

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Commodity Credit Corporation
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Georgia State Office

**Enhancing Program Delivery in Georgia
(Available Only in Georgia)
Fiscal Year 2013 Announcement of Program Funding**

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.072-Wetlands Reserve Program; 10.902-Conservation Technical Assistance; 10.912-Environmental Quality Incentives Program; 10.914-Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program; 10.924 Conservation Stewardship Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Georgia NRCS is making a Request For Proposals (RFP) to applicants for outreach and related activities that will improve USDA-NRCS program promotion and delivery to new and underserved individuals, groups that serve and support veterans, women and the impoverished communities in Georgia. As a result, the Georgia NRCS will partner with the successful applicants on these related activities and projects that will improve program promotion, delivery and technical assistance to these groups. For FY 2013, up to \$400,000 is available for the Georgia NRCS program delivery enhancement competition. Cooperative agreements under this RFP will not exceed **\$50,000**, and must be equal to or more than **\$10,000** from NRCS, with a required **25 percent local match** for any level of funding received. Funds will be awarded through a statewide competitive cooperative agreements process. Applications are requested from eligible entities only for competitive consideration of cooperative agreement awards for outreach related projects between one and two years in duration. This notice identifies the objectives for projects, the eligibility criteria for projects, and associated instructions needed to apply for cooperative agreements.

APPLICATION DUE DATE AND ADDRESSES: Applications must be received in the Georgia NRCS State Office by 4:30 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST) on **August 30, 2013**. The address for the U.S. Postal Service, hand-delivered applications, or applications submitted using express mail or overnight courier service is: Rebekah Huson, Grants & Agreements Specialist, NRCS, 355 East Hancock Avenue, Mail Stop 200, Athens, GA 30601.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Chris Groskreutz, Acting State Public Affairs Specialist and Outreach Coordinator, NRCS, 355 East Hancock Avenue, Mail Stop 200, Athens, GA 30601. Phone (706) 546-2272; facsimile: (706)546-2120; email: chris.groskreutz@ga.usda.gov.

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I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Overview

The purpose of this funding opportunity is to improve delivery of USDA programs in the state of Georgia, and to increase awareness and understanding of opportunities for new and underserved individuals, groups, veterans, and communities to participate in USDA programs.

B. Funding Priorities

Priority will be given to those projects that:

- Target veterans, beginning, organic, minority, non-traditional producers, and other communities that have been historically underserved, as defined in Section VIII OTHER INFORMATION;
- Develop partnerships and working relationships with new and underserved individuals, groups, veterans, and communities that will increase participation in USDA programs, especially those that have significant participation disparities of HUS customers;
- Implement specific outreach activity performance measures with expected outcomes;
- Provide specific and tangible deliverables documenting success;
- Operate a service area within Georgia, and
- Do not exceed two years

This grant opportunity **does not cover research related projects.**

C. Legislative Authority

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.072-Wetlands Reserve Program; 10.902-Conservation Technical Assistance; 10.912-Environmental Quality Incentives Program; 10.914-Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program; 10.924 Conservation Stewardship Program

II. AWARD INFORMATION

Effective on the date of this publication, CCC announces up to \$400,000 for Georgia NRCS program delivery enhancement projects. It is anticipated that approximately twenty (20) projects will be awarded through a statewide competitive process. NOTE: the final number of actual projects selected is subject to quality and number of actual proposals received and available funding. Individual projects, funded in fiscal year 2013, may not receive more than \$50,000.

The anticipated start date for awarded projects is September 30, 2013, and the anticipated end date is September 30, 2015. Selected applicants will enter into grant agreements with Georgia NRCS.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Entities

State and local governments and nonprofit organizations with authority to plan or carry out activities relating to resource use and development in multi-jurisdictional areas may apply for these funds. Eligible entities include:

- State governments,
- County governments,
- City governments,
- Special district governments,
- Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized),
- Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments),
- Nonprofits having a 501(c) (3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education, and
- Small businesses.

