

The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering grants to promote innovative ideas to address some of the nation's most pressing natural resource concerns. This year, NRCS' Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) will focus funding on soil health, grazing lands and organic agriculture systems.

PRESS RELEASE

Dec. 20, 2017

TO: Editors / News Directors

FROM: Missouri Press Service

Note: This Flash News! item is being distributed by Missouri Press Service. MPS is not the source of the news. If you need further information or verification, contact the person listed in the news release, do not "reply" to this message.

Press Release

United States Department of Agriculture: Natural Resources Conservation Service

Contact: Karen Brinkman

Phone: 573-876-0901

Date: Dec. 20, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NRCS Offers Grants for Innovative Ways to Solve Natural Resource Concerns

Dec. 20, 2017 -- The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering grants to promote innovative ideas to address some of the nation's most pressing natural resource concerns. This year, NRCS' Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) will focus funding on soil health, grazing lands and organic agriculture systems.

Soil health projects include the support of cropping and grazing systems that incorporate soil health management for specific resource concerns like nutrients and availability. Projects could also evaluate multiple soil-health-assessment methods to help develop new soil health indicators and thresholds.

Grazing lands projects could help livestock producers make grazing management decisions, encourage prescribed burning as a grazing management practice, and improve access to conservation planning tools used for developing grazing management plans.

Organic Agriculture Systems projects would help organic food producers develop innovative cropping and tillage systems, edge-of-field monitoring, crop rotations, and intercropping systems.

"Conservation Innovation Grants help foster improvements of existing technologies and approaches and spark the development of new technology that NRCS and our partners can use with farmers, ranchers and forest landowners to advance conservation," State Conservationist J.R. Flores said. "CIGs inspire creative problem-solving skills that boost production and ultimately improve water quality, soil health and wildlife habitat."

CIG proposals are due February 26, 2018. Potential applicants should review the announcement of program funding available at www.grants.gov, which includes application materials and submission procedures. NRCS will host a webinar at 3 p.m. January 11, 2018, for potential CIG applicants. Information on how to join the webinar can be found on the national NRCS website: (<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/cig/>)

Nationally, NRCS is investing up to \$10 million in competitive CIGs in 2018. The maximum award amount for any project is \$2 million, and up to 20 percent of CIG funds will be set aside for

proposals from historically underserved producers, veteran farmers or ranchers or groups serving these customers.

-30-

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.