based on facts, first-hand knowledge, and data that is documented. Applicant's level of detail in describing the project goals, including historically underserved producer or underserved communities that will benefit from the project deliverables and what community needs it will address.
- The proposal includes information about the applicant's connectivity to the local community and why the applicant is well-suited to carry out this project. The organization has appropriately demonstrated experience in outreach and engagement with historically underserved producers and underserved communities, The organization also has the proven skills and abilities to foster relationships with historically underserved producers and underserved communities and increase an awareness of NRCS climate smart agricultural principles, as well as conservation planning and implementation.
- The proposal clearly communicates the goals and deliverables are achievable. The deliverables are reasonable and likely to be achieved. There is a direct link between the deliverables and the projected outcomes. The likelihood is that the project will be successful in positively impacting outreach to historically underserved producers and underserved communities in the specified timeframe and in the focused community.
- The timeline and established milestones are clear and reasonable.
- The applicant has identified expertise that is needed to carry out the project. Proposed staff has experience in the relevant field, as well as direct experience working with NRCS and with historically underserved producers and underserved communities. Personnel, partners, and contractors included in the plan are suitable to complete the project and support the agency priorities for conservation outreach, including equity, climate, and urban agriculture.
- The project outcomes are listed, measurable, and likely to be achieved.
- The budget is adequately explained and justified. The budget narrative provides sufficient detail of the costs and shows how it supports the project goals. Total

funding requested is appropriate for the scope of the project. Proposed costs are reasonable, necessary, and allocable to carry out project goals and objectives.

3. Administrative and Risk Criteria

A notice of selection after a merit or technical evaluation does not guarantee that an applicant will receive an award. Following a notification of selection for funding (see section F), staff from the FPAC Business Center's Grants and Agreements Division conducts a final administrative and risk review of those applications. The administrative review includes, but is not limited to, a check to ensure that NFO requirements were met (e.g., applicant meets eligibility criteria, application was submitted by the established deadline, etc.), and proposed costs are allowable, allocable, and necessary. During this process, it may be necessary to request further documentation from the applicant (e.g., organizational information as part of the risk assessment, more detail regarding proposed costs, etc.).

In addition, to comply with the requirements of 2 CFR § 200.206, the agency will follow the risk review process described in this section, at a minimum (additional steps may be taken).

The awarding agency will check SAM to ensure that 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 the Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System (FAPIS) in SAM (see 41 U.S.C. § 2313 and 2 CFR § 200.206(a)).

An applicant must meet the following standards to be considered for award:

a. Financial Stability

The applicant maintains adequate financial resources or cash flow to meet its financial obligations on a routine basis in order to successfully complete any agreement it may be awarded.

b. Quality of Management Systems and Ability to meet Management Standards prescribed in 2 CFR § 200

The applicant has a financial management system that is adequate to segregate and track Federal funds and has adequate systems in place for: (1) proper agreement administration; (2) compliance with the standards outlined in 2 CFR § 200 Section D for procurement, property, and records management; and (3) required financial and performance reporting.

c. History of Performance

If the applicant has previously obtained a Federal financial assistance award, the applicant must never have failed to materially comply with Federal award terms and conditions and, furthermore, must have never had an award terminated on that basis.

Submission of an application constitutes certification that an applicant meets these standards (items E.3.a through E.3.c). The agency may request documentation to substantiate the certification. Based on risk assessment, the agency may impose specific award conditions in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.208.

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

- a.** 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 FAPIIS in SAM. FAPIIS is a Federal database intended to serve as a Governmentwide source of information about the prior performance and compliance of Federal procurement contractors, grantees, and cooperative agreement holders (see 41 U.S.C. § 2313 and 2 CFR § 200.206(a)).
- b.** An applicant may review information in FAPIIS and comment on any information that a Federal awarding agency previously entered.
- c.** The agency will consider any comments provided by the applicant in addition to the other information in FAPIIS when 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 § 200.206, Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

The agency will provide notice that an application has been selected before it makes the Federal award. As such, the selection notification is not an authorization to begin work. 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 official is the only authorizing document and will be provided electronically to the awardee's authorized official for signature.

Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified of the award decision by email.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All project funds will be used in accordance with 2 CFR § 200 and the General Terms and Conditions, which are available on the following FPAC webpage:

<https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/about/grants-and-agreements/award-terms-and-conditions/index.html>.

Projects performed pursuant to this opportunity may be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act. If applicable, NRCS must work with awardees to complete an environmental review of each awarded project before project commencement. In addition, prior to any ground-disturbing activities related to NRCS funding, the awardee must work with NRCS staff to complete an environmental evaluation related to those activities. Awardees may be required to prepare or pay for the preparation of an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement if an environmental review should find that one is required.

In addition, a National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 review and consultation by an NRCS state or area office with consulting parties (such as the pertinent state historic preservation officer and Federally recognized Native American tribes) may be required prior to the implementation of project activities that have the potential to impact cultural resources. NHPA Section 106, its implementing regulations (36 CFR § 800), and other related authorities, require Federal agencies to determine if a project has the potential to affect historic properties and, if so, how any negative impact might be addressed. The NHPA review and compliance in accordance with NHPA Section 106 and implementing regulations at 36 CFR § 800 must be completed by NRCS, and applicants may be required to pay for any cultural resource surveys needed for NRCS to assess the project. More information on the applicant's role in the NHPA Section 106 process can be found on the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation website at <https://www.achp.gov/digital-library-section-106-landing/section-106-applicant-toolkit>.

Consultation with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service under the Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is also required for projects that may affect listed or proposed species or destroy or modify critical habitat. The ESA consultation in accordance with ESA Section 7 and implementing regulations at 50 CFR § 402 must be completed by NRCS prior to the implementation of project activities that have the potential to impact species or habitat protected under the ESA. More information on the Section 7 consultation process can be found at <https://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/consultations-overview.html>.

3. Reporting

Reporting will follow the guidelines included in the agency's General Terms and Conditions, which are available at the following website:

<https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/about/grants-and-agreements/award-terms-and-conditions/index.html>

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 § 200, Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters.

Applicants that receive awards pursuant to this opportunity and any subawardees 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).

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT

For questions regarding this opportunity, please contact the following individual with the NFO number in the subject line:

Name: Sondra Watkins
Grants Management Specialist
FPAC Business Center

Email: Sondra.Watkins@usda.gov with a copy to
FPAC.BC.GAD@USDA.GOV

H. OTHER INFORMATION

1. Questions regarding this opportunity must be submitted by email to the Federal awarding agency contact identified in section G providing the NFO number in the subject line.
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

Applications are considered confidential information. Applications are not shared with individuals or entities seeking public disclosure through the Freedom of Information Act without the consent of the applicant. More specifically, Executive Order 12600 and USDA Freedom of Information Act regulation 7 CFR § 1(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 award Federal award as a result of this opportunity. Only authorized Federal officials can bind the Federal Government to the expenditure of funds.

