



United States
Department of
Agriculture

FAQ

frequentlyaskedquestions

RCPP

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Q: Can an eligible partner compete in all three funding pools (State, National, and CCA) with one project application?

A: No. An eligible partner submitting a project application must select one funding pool for that application.

Q: How do eligible partners know which funding pool to select?

A: To choose a funding pool, partners should consider the geographic area, agricultural land uses, and resource concerns that will be addressed through the project.

To be considered under the Critical Conservation Area (CCA) funding pool, the project must lie within the boundary of the CCA [\[insert link to map\]](#) and address the priority resource concern(s) of the CCA. These projects may cross state boundaries, but can also be located within a single state.

To be considered under the State funding pool, the project should be located entirely within one state. Each NRCS State Conservationist, in coordination with the State Technical Committee, has identified priority resource concerns within the state that may be given priority when selecting project applications [\[link\]](#). However, all project applications that address water quantity, water quality, soil health, at-risk species habitat, or air quality will be considered.

To be considered under the National funding pool, the project should address regional resource concerns that cross multiple states, with the geographic boundary defined by watershed, land use, or common resource concern. National project applications should address one of the following resource concerns: water quantity, water quality, soil health, at-risk species habitat, or air quality.

Q: Can a partner submit multiple applications?

A: A partner should submit only one application per project. However, applicants may submit more than one application, as long as the proposals are for distinctly different projects. If an applicant wishes to submit multiple applications, the applicant must identify and provide clear evidence that project activities under one application are distinct from any other application.

Q: When are project applications due?

A: Preproposal applications are due July 14, 2014. Full proposals will be due September 26, 2014. Full proposals will be accepted only from applicants who are notified at the end of the preproposal review process that their application has been identified for further evaluation.

Q: When will NRCS notify applicants that their project has been selected?

A: NRCS will notify applicants of the status of preproposals by July 28, 2014. NRCS will make final project selections based on the review of full proposals by October 17, 2014.

Q: Where should partners send applications?

A: All applications must be sent to NRCS National Headquarters. Partners may submit applications using ONE of the three methods described below. Partners should not send applications using more than one method.

1. The preferred method of submission is by email at RCPP@wdc.usda.gov.
2. Applicants may send a paper copy to:

Mark A. Rose, Director
Financial Assistance Programs Division
Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
RCPP Application
P.O. Box 2890
Washington, D.C. 20013-2890

3. Applicants may submit the application electronically on Grants.gov.

For applicants submitting an application for the State funding pool, the applicant must also provide a copy of the application to the appropriate State Conservationist. A list of State Conservationists and their addresses is located here [\[link\]](#). Email is the preferred method for submission.

Q: How can farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners get involved in RCPP?

A: NRCS supports locally driven projects and encourages landowners and producers to get involved in the design of project proposals. USDA Service Centers, soil and water conservation districts, and local water and irrigation districts may know whether a project is being proposed in your area.

Beginning in fall 2014, NRCS will post selected RCPP projects on this Web site. Farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners located within project areas will be able to contact their local USDA Service Center to find out how to apply for financial assistance. The project partner will also conduct outreach to landowners and producers and will be able to provide assistance with applying to NRCS programs.

Q: How will funding be distributed for selected projects?

A: NRCS will provide financial assistance and technical assistance in selected project areas for the programs identified in the project agreement.

In most cases, NRCS will administer financial assistance directly to farmers, ranchers, and private foresters who apply for eligible conservation practices in the project area and who are selected for funding. NRCS will provide financial assistance in the project area up to the amount identified in the project proposal. However, the amount of funding available will depend on congressional appropriations and apportionment from the Office of Management and Budget.

NRCS will allocate technical assistance funds to support conservation planning and implementation in selected project areas. NRCS may allocate technical assistance to support NRCS personnel who provide these services to farmers, ranchers, and private foresters.

Partners may also request technical assistance to support activities such as resource assessment, conservation practice survey and design, conservation planning, conservation implementation, water quality activities, resource monitoring, and follow-up of installed practices.

Partners who include a request for technical assistance funds in their project application are encouraged to work with the appropriate NRCS State Conservationist(s) to determine eligible activities.

Multistate water resource agencies or authorities may apply for an alternative funding arrangement. If approved, entities with an alternative funding arrangement may receive NRCS financial and technical assistance to enter into contracts and agreements with farmers, ranchers, and private foresters. Partners entering into an alternative funding arrangement must adhere to program and reporting requirements. Details are provided in the RCPP Announcement of Program Funding [link].

NRCS funds may not be used for the partner's administrative expenses (for example, rent, utilities, space used by staff, copies, phones, IT support, etc., that are used by all staff and not directly related to the project).

Q: How is the “significant contribution” of partners defined?

A: An eligible partner must provide a significant portion of the overall cost of the project. The overall cost includes direct financial assistance (FA) to producers, technical assistance (TA), and other in-kind services, such as outreach and education, monitoring, and administrative services.

Priority will be given to those applications that significantly leverage non-Federal financial and technical resources. NRCS has a goal of leveraging an amount equal to the Federal investment; therefore, partner applications that meet or exceed the amount requested from NRCS (direct or in-kind) will be the most competitive.

Q: I represent an eligible entity, but I know that my organization will not be able to provide a lot of cash to support projects. Am I eligible to apply for a project under RCPP?

A: The “significant contribution” that partners must bring to selected projects can include in-kind contributions, such as outreach, monitoring, conservation planning, and producer assistance. Partners may also include administrative services that they provide in the calculation of their contribution to the project. Partners should consider the total benefit they expect to bring to the project.

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Natural Resources Conservation Service