B. Matching Funds

Selected applicants may receive cooperative agreements of up to 75 percent of the total project costs, not to exceed \$50,000. Required local match of 25 percent may be cash or acceptable in-kind and must be documented.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. How to Obtain Application Materials

All Office of Management and Budget standard forms necessary for submission are posted on the following website: www.grants.gov. An application checklist is available on the Georgia NRCS Outreach website:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ga/about/outreach/>.

B. Address to Request Application Packet

This announcement constitutes an application packet. Additional hard copies or electronic copies can be obtained by contacting Rebekah Huson, Grants & Agreements Specialist, NRCS, 355 East Hancock Avenue, Mail Stop 200, Athens, GA 30601. Phone (706) 546-2119; email:

rebekah.huson@ga.usda.gov. All Office of Management and Budget standard forms necessary for submission are posted on the following website: www.grants.gov.

C. Application Content and Format

1) Required Content

Applications must contain the information set forth below in order to receive consideration for a grant. Applicants should not assume prior knowledge on the part of NRCS, or others as to the relative merits of the project described in the application.

Applications are to be typewritten on 8½" x 11" white paper, double spaced, and on one side only. The text of the application should be in a font no smaller than 12-point, with

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

To submit your application electronically, use the template “**USDA-NRCS Application Package**” for Georgia State Office. It is available on-line at http://www.grants.gov/applicants/apply_for_grants.jsp.

2) Forms

The following forms are required for consideration of a completed application:

- a. Completed Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance, (including SF 424A and SF 424B), Applicants, by signing and submitting an application, assure and certify that they are in compliance with the following from 7 Code of Federal Register (CFR)
 - i. Part 3017, Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement);
 - ii. Part 3018, New Restrictions on Lobbying;
 - iii. Part 3021, Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)
- b. **DUNS Number:** A Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. A federal Register notice of final policy issuance (68 FR 38402) requires a DUNS number in every application (i.e., hard copy and electronic) for a grant or cooperative agreement (except applications from individuals) submitted on or after October 1, 2003. Therefore, potential applicants should verify that they have a DUNS number or take the steps needed to obtain one. For information about how to obtain a DUNS number go to http://www.grants.gov/applicants/org_step1.jsp or call 1-866-705-5711. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.
- c. **Required CCR Registration:** The Central Contractor Registry (CCR) is a database that serves as the primary Government repository for contractor information required for the conduct of business with the Government. This database will also be used as a central location for maintaining organizational information for organizations seeking and receiving grants from the Government. CIG applicants must register with the CCR. To register, visit <http://www.sam.gov>. Allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration.
- d. Project proposal as outlined in number 3 below.

3) Proposal Format

Narrative description the proposed project that includes:

- Project Title
- Project Dates
- Specific Program Objective[s] being addressed
 - New and Underserved populations to be targeted
 - Partnerships to be developed
 - Outreach activity to be pursued
 - Geographic area in Georgia served
- An Objective Statement associated with the Project
- Methodology for accomplishing Project Objective Statement
- Specific Priority Deliverable[s] being generated from Project (see SECTION VIII OTHER INFORMATION)
- Milestone Dates for Project Completion
- Project Budget detailing:
 - Personnel
 - Event costs (contractual or actual)
 - Administrative costs (Maximum 10% of federal amount)
 - Local Match Amounts (Minimum 25% of federal amount)
- Plan for Documenting Expenditures

4) Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be received in the Georgia NRCS State Office by 4:30 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST) on **August 30, 2013**. An application postmark date is not a factor in whether an application is received on time. The applicant assumes the risk of any delays in application delivery. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit completed applications via overnight mail or delivery service to ensure timely receipt by NRCS. Applications received after this time will not be considered.

Applicants must submit one signed original and five complete copies of each project application. Each copy of the application must be stapled securely in the upper left-hand corner. Hard copies must be accompanied by an electronic copy on a compact disc (CD). Electronic files must be either Microsoft Word or Acrobat (pdf) files. Application submitted via facsimile or e-mail will not be accepted.