5. Any award made pursuant to this NFO may be executed in any number of counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

6. USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and 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 or 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 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. In addition, 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> or at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA providing 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 at:

mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410

fax: (202) 690-7442

email: program.intake@usda.gov

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

APPENDIX A: Instructions for Completing SF-424

SF-424, APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE INSTRUCTIONS FOR USDA-FPAC AGENCIES

Applicants must review these instructions to ensure the form is completed correctly. This will reduce the likelihood that the form will need to be returned for correction and potentially delay execution of any resultant agreement.

Item	Name	Instructions
1	Type of Submission	Select "Application" since this is first time your entity is applying for this funding opportunity.
2	Type of Application	Select "New" since this application is being submitted to an agency for the first time for this funding opportunity.
3	Date Received	Leave blank.
4	Applicant Identifier	Leave blank.
5a	Federal Entity Identifier	Leave blank.
5b	Federal Award Identifier	Leave blank.
6	Date Received by State	Leave blank.
7	State Application Identifier	Leave blank.
8a	Applicant Legal Name	Enter the legal name of applicant. This name must be consistent with the name as registered in the System for Award Management (SAM). If the name in SAM is not correct, update it.
8b	Applicant Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN)	Enter the employer or taxpayer identification number of applicant assigned by the Internal Revenue Service. This number must be consistent with the number in the applicant's SAM registration.
8c	Applicant Organizational DUNS/Unique Entity Identifier	Enter the DUNS number of applicants. This number must be consistent with the number in the applicant's SAM registration. The DUNS number is a total of 13 digits. The first 9 are the basic DUNS number from SAM. The last four digits are reserved for a certain purpose and is usually "0000" for most applicants.
8d	Applicant Address	Enter the mailing address of applicant. This address must be consistent with the mailing address in the applicant's SAM registration.
8e	Applicant Organizational Unit	Not required.
8f	Applicant Contact Information	Provide the name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application. This does not necessarily need to be the person with authority to sign the application. It is a point of contact for agency staff to contact regarding the application.
9	Type of Applicant 1	Select the type of entity the applicant is. This type must be consistent with the entity type listed in the applicant's SAM registration.
10	Name of Federal Agency	Enter the applicable agency: USDA-NRCS, USDA-FSA, or USDA-RMA
11	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number/Federal Assistance Listing and Title	Enter the CFDA number from the Notice of Funding Opportunity. For the title, see https://beta.sam.gov/
12	Funding Opportunity Number and Title	Enter the opportunity number and title from the Notice of Funding Opportunity
13	Competition Identification Number and Title	Leave blank.

14	Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.)	Leave blank.
15	Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project	Enter a concise title for the project.
16a	Congressional District of Applicant	Enter the Congressional district based on the physical address of the applicant as listed in the applicant's SAM registration. District numbers can be found at http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/ .
16b	Congressional District(s) of Program/Project	Enter the Congressional district(s) for all districts affected by the program/project. Enter in the format: first 2 characters for state abbreviation and next 3 characters for the district number (e.g., "CA-005" for California 5th district, "NC-103" for North Carolina's 103 district). If all congressional districts in a state are affected, enter "all" for the district number (e.g., "MD-all" for all congressional districts in Maryland). If nationwide (i.e., all districts within all states are affected, enter "US-all"). Attach an additional list of program/project congressional districts, if needed. District numbers can be found at http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/ .
17a	Proposed Project Start Date	Enter an estimated date consistent with what is stated on the Notice of Funding Opportunity. Do not anticipate an earlier award date, even though an earlier award may be possible.
17b	Proposed Project End Date	Enter the estimated end date consistent with the start date and what is stated on the Notice of Funding Opportunity
18a-g	Estimated Funding	Enter the project's total amount of funding by organization including the Federal share, applicant share (if any), and any other sources of applicant funding, other than their own funds. <i>These values must be consistent with the values on the SF-424A and the Budget Narrative.</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Federal</u>: enter the amount of Federal funds being requested. <u>Applicant</u>: enter cost share/match being provided by the applicant itself. Do not include cost share/match being provided by commitments from the sources listed below. <u>State</u>: enter the amount of any cost share/match being provided by a State government entity. <u>Local</u>: enter the amount of any cost share/match being provided by a Local government entity. <u>Other</u>: enter the amount of any cost share/match being provided by a source other than those listed above. <u>Program Income</u>: enter the amount of program income (if any) used for meeting cost share/match requirements (see 2 CFR 200.80 and 200.307). <u>Total</u>: enter the sum of all amounts. <i>This must equal the total proposed budget amounts above.</i>
19	Executive Order 12372	Select the applicable response as to whether or not the application is subject to State review under state laws or procedures. Executive Order 12372 can be found at https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/12372.html
20	Federal Debt Delinquency	Select the applicable response as to whether or not the applicant is delinquent on any Federal debt.
21	Certification and Signature	Check the "I Agree" box and provide the name and contact information for the person who is authorized by the applicant to submit the application on its behalf. The form will be electronically signed during the submission process on Grants.gov.

APPENDIX B: Instructions for Completing SF-424A

**SF-424A, BUDGET INFORMATION
INSTRUCTIONS FOR USDA-FPAC AGENCIES**

Applicants must review these instructions to ensure the form is completed correctly. This will reduce the likelihood that the form will need to be returned for correction and potentially delay execution of any resultant agreement.

SECTION A – BUDGET SUMMARY		
Column	Name	Instructions
(a)	Grant Program Function or Activity	FPAC agencies do not require the project budget be broken down into separate programs, functions, or activities on this form. That level of detail, if desired, is reserved for the Budget Narrative which is a related, but separate document. Enter “Federal” in 1(a) and Non-Federal in 2(a). Leave the remaining rows blank.
(b)	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number	Enter the CFDA number from the Notice of Funding Opportunity in 1(b) and 2(b). Leave the remaining rows blank.
(c)	Estimated Unobligated Funds: Federal	Leave this entire column blank.
(d)	Estimated Unobligated Funds: Non-Federal	Leave this entire column blank.
(e)	New or Revised Budget: Federal	Enter the total amount of the Federal funds requested in Row 1. Leave the remaining rows blank. This amount must be consistent with the amount in Block 18a of the SF-424.
(f)	New or Revised Budget: Non-Federal	Enter the total amount of the Non-Federal cost share/match in Row 2 and leave the remaining rows blank. This amount must be consistent with the total amount of Blocks 18b through 18f of the SF-424.
(g)	Total	This auto-calculates and is the total proposed agreement budget. This amount must be consistent with the total amount in Block 18g of the SF-424.

SECTION B – BUDGET CATEGORIES		
Column	Name	Instructions
(1)	Grant Program Function or Activity 1	The form will auto-populate “Federal” in the heading of Column 1. See the list of budget cost categories at the end of this table for guidance on what types of costs to include in each category. The total of Column 1 must be consistent with the Federal total in Section A.
(2)	Grant Program Function or Activity 2	The form will auto-populate “Non-Federal” in the heading of Column 2. See the list of budget cost categories at the end of this table for guidance on what types of costs to include in each category. The total of Column 2 must be consistent with the Non-Federal total in Section A.
(3)	Grant Program Function or Activity 3	Leave this entire column blank.
(4)	Grant Program Function or Activity 4	Leave this entire column blank.
(5)	Total	This auto-calculates.

