



The Oregon CIG program is designed to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies.

The 2009 Oregon CIG application deadline is May 8, 2009.



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

www.or.nrcs.usda.gov

Oregon CIG

Oregon Conservation Innovation Grants

OREGON NRCS - March 2009

Q. What is the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program?

- A. CIG is a voluntary program intended to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging the Federal investment in environmental enhancement and production. These grants would be carried out in conjunction with agricultural and forestry production.

Q. What is CIG's connection to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)?

- A. There are a number of connections between CIG and EQIP, including:
- CIG is authorized under EQIP in the 2008 Farm Bill.
 - Funds for CIG are part of the EQIP allocation NRCS Oregon receives.
 - Payments made to an individual or entity using funds from a CIG award to carry out structural, vegetative or management practices count toward each participating individual or entity's EQIP payment limitation of \$300,000 over the life of the Farm Bill.
 - CIG projects must involve EQIP eligible producers.
 - Technologies and approaches that are eligible for funding in a project's geographic area through EQIP are ineligible for CIG funding except where the use of those technologies and approaches demonstrates clear innovation.

Q. What is the CIG State Component?

- A. The intent of the State CIG is to provide flexibility and opportunities to individual producers and smaller organizations in Oregon that may possess promising innovations, but may not compete well on the larger scale of the national grants competition. State CIG proposals may request up to \$75,000 and must be focused in Oregon. The State component will use the basic requirements and procedures established for the national CIG program.

Q. What projects are eligible for the Oregon CIG sign-up?

- A. Applications must describe projects that incorporate innovative conservation approaches or technologies, or both used in combination. Applicants should consider the following:
- CIG is not a research program. It is a vehicle to promote the development and adoption of innovative approaches and technologies.
 - CIG will fund projects targeting on-the-ground conservation, including pilot projects and field demonstrations.
 - Proposed projects must conform to the description of innovative conservation projects and activities included in the State CIG Announcement for Program Funding (APF).
 - Proposed innovative approaches or technologies must address a natural

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resource conservation concern or concerns. The natural resource concerns for CIG will be reviewed by the Oregon Technical Advisory Committee and may change each year. The natural resource concerns are published in the State CIG Announcement for Program Funding.

Q. Who can participate in CIG State component?

- A. Eligible CIG applicants include Federally recognized