Submit written Applications to:

Rebekah Huson, Grants & Agreements Specialist
 USDA, NRCS
 355 East Hancock Avenue, Mail Stop 200
 Athens, GA 30601
 706-546-2272
rebekah.huson@ga.usda.gov

Applicants may submit applications electronically through www.grants.gov, the Federal government's e-grants portal. Applications submitted through Grants.gov must contain all of the elements of a complete application outlined above. Applications submitted

electronically are date- stamped and time-stamped by www.grants.gov and must be received by the identified closing date. Note that NRCS is not responsible for any technical malfunctions or website problems related to Grants.gov submissions. Applicants should begin the Grants.gov process well before the submission deadline to avoid problems.

5) Acknowledgement of Application Submission

Applications received by the due date will be acknowledged with an official letter. If an applicant has not received an acknowledgment within 30 days of the submission, the applicant must contact the administrative contact (see “Agency Contacts” below) immediately. Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel.

6) Is opportunity subject to Executive Order 12372?

No, this opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372.

7) Funding Restrictions

The indirect costs (F&A) for these awards may not exceed 10 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. Awardees may not use unrecovered indirect costs as part of their matching funds.

The Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, Section 708, limits indirect costs under cooperative agreements between USDA and non-profit institutions, including institutions of higher education, to ten percent of the total direct costs of the agreement. Section 708 authorizes an exception to the ten percent limit for institutions that compute indirect cost rates on similar basis for all agencies for which the Act makes appropriations. If requested, indirect costs must be justified and may not exceed the ten percent limitation or the current rate negotiated with the cognizant Federal-negotiating agency.

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

- Costs above the amount of funds authorized for the project;
- Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the grant;
- Costs which lie outside the scope of the approved project and any amendments thereto;
- Entertainment costs, regardless of their apparent relationship to project objectives;
- Compensation for injuries to persons, or damage to property arising out of project activities;
- Consulting services performed by a Federal employee during official duty hours when such consulting services result in the payment of additional compensation to the employee; and,
- Renovation or refurbishment of research or related spaces; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such spaces; and the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

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

V. APPLICATION REVIEW

A. Application Review and Selection Process

Prior to review, each application will be screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete applications and those that do not meet the provisions of this notice will be eliminated from competition, and notification of elimination will be mailed to the applicant.

Applications meeting the provisions of this notice will be scored by a Peer Review Panel against the Criteria for Proposal Evaluation listed above. Scored applications will be forwarded to the Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, which will certify the rankings from the peer review panels, and ensure application evaluations are consistent with program objectives. The State Conservationist will make the final selections, and funding decisions.

METHODS OF EVALUATING AND RANKING APPLICATIONS: Initially, all application packages will be reviewed to confirm that the applicant is an eligible recipient and to ensure that the application contains all of the items specified in the Application Content and Format section of this announcement. Applicants must be registered with Dun and Bradstreet and include their CCR information with their application. Each complete application form submitted by an eligible recipient will then be evaluated and ranked by the Responsible Official. Funding decisions will be based on the award selection factors.

B. Criteria for Application Evaluation

Peer review panels will use the following criteria to evaluate project applications:

- 1) Credit is given to those projects that target new and underserved populations based on the number of new and underserved populations identified;
- 2) Credit is given to those projects that partner with new and underserved individuals, veterans and women groups, or communities based on the number of partnerships proposed;
- 3) Credit is given to those projects addressing geographic areas in Georgia based on county, multi-county, regional, or statewide;
- 4) Credit is given to those projects proposing specific outreach activities based on the number and type of activity proposed;
- 5) Credit is given to those projects for implementation in the first 12 months;
- 6) Penalty is given to those applicants who have a history of delinquent grant/agreement requirements with NRCS over the last two fiscal years (FY) prior to FY2013

C. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Awards are anticipated to be announced by on or about September 15, 2013. Funds are not awarded, and work may not start, until an agreement is signed by both Georgia NRCS and the grantee.