		<i>All costs must comply with the cost principles of 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E – Cost Principles. All costs must be allowable (2 CFR 200.403), allocable to the agreement (2 CFR 200.405), and reasonable in amount (2 CFR 200.404).</i>
	Personnel	<p>Compensation for employees of the applicant, for example, wages and salaries. See 2 CFR 200.430, Compensation-Personal Services.</p> <p>Do not include the cost of fringe benefits in this category. Such costs must be listed in the “Fringe Benefit” category.</p> <p>Do not include the personnel cost of contractor’s or other organizations with which a contract or other agreement for their services exists. Those amounts must instead be listed under the “Contractual” category as part of the total value of the contract or agreement.</p> <p>Do not include the value of donated or volunteer services (or third-party in-kind contributions of services) as it may <i>not</i> be charged to the Federal award either as a direct or indirect cost (2 CFR 200.434). However, the value of those services may be used to meet cost sharing/matching requirements (2 CFR 200.306).</p>
	Fringe Benefits	<p>Fringe benefits should be separated out from the personnel category and are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages. Fringe benefits include, but are not limited to, the costs of leave (vacation, family-related, sick or military), employee insurance, pensions, and unemployment benefit plans. Also, see 2 CFR 200.431, Compensation-Fringe Benefits.</p> <p>Do not include the fringe benefit cost of contractor’s or other organizations with which a contract or other agreement for their services exists. Those amounts must instead be listed under the “Contractual” category as part of the total value of the contract or agreement.</p>
	Travel	<p>Travel costs are the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items incurred by employees who are in travel status on official business of the applicant. This only includes the travel costs directly incurred by employees of the applicant. Also, see 2 CFR 200.475, Travel Costs.</p> <p>Travel costs do not include the cost of renting a conference room for people who are in travel status. Instead, that type of cost should be included under the “Contractual” category.</p> <p>Travel costs incurred by a third-party under a contract or agreement with the applicant should instead listed under the “Contractual” category as part of the total value of the contract or agreement.</p>
	Equipment	<p>The common dictionary definition or common use of the term “equipment” does not apply to financial assistance agreements. Consequently, property that might otherwise normally be considered equipment, might actually be considered “supplies” as defined by 2 CFR 200.94.</p> <p>“Equipment” is defined as “tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of</p>

		<p>the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000. See also §200.12 Capital assets, 200.20 Computing devices, 200.48 General purpose equipment, 200.58 Information technology systems, 200.89 Special purpose equipment, and 200.94 Supplies” (2 CFR 200.33).</p> <p>Include the cost of all equipment planned to be acquired under the agreement in this budget category.</p> <p>Do not include the value of third-party in-kind contributions of property (2 CFR 200.96) as it may <i>not</i> be charged to the Federal award either as a direct or indirect cost (2 CFR 200.434). However, the value of this property may be used to meet cost sharing/matching requirements (2 CFR 200.306).</p> <p>Do not include the cost of renting or leasing equipment in this category. Instead, such costs should be included under the “Contractual” category. Also, see 2 CFR 200.465.</p> <p>Also, see 2 CFR 200.439, Equipment and Other Capital Expenditures, regarding allowability of costs.</p>
	Supplies	<p>Property that might otherwise normally be considered equipment, might actually be considered “supplies” as defined by 2 CFR 200.94 (see section above regarding the definition of equipment).</p> <p>“Supplies” is defined as all tangible personal property other than those described in §200.33 Equipment. A computing device is a supply if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes or \$5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life. See also §§200.20 Computing devices and 200.33 Equipment” (2 CFR 200.94).</p> <p>Include the cost of all supplies acquired under the agreement in this budget category.</p> <p>Non-tangible goods and services associated with supplies, such as printing services, photocopy services, and rental costs should be included in the “Other” category.</p> <p>Do not include the value of third-party in-kind contributions of property (2 CFR 200.96) as it may <i>not</i> be charged to the Federal award either as a direct or indirect cost (2 CFR 200.434). However, the value of this property may be used to meet cost sharing/matching requirements (2 CFR 200.306).</p> <p>Also, see 2 CFR 200.453, Materials and Supplies Costs, Including Costs of Computing Devices, regarding the allowability of costs.</p>
	Contractual	<p>Services to be carried out by an individual or organization other than the applicant in the form of procurement.</p> <p>It excludes the acquisition of equipment and supplies, which is included under those respective categories.</p> <p>Do not include the value of donated or volunteer services (third-party in-kind contributions of services). While the value of those services may be</p>

		used to meet cost sharing/matching requirements, it may <i>not</i> be charged to the Federal award either as a direct or indirect cost (2 CFR 200.434). Also, see 2 CFR 200.459, Professional Service Costs, regarding the allowability of costs.
	Construction	Include any construction, alteration, or repair of real property (e.g., buildings and facilities).
	Other (Direct Costs)	This category includes all other direct costs that do not fit in any of the other direct costs categories above. “Direct costs” is defined by 2 CFR 200.413. The costs in this section must be broken down in the budget narrative. Include sub-awards in this category Also, see 2 CFR 200.466, Scholarships and Student Aid Costs, regarding tuition remission.
	Indirect Charges	This category includes the amount of indirect cost permitted under the agreement. “Indirect costs” is defined by 2 CFR 200.414.

SECTION C – NON-FEDERAL RESOURCES

Not required to be completed

SECTION D – FORECASTED CASH NEEDS

Not required to be completed

SECTION E – BUDGET ESTIMATES OF FEDERAL FUNDS NEEDED FOR BALANCE OF THE PROJECT

Not required to be completed

SECTION F – OTHER BUDGET INFORMATION

Not required to be completed

APPENDIX C: Budget Narrative Guidance

All costs must comply with the cost principles of 2 CFR Part 200, [Subpart E, “Cost Principles.”](#) All costs (both Federal and any required non-federal cost sharing/match) that are part of an award must be:

- Allowable ([2 CFR Section 200.403](#)),
- Allocable to the agreement ([2 CFR Section 200.405](#)), and
- Reasonable in amount ([2 CFR Section 200.404](#)).

A thorough budget narrative will aid the administrative review and processing of a recommended award. Amounts included in a budget and budget narrative are estimates; in the event of an award, payments will be based on actual expenditures. The following is guidance for your use in preparing a thorough budget narrative. The guidance follows the order of the budget items.

COST SHARING/MATCHING: You must provide the information below for the federal portion of costs and **separately** provide the information below with the same level of detail for the cost sharing/matching portion, as applicable, as part of the budget narrative.

PERSONNEL – Only include employees of applicant organization

This category includes salaries and wages of personnel of the applicant organization (i.e., employees) that will be working directly on the project. For each individual, identify their role and describe their contributions to the project. Also include their annual salary, percent of effort, and the period of time they will contribute to the project along with the associated funds requested for support.

The following format is an appropriate way to provide the information:

Mr. Jones – Project Director. Accountable for assuring that all project activities are carried out in a timely, cost-efficient and responsible manner. He will provide oversight of daily activities and lead and direct the project toward accomplishment of the objectives of the project. He is responsible for the submission of the required reports.

Salary	% effort	Project Duration	Funds Requested
\$50,000	25%	12 months	\$12,500

FRINGE BENEFITS – Only related to salaries identified under Personnel

Fringe benefits include, but are not limited to, the costs of leave (e.g., vacation, family-related, sick or military), employee insurance, pensions, and unemployment benefit plans. Also, see [2 CFR Section 200.431](#), “Compensation - fringe benefits.” Provide information about how fringe benefits are determined along with the amount requested.

Example: Fringe benefits - 25% of salaries and wages (\$12,500 @ 25%). \$3,125

TRAVEL

See your organization's travel policy for guidance on how to arrange travel. If your organization lacks a policy, it is expected that you follow the U.S. Federal Government policy. See <http://www.gsa.gov/federaltravelregulation>.

For the budget narrative, identify the total funds requested for travel. Provide as much detail as possible including purpose, destination, dates of travel, and number of individuals for each trip. If the dates of travel are not known, specify estimated length of trip. Identify what will be followed (e.g., organizational travel policies or government per diem rates).

The following are a few examples of how to provide the information.

- 2 people - travel to Washington D.C. once per year for a two-day meeting [identify purpose of meeting].
 - Airfare \$800 x 2 for airfare = \$1,600;
 - Airport parking = \$64
 - Hotel for 3 nights x 2 @ \$200 = \$1,200;
 - Meals for 2 days x 2 = \$245;
 - Rental car for 3 days @ \$110/day = \$330. Total for trip: \$3,439
- Local travel for project manager is calculated at .50 per mile throughout primary service area x 326 miles/month x 12 months = \$1,956.

EQUIPMENT

Equipment is defined as an item of property that has an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more (unless the organization has established lower levels) and an expected service life of more than 1 year. List each item of equipment along with the applicable cost. Include justification of its need in accomplishing the goals of the project.

Example:

To complete objectives #1 and #2, Refrigerated Trailer is required. XYZ Refrigerated Trailer, Model #123, at \$5,555

These costs should only include the costs to purchase new equipment. The cost of renting or leasing equipment is not to be included in this category but instead, include under the "Contractual" category. If equipment is costly, include a lease versus purchase comparison in the budget narrative in support of route chosen.

SUPPLIES

Supplies are defined in [2 CFR Section 200.94](#) as all tangible personal property other than those described in [2 CFR Section 200.313](#), "Equipment." A computing device is a supply if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-federal entity for financial statement purposes or \$5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life. See [2 CFR Section 200.453](#), "Materials and Supplies Costs, Including Costs of Computing Devices," regarding the allowability of costs.

Indicate general categories of expendable supplies, including an amount for each category.
Caution: If a category is viewed as too general or the associated amount is too high, further itemization may be requested. Therefore, use good judgement in determining the level of detail to provide.

Example:

General office supplies \$50/mo. x 12 mo. = \$600
Postage \$37/mo. x 8 mo. = \$296
Laptop Computer 1 x \$900 = \$900
Printer 1 x \$300 = \$300
Projector 1 x \$900 = \$900
Copies 8000 copies x .10/copy = \$800

CONTRACTUAL

A contractor (versus a subrecipient) provides goods and services within normal business operations. These goods and services are ancillary to the operation of the federal program. A contractor generally provides similar goods or services to many different purchasers, and normally operates in a competitive environment. This category includes consultants, subcontracts, etc.

Consultants -- List the total costs for all consultant services. Identify each consultant, the services performed, total number of days, rate of pay, travel costs, per diem, and total estimated costs.

Contract -- A contract is defined in [2 CFR Section 200.22](#) as a legal instrument by which a non-federal entity purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program under a federal award. The term as used in this part does not include a legal instrument, even if the non-federal entity considers it a contract when the substance of the transaction meets the definition of a federal award or subaward (see §200.92 Subaward).

Explain the need for each agreement and how their use will support the purpose and goals of the project. For each contract, describe the associated activities, scope of work or services to be provided, and how the costs were estimated. If budgeting for a procurement action, document if a solicitation process has occurred or if the contract will be a sole source.

Example:

- ABC Company: Training \$250/individual x 3 staff 5 days = \$ 750
- Amy White to provide Technical Assistant Services
 - 1FTE @ \$25,000 + 20% Fringe Benefits of \$5,000 = \$30,000
 - Travel at 2,000 miles @ .50 per mile = \$ 1,000
 - Training course \$ 175
 - Supplies @ \$42.50 x 12 months = \$ 510
 - Telephone @ \$40 x 12 months = \$ 480 \$32,165
- John Doe, Consultant \$40 per hour x 220 hours for 12-month period = \$ 8,800

- To Be Announced Outreach Coordinator Annual salary \$30,000 x 10% level of effort/12 months = \$ 3,000

CONSTRUCTION

Construction efforts are to be included under this category with the same level of detail as described under the “Other” category below.

OTHER

Costs not fitting under one of the other categories are to be included under this category. The level of detail is to be commensurate with other categories. Subawards should be included in this category. Per [2 CFR Section 200.92](#), a subaward is an award provided by a pass-through entity to a subrecipient for the subrecipient to carry out part of a federal award received by the pass-through entity. It does not include payments to a contractor or payments to an individual that is a beneficiary of a federal program. A subaward may be provided through any form of legal agreement, including an agreement that the pass-through entity considers a contract.

Please include a similar level of detail in your subawardee budget narratives as you do for your primary awardee, including all relevant cost categories discussed elsewhere in this section.

Example: Outreach Workshop

- Rental of facilities (\$750/2 days) \$1,500
- Information technology services \$400
- Training packets (approx. 125/\$40 each) \$5,000
 - Total \$6,900

Note: Percentage for contingencies is not an allowable cost.

INDIRECT

[2 CFR Section 200.56](#) defines indirect (facilities & administrative (F&A)) costs as those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. To facilitate equitable distribution of indirect expenses to the cost objectives served, it may be necessary to establish a number of pools of indirect (F&A) costs. Indirect (F&A) cost pools must be distributed to benefitted cost objectives on bases that will produce an equitable result in consideration of relative benefits derived.

This cost category guidance includes several components:

- Calculation (This is to be included as part of the budget narrative)
- Indirect Cost Rates
- Negotiated Rate
- 10% De Minimis Rate
- Limitation (i.e., indirect cost cap)
- Unrecovered Indirect Costs for Cost Sharing/Match
- Voluntarily Reduce/Waive

Calculation.

If indirect costs are requested as part of the proposed budget, you must provide details used in determining the indirect costs requested. For instance, provide the calculation specifying the amounts used in applying the base (the base specified in the applicable rate agreement) by the applicable rate (see indirect cost rate info below as well as Limitation section). The calculation can be displayed in different formats but must capture the components (i.e., amounts used in applying the base and the applicable rate).

EXAMPLE 1: For purposes of this example, the recipient uses the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate (10 percent of Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)). MTDC means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$25,000 of each subaward. MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000.

Item	Budget	Indirect Eligible Amounts
Salaries and wages	\$50,000	\$50,000
Materials and supplies	\$3,000	\$3,000
Equipment	\$5,500	\$0
Subaward	\$30,000	\$25,000
		\$78,000 x 10% = \$7,800 Indirect Costs

EXAMPLE 2: For purposes of this example, the recipient has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) of 20 percent with a base of salaries and fringe benefits.

Item	Budget	Indirect Eligible Amounts
Salaries and wages	\$50,000	\$50,000
Fringe Benefits	\$10,000	\$10,000
Materials and supplies	\$3,000	\$0
Equipment	\$5,500	\$0
Subaward	\$30,000	\$0
		\$60,000 x 20% = \$12,000 Indirect Costs

Indirect costs may only be recovered if the non-federal entity has one of the following indirect cost rates.

1. Negotiated Rate: If the organization has a **current** NICRA established with the cognizant federal agency (the agency that provides the most funds to the organization), then provide a copy of the NICRA; expired rates are not acceptable. If unable to obtain a current negotiated rate from the cognizant agency, you are permitted to opt to use the 10 percent de minimis cost rate (you may only be reimbursed for allowable direct cost). Violation of cost accounting principles is not permitted when rebudgeting or charging costs to awards. Rather, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs. Along with a copy of the NICRA, include the rate and base as part of the budget narrative.

Example: Rate 24.87% of MTDC - 24.87% applied to the following items: \$97,300 of Personnel, \$23,352 of Fringe, \$110,000 of other, and the first \$25,000 of three (3) subawards = \$76,015.65 indirect costs

2. 10 Percent De Minimis Cost Rate: In accordance with [2 CFR Section 200.414\(f\)](#), any non-federal entities, unless excepted, may elect to forgo calculation of an indirect cost rate and request a 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate. The 10 percent de minimis rate is applied to modified total direct costs (MTDC). For this purpose, MTDC means total direct costs related to the award, such as direct labor, fringe benefits, materials and supplies, publications, consultant services and travel costs. MTDC excludes the following costs: equipment, capital expenditures, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward and subcontract in excess of \$25,000. Violation of cost accounting principles is not permitted when charging costs to awards. Rather, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs.

If the 10 percent de minimis option is chosen, it must be used consistently for all federal awards until such time you choose to negotiate for a rate, which you may apply to do at any time. If the organization previously opted for the de minimis rate, a copy of the rate agreement must be provided. If the organization is currently electing the de minimis rate, use an indirect cost rate of no more than 10 percent of MTDC when preparing the budget. If selected for award, a de minimis rate agreement will be executed along with the award, as appropriate.

Example: Rate 10% of MTDC – 10% applied to the following items: \$45,000 of Personnel, \$10,800 of Fringe, and \$59,000 of Other = \$11,480 indirect costs

Limitation: Some programs may not allow the recovery of indirect costs. In such instances, the limitation flows down to subcontractors. See the applicable notice of funding opportunity to determine if indirect costs are unallowable.

USDA appropriation acts limit indirect costs to 10 percent for cooperative and contribution agreements with nonprofit entities; for purposes of this limitation, “nonprofit entities” includes institutions of higher education. For agreements subject to this limitation, first apply the 10 percent indirect cost rate to the agreement’s total direct costs; this is shown on line 6.i of the SF-424A. Then calculate indirect costs using the rate and the direct cost application base specified in the recipient’s NICRA. Use whichever rate results in the lower amount.

If the organization has a NICRA, both the NICRA calculation and the 10 percent TDC must be completed in order to determine the lesser (i.e., maximum allowed indirect costs) for the applicable project.

Calculation instructions: First, multiply the NICRA rate by the base stated in the NICRA to arrive at amount A. Next, multiply the statutory limit of 10 percent by TDC to arrive at amount B. The lower of amount A and B is the maximum amount of allowable indirect cost, therefore include this amount on the budget.

Unrecovered Indirect Costs for Cost sharing/Match: 2 CFR Section 200.306(c) states that unrecovered indirect costs, including indirect costs on cost sharing or matching may be included as part of cost sharing or matching only with the prior approval of the federal awarding agency. 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 non-federal entity's approved negotiated indirect cost rate. In instances where indirect costs are statutorily

limited, unrecovered indirect costs will normally **not** be accepted as part of required cost sharing or match; it is only allowable if a statute specifically allows it.

Voluntarily Reduce/Waive: 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 organizations waive indirect cost recovery and request only direct costs, the organization is required to include in the award budget only those types of costs consistently treated as direct costs by the organization.

APPENDIX D: Project Proposal Application Template
EQUITY IN CONSERVATION OUTREACH COOPERATIVE
AGREEMENTS
PROJECT PROPOSAL APPLICATION TEMPLATE

Thoroughly review the Equity in Conservation Outreach Cooperative Agreements Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO) before completing this form. This form must be submitted as a PDF or Microsoft Word electronically along with the application package by email to SM.FPAC.NRCS.DCWA2.OPD.Applications@USDA.GOV.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Must match box 8 of the SF-424.

Organization (if an individual, enter name):..... *Enter the Applicant Organization's Business Name*
Phone Number:..... *Enter the Applicant Organization's Phone Number*
Email:..... *Enter the Applicant Organization's Email*
Physical Address:..... *Enter the Applicant Organization's Physical Address*
Mailing Address:..... *Enter the Applicant Organization's Mailing Address (if different than physical address)*

APPLICANT ENTITY TYPE

Select entity type as defined in Section C.1. of the NFO. For profit organizations are not eligible.

- Individual
- Native American tribal government (Federally recognized)
- Native American tribal government (State recognized)
- Native American tribal organizations
- Nonprofit organization having a 501(c)(3) status with the Internal Revenue Service (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)
- Nonprofit private institution of higher education
- Public and State-controlled institution of higher education
- Conservation Districts

ENTITY OWNERSHIP TYPE

This is for information only and will not be used as a selection criterion.

- Woman owned
- Veteran owned
- Minority owned
 - Asian-Pacific Islander American owned
 - Black American owned
 - Hispanic American owned
 - Native American owned
 - Other *Enter if not listed above.*

INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION TYPE

Select type of institute of higher education

- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU)
- 1890 Land-Grant Institutions Programs Colleges and Universities (1890 HBCU)
- Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU)
- 1994 Tribal Land Grant Colleges and Universities (1994 TCU)
- Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI)
- Asian American and Native American Pacific Inlander Serving Institutions (AANAPISI)
- 1862 Land Grant College or University
- Other *Enter institute of higher education type if not listed above.*

ORGANIZATON POINT OF CONTACTS (POC)

List the person who will be the main contact for any correspondence.

Name: *Enter the POC's Name*
Title: *Enter the POC's Title*
Phone Number: *Enter the POC's Phone Number*
Email: *Enter the POC's Email*
Mailing Address: *Enter the POC's Mailing Address*

Name 2: *Enter the POC-2's Name*
Title 2: *Enter the POC-2's Title*
Phone Number 2: *Enter the POC-2's Phone Number*
Email 2: *Enter the POC-2's Email*
Mailing Address 2: *Enter the POC-2's Mailing Address*

AUTHORIZED ORGANIZATON REPRESENTATIVE (AOR)

List the person who is responsible for signing any documentation should the cooperative agreement be awarded.

Name: *Enter the AOR's Name*
Title: *Enter the AOR's Title*
Phone Number: *Enter the AOR's Phone Number*
Email: *Enter the AOR's Email*
Mailing Address: *Enter the AOR's Mailing Address*

PROJECT TITLE

Provide a descriptive project title in 15 words or less in the space below. Must match box 15 of the SF-424.

Enter Project Title – 15 words limit

FUNDING REQUEST

Insert the total amount (\$) of Federal funds requested. This must match the total amount requested on Line 18a. Estimated Federal Funding of the SF-424.

Total Funds Requested (\$100,000 to \$1,000,000.00):.....Enter Total Funds Requested Amount \$

DURATION OF PROJECT

Start Date: *Start Date* **End Date:** *End Date*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Include a project summary of **250 words or less** suitable for dissemination to the public. A Project Summary provides a description of your project's outreach and technical assistance need, purpose, goals, and expected outcomes.

Enter project summary.

LOCATION OF WORK TO BE COMPLETED

Select all states where work will be completed.

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alaska | <input type="checkbox"/> Indiana | <input type="checkbox"/> Nevada | <input type="checkbox"/> Texas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alabama | <input type="checkbox"/> Iowa | <input type="checkbox"/> New Hampshire | <input type="checkbox"/> Utah |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arkansas | <input type="checkbox"/> Kansas | <input type="checkbox"/> New Jersey | <input type="checkbox"/> Vermont |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arizona | <input type="checkbox"/> Kentucky | <input type="checkbox"/> New Mexico | <input type="checkbox"/> Virginia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> California | <input type="checkbox"/> Louisiana | <input type="checkbox"/> New York | <input type="checkbox"/> Washington |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colorado | <input type="checkbox"/> Maine | <input type="checkbox"/> North Carolina | <input type="checkbox"/> West Virginia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connecticut | <input type="checkbox"/> Maryland | <input type="checkbox"/> North Dakota | <input type="checkbox"/> Wisconsin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> District of Columbia | <input type="checkbox"/> Massachusetts | <input type="checkbox"/> Ohio | <input type="checkbox"/> Wyoming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Delaware | <input type="checkbox"/> Michigan | <input type="checkbox"/> Oklahoma | <input type="checkbox"/> Puerto Rico and
Virgin Islands |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Florida | <input type="checkbox"/> Minnesota | <input type="checkbox"/> Oregon | <input type="checkbox"/> Nationwide |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Georgia | <input type="checkbox"/> Mississippi | <input type="checkbox"/> Pennsylvania | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hawaii and
Pacific Islands | <input type="checkbox"/> Minnesota | <input type="checkbox"/> Rhode Island | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Idaho | <input type="checkbox"/> Missouri | <input type="checkbox"/> South Carolina | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois | <input type="checkbox"/> Montana | <input type="checkbox"/> South Dakota | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Nebraska | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennessee | |

Enter congressional district(s) where work will be completed:

Congressional District(s): *Enter congressional district where work will be completed.*

PROJECT NARRATIVE

The project narrative must cover all activities proposed to be carried out with federal funds. All project narratives must contain headings 1 through 4 below, in order, and respond to each of the points included under each heading.

1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

- *Present a statement of need or assessment of the problem. What is the situation that is causing concern? Why is it happening?*
- *Describe the focus area and how you determined the need there, with at least one source of data supporting that need.*
- *Describe the project community, explaining the needs of the local community, and provide at least one source of supporting data, such as demographics, income, and/or geographic characteristics of the area or community.*
- *Explain how the project is aligned with the purpose and priorities of this program and will make a difference in the identified communities.*
- *Describe how this project will initiate, build upon, or expand related work or programs.*

Enter Project Overview

2. PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- *Concisely state the goals and objectives of the proposed project.*
- *Describe the project goals, including who will benefit from the project and what community needs it will address.*
- *Describe project objectives that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound.*
- *Describe project outcomes, including what will be accomplished, who will benefit (e.g., residents, students, participants), and how many people will benefit.*
- *Describe the involvement of stakeholders in developing project objectives and implementing results.*

Enter Project Goals and Objectives

3. THE ORGANIZATION AND PARTNERS INVOLVED (WHERE APPLICABLE)

- *Explain your organization's experience working with historically underserved groups and/or underserved communities and in providing conservation outreach and technical assistance in the project area.*
- *List your organization's leadership and key personnel for this project. For everyone listed, describe: their role in project and qualifications to carry out project, including experience and expertise in agriculture and conservation (which will be considered as important as academic or professional credentials).*
- *List partner organizations for this project and include their contact information, relevant experience, community connections, and specific responsibilities for achieving the project goals.*
- *Explain plans to coordinate work with partner organizations and to leverage existing resources.*

Enter the organization and partners involved

4. PROJECT METHODOLOGY/WORKPLAN AND ACTIVITIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS

- *Summarize the work to be performed in nontechnical terms for each goal and project objectives.*
- *Explain why the applicant and its partners (where applicable) selected the activities proposed in the application.*
- *Include a timeline of activities with milestones and verifiable indicators to demonstrate how progress will be achieved. Include the specific tasks to complete each activity and identify the responsible party to complete the task.*
- *Describe plan to ensure financial accountability, including accounting and purchasing policies of your organization.*
- *Describe the method utilized to measure key and important progress toward the projects goal and how you will evaluate the project outcome and whether objectives were met.*

Enter workplan and activities to achieve the goals

PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

Describe who and how many will benefit from your project. This should include an estimate of the type and number of historically underserved producers to be reached.

Describe beneficiaries of this proposal.

Historically Underserved Producer Groups	Numbers Reached/Served
Beginning Farmer and Rancher	Number
Limited Resource Farmer and Rancher	Number
Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	Number
Asian	Number
Black or African American	Number
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	Number
Hispanic	Number
Veteran Farmer or Rancher	Number
Students/Youth	Number

TECHNICAL MERIT

EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND DELIVERABLES

List the expected accomplishments and deliverables and the number of historically underserved producers reached or served.

#	Accomplishments/Deliverables	Number of Historically Underserved Producers Reached
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

WORK PLAN

Develop a Task Timeline using the headings below. List and describe each individual task to be performed including the timeframe for implementation; and milestone(s) for assessing progress and success. The task descriptions should be sufficiently detailed to give a clear understanding of the general flow of work necessary to complete the project. There should be one or more milestones for each of the deliverables.

#	Task Description	Anticipated Start Date	Anticipated Completion Date	Milestone(s) for Assessing Progress and Success
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

ACHIEVABILITY

SELECT THE APPROPRIATE OUTCOME(S) AND INDICATOR(S)/SUB-INDICATOR(S)

All applicants must identify a minimum of one outcome from the list below and provide an indicator that will be addressed through your project. You will need to establish baseline numbers and/or estimate realistic target numbers for the outcome(s) and indicator(s) you select.

FOR EXAMPLE:

Outcome 2, Indicator 1.
Description: Host training sessions on the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to Veteran Farmers and Ranchers in Ohio to increase their knowledge about NRCS financial and technical assistance to address natural resource concerns through EQIP.
Estimated Number: 10 training sessions, 80 veterans reached.

OUTCOME MEASURE(S)

- Outcome 1: To address local natural resource issues with a focus on working with historically underserved producers and underserved communities, especially those that:**
- a. Improve the environmental and economic performance of working lands
 - b. Improve water quality and/or quantity
 - c. Improve soil health
 - d. Provide habitat for local wildlife species of concern

Indicator	Description	Estimated Number
1.a.		
1.b.		

Outcome 2: Demonstrating [Climate-Smart Conservation Activities](#) that build climate resilience, by mitigating climate change through reducing GHG emissions and/or sequestering carbon, or by adapting agriculture to a world with a changing climate, building a more sustainable future through effective environmental practices on the land.

Indicator	Description	Estimated Number
2.a.		
2.b.		

Outcome 3: Encouraging partnerships to emphasize equity in advancing underserved communities utilizing urban and small-scale agriculture.

Indicator	Description	Estimated Number
3.a.		
3.b.		

Outcome 4: Developing state and community-led conservation leadership for historically underserved producers and underserved communities.

Indicator	Description	Estimated Number
4.a.		
4.b.		

Outcome 5: Developing high school and college students from underserved communities to pursue NRCS career opportunities.

Indicator	Description	Estimated Number
5.a.		
5.b.		

REPORTING ON SELECTED OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS

For each completed outcome indicator explain how you will achieve the selected outcome in the space below. Provide a clear, concise description of the steps including specific work to be accomplished and any potential challenges. If specific plans have not been developed, explain your plan for having them developed.

Outcome and Indicator # <i>1.a., 2.a., 3.a.,</i>	How did you derive the estimated numbers? <i>1.a., documented background or baseline information, etc.</i>	How and when do you intend to evaluate? <i>I.e., surveys, 3rd party assessment</i>	Anticipated key factors predicted to contribute to and restrict outcome <i>Including action steps for addressing identified restricting factors</i>

EXPERTISE AND PARTNERS

List key staff, including applicant personnel and external project partners and collaborators that comprise the Project Team, their role, their relevant experience in developing and operating projects like those to be conducted under this project.

#	Name and Title of Key Staff	Role	Relevant Experience and Past Successes
1			
2			
3			

PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Describe your management plan including applicant personnel and external project partners, will be leading, coordinating, and carrying out activities under this project.

Enter Entity's Management Plan

FISCAL PLAN AND RESOURCES

All expenses described in your Standard Form (SF) 424A, Budget Information must be associated with expenses that will be covered by the Equity Conservation Cooperative Agreements. Applicants should review the Request for Applications Section D.6. Funding Restrictions and Section D.7. Indirect Cost Limitations prior to developing their budget narrative. **See budget narrative guidance for guidance on how each category should be calculated.**

BUDGET SUMMARY

Expense Category	Funds Requested
Personnel	
Fringe Benefits	
Travel	
Equipment	
Supplies	
Contractual	
Other	
Direct Costs Subtotal	
Indirect Costs	
Total Budget (direct +indirect)	

Will Entity be requesting indirect cost?

If yes, will it be a NICRA or De Minimis? NICRA De Minimis

PERSONNEL

List the organization's employees whose time and effort can be specifically identified and easily and accurately traced to project activities. See the Request for Applications Section D.6. Funding Restrictions and Section D.7. Indirect Cost Limitations for further guidance.

#	Name/Title	Annual Salary or Hourly Wage	Level of Effort (# of hours OR % FTE)	Funds Requested
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
Personnel Subtotal				

PERSONNEL JUSTIFICATION

For each individual listed in the above table, describe the activities to be completed by name/title including approximately when activities will occur. Add more personnel by copying and pasting the existing listing or deleting personnel that aren't necessary.

Personnel 1:

Personnel 2:

Personnel 3:

Personnel 4:

Personnel 5:

Personnel 6:

FRINGE BENEFITS

Provide the fringe benefit rates for each of the project's salaried employees described in the Personnel section that will be paid with the Equity Conservation Cooperative Agreements funds.

#	Name/Title	Fringe Benefit Rate	Funds Requested
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
Fringe Benefits Subtotal			

TRAVEL

Explain the purpose for each Trip Request. Please note that travel costs are limited to those allowed by formal organizational policy; in the case of air travel, project participants must use the lowest reasonable commercial airfares. For recipient organizations that have no formal travel policy and for-profit recipients, allowable travel costs may not exceed those established by the Federal Travel Regulation, issued by GSA, including the maximum per diem and subsistence rates prescribed in those regulations. This information is available at <http://www.gsa.gov>.

#	Trip Destination	Type of Expense (airfare, car rental, hotel, meals, mileage, etc.)	Unit of Measure (days, nights, miles)	# of Units	Cost per Unit	# of Travelers Claiming the Expense	Funds Requested
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
Travel Subtotal							

TRAVEL JUSTIFICATION

For each trip listed in the above table describe the purpose of this trip and how it will achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. Be sure to include approximately when the trip will occur. Add more trips by copying and pasting the existing listing or delete trips that aren't necessary.

Trip 1 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Trip 2 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Trip 3 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Trip 4 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Trip 5 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Trip 6 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

CONFORMING WITH YOUR TRAVEL POLICY

By checking the box to the right, I confirm that my organization's established travel policies will be adhered to when completing the above-mentioned trips in accordance with [2 CFR 200.474](#) or [48 CFR subpart 31.2](#) as applicable.

EQUIPMENT

Describe any special purpose equipment to be purchased or rented under the grant. "Special purpose equipment" is tangible, nonexpendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost that equals or exceeds \$5,000 per unit and is used only for research, medical, scientific, or other technical activities.

Purchase of "general purpose equipment" requires prior approval and must be necessary and directly related to the activities of the project.

#	Item Description	Rental or Purchase	Acquire When?	Funds Requested
1				
2				
3				
Equipment Subtotal				

EQUIPMENT JUSTIFICATION

For each piece of Equipment listed in the table above, describe the need and how this equipment will be used to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. Add more equipment by copying and pasting the existing listing or delete equipment that isn't necessary.

Equipment 1:

Equipment 2:

Equipment 3:

SUPPLIES

List the materials, supplies, and fabricated parts costing less than \$5,000 per unit and describe how they will support the purpose and goal of the proposal.

#	Item Description	Per-Unit Cost	# of Units/Pieces Purchased	Acquire When?	Funds Requested
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
Supplies Subtotal					

SUPPLIES JUSTIFICATION

Describe the purpose of each supply listed in the table above purchased and how it is necessary for the completion of the project's objective(s) and outcome(s).

Supply 1:

Supply 2:

Supply 3:

Supply 4:

Supply 5:

Supply 6:

Supply 7:

Supply 8:

CONTRACTUAL/CONSULTANT

Contractual/consultant costs are the expenses associated with purchasing goods and/or procuring services performed by an individual or organization other than the applicant in the form of a procurement relationship. If there is more than one contractor or consultant, each must be described separately. (Repeat this section for each contract/consultant.)

ITEMIZED CONTRACTOR(S)/CONSULTANT(S) (CONTRACTUAL/SUBAWARDS)

Provide a list of contractors/consultants (contractual/subaward), detailing out the name, hourly/flat rate, and overall cost of the services performed. Please note that any statutory limitations on indirect costs also apply to contractors and consultants. If travel and supply are needed for the contractor or consultant, complete below tables with justification.

#	Name/Organization	Hourly Rate or Annual Salary/Flat Rate	Level of Effort (# of hours OR % FTE)	Funds Requested
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
Contractual/Consultant Subtotal				

CONTRACTUAL JUSTIFICATION

Provide for each of your real or anticipated contractors listed above a description of the project activities each will accomplish to meet the objectives and outcomes of the project. Each section should also include a justification for why contractual/consultant services are to be used to meet the anticipated outcomes and objectives. Include timelines for each activity. If contractor employee and consultant hourly rates of pay exceed the salary of a GS-15 step 10 Federal employee in your area, provide a justification for the expenses. This limit does not include fringe benefits, travel, indirect costs, or other expenses.

Contractor/Consultant 1:

Contractor/Consultant 2:

Contractor/Consultant 3:

Contractor/Consultant 4:

Contractor/Consultant 5:

Contractor/Consultant 6:

Contractor/Consultant 7:

Contractor/Consultant 8:

Provide the fringe benefit rates for each of the contractual/subaward employees described above section that will be paid with the Equity Conservation Cooperative Agreements funds.

#	Name/Title	Fringe Benefit Rate	Funds Requested
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
Fringe Benefits Subtotal			

Explain the purpose for each Trip Request for each contractual/subaward. Please note that travel costs are limited to those allowed by formal organizational policy; in the case of air travel, project participants must use the lowest reasonable commercial airfares. For recipient organizations that have no formal travel policy and for-profit recipients, allowable travel costs may not exceed those established by the Federal Travel Regulation, issued by GSA, including the maximum per diem and subsistence rates prescribed in those regulations. This information is available at <http://www.gsa.gov>.

#	Trip Destination	Type of Expense (airfare, car rental, hotel, meals, mileage, etc.)	Unit of Measure (days, nights, miles)	# of Units	Cost per Unit	# of Travelers Claiming the Expense	Funds Requested
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
Travel Subtotal							

TRAVEL JUSTIFICATION FOR CONTRACTUAL/SUBAWARDS

For each trip listed in the above table for contractals/subawards, describe the purpose of this trip and how it will achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project. Be sure to include approximately when the trip will occur. Add more trips by copying and pasting the existing listing or delete trips that aren't necessary.

Trip 1 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Trip 2 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Trip 3 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Trip 4 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Trip 5 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

Trip 6 (Approximate Date of Travel MM/YYYY):

List the materials, supplies, and fabricated parts costing less than \$5,000 per unit and describe how they will support the contractual/subaward.

#	Item Description	Per-Unit Cost	# of Units/Pieces Purchased	Acquire When?	Funds Requested
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
Supplies Subtotal					

SUPPLIES JUSTIFICATION CONTRACTUAL/SUBAWARDS

Describe the purpose of each supply listed in the table above purchased and how it is necessary for the completion of the project's objective(s) and outcome(s).

Supply 1:

Supply 2:

Supply 3:

Supply 4:

Supply 5:

Supply 6:

Supply 7:

Supply 8:

If any, indirect costs (also known as "facilities and administrative costs"—defined at [2 CFR §200.1](#)) for contractual/subawards represent the expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with a particular grant, contract, or project function or activity, but are necessary for the general operation of the organization and the conduct of activities it performs. See Section D.7. Indirect Cost Limitations for further guidance.

Indirect Cost Rate for Contractual/Subawards	Funds Requested
Personnel	
Fringe Benefits	
Travel	
Equipment	
Supplies	
Contractual	
Other	
Direct Costs Subtotal for Indirect Costs Calculation	
Modified Total Direct Cost (MDTC) if applicable	

Indirect Cost Rate for Contractual/Subawards		Funds Requested
Indirect Percentage		
Indirect Cost		

CONFORMING WITH YOUR PROCUREMENT STANDARDS

By checking the box to the right, I confirm that my organization followed the same policies and procedures used for procurements from non-federal sources, which reflect applicable State and local laws and regulations and conform to the Federal laws and standards identified in [2 CFR Part 200.317 through 326](#), as applicable. If the contractor(s)/consultant(s) are not already selected, my organization will follow the same requirements.

OTHER

Include any expenses not covered in any of the previous budget categories. Be sure to break down costs into cost/unit. Expenses in this section include, but are not limited to, meetings and conferences, communications, rental expenses, advertisements, publication costs, and data collection.

If you budget meal costs for reasons other than meals associated with travel per diem, provide an adequate justification to support that these costs are not entertainment costs.

Item Description	Per-Unit Cost	Number of Units	Acquire When?	Funds Requested
Other Subtotal				

OTHER JUSTIFICATION

Describe the purpose of each item listed in the table above purchased and how it is necessary for the completion of the project's objective(s) and outcome(s).

INDIRECT COSTS

Indirect costs (also known as "facilities and administrative costs"—defined at [2 CFR §200.1](#)) represent the expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with a particular grant, contract, or project function or activity, but are necessary for the general operation of the organization and the conduct of activities it performs. See Section D.6. Indirect Cost Limitations for further guidance.

Note: Individuals are not eligible to charge indirect costs to their award.

Indirect Cost Rate	BASE	Funds Requested
Indirect Subtotal		

OTHER

DO YOU HAVE OR HAVE HAD AN AGREEMENT OR GRANT WITH NRCS?

Yes

No

IF YES, LIST THE GRANTS OR AGREEMENTS AND PROVIDE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HOW THIS PROJECT APPLICATION IS DIFFERENT.

#	Grant Program	Description of Difference
1		
2		
3		

HAVE YOU SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT PROPOSAL TO ANOTHER FEDERAL OR STATE GRANT PROGRAM?

Yes

No

IF YES, LIST THE FEDERAL OR STATE GRANT PROGRAM AND DESCRIBE HOW THE PROJECT IS DIFFERENT.

#	Grant Program	Description of Difference
1		
2		
3		

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