VI. AWARD INFORMATION**A. Award Notification**

Applicants who have been selected will be notified by official letter by the State Conservationist. Applications which are not selected will be notified by official letter.

B. Grant Agreement Execution

The CCC, through NRCS, will use a grant agreement with selected applicants to document participation. The grant agreement will include:

- Project purpose;
- Project objectives and deliverables;
- Project progress and budget reporting requirements;
- Award amount and budget information;
- Information regarding requests for advance of funds or reimbursement;
- Acknowledgement of 1619 Compliance;
- Other requirements and terms deemed necessary by the CCC to protect the interests of the United States.

C. Reporting Requirements

Grantees will be required to submit an SF-425, Federal Financial Report quarterly to cover the periods ending March 31, June 30, September 30 and December 31. The following data elements must be completed on the form:

- Federal cash
- Federal expenditures
- Recipient share

In addition, every six months the grantee must submit a written performance progress report to the Georgia NRCS State Office. This report is distinct from the quarterly financial report described above. Each progress report shall cover work performed during the previous 6-month period, including any funded or unfunded time extensions, a comparison of actual accomplishments to project goals, and a statement of work projected to be completed in the next 6-month period. A progress report template can be provided to grantees by NRCS upon request.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

For RFP related questions, please contact:

Rebekah Huson, Grants & Agreements Specialist
NRCS, 355 East Hancock Avenue, Mail Stop 200
Athens, GA 30601
Phone (706) 546-2119
Rebekah.huson@ga.usda.gov

VII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. Definitions:

Beginning Farmers

A farmer who has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not 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, individually or 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.

In the case of a contract with an entity, all members must materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch. Material and substantial participation requires that each of the members provide some amount of the management, or labor and management necessary for day-to-day activities, such that if each of the members did not provide these inputs, operation of the farm or ranch would be seriously impaired.

Socially Disadvantage Farmers

A socially disadvantaged farmer is a farmer who has been subject to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group, without regard to their individual qualities. This could be one of the following:

- American Indians or Alaskan Natives
- Asians
- Blacks or African Americans
- Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders
- Hispanics

B. Priority Deliverables:

Specific project deliverable(s), applicant can accomplish deliverables by means of Program workshops, trainings, field-days, demonstration sites, etc. or a similar variance should include and address as many of these items as possible to achieve the highest ranking:

- Assistance of NRCS with promoting NRCS and other USDA programs to new and underserved individuals, groups, veterans, and communities in Georgia
 - Focusing on an increased amount of customer awareness
 - Focusing on an increased amount of program applications initiated
- Focusing on an increase number of applications in NRCS Easement programs (i.e. Wetland Reserve Program) by new and underserved individuals, groups, veterans, and communities in Georgia
- Workshops/Trainings that are provided “After Hours” to new and underserved individuals, groups, veterans, and communities in Georgia. After Hours is defined as events conducted after 5:00 pm. Eastern Time and Saturdays.
- Assistance of NRCS with promoting USDA Special Initiatives to new and underserved individuals, groups, veterans, and communities in Georgia such as the Water Quality Initiatives; StrikeForce, Working Lands For Wildlife; High Tunnel; and Longleaf Pine.
- Workshops that promote a “One USDA” theme in which the new and underserved individuals, groups, veterans, and communities in Georgia can learn about the variety of USDA programs available.

*Any of the proposed deliverable(s) must be documented in some form and provided with reimbursement requests:

- Copies of project flyers
- Meeting agendas
- Attendee rosters and sign in sheets
- Any publications that result from this agreement
- Sorted diversity data that was collected through voluntary disclosure methods
- Other applicable forms not listed here

C. Certification Requirement:

(1) By Submitting this grant or agreement application, the undersigned attests that _____ has not been convicted of a felony criminal violation under Federal or State law in the 24 months preceding the date of signature, nor has any officer or agent of _____ been convicted of a felony criminal violation under Federal or State law in the 24 months preceding the date of signature.

(2) By Submitting this grant or agreement application, the undersigned attests that _____ does not have any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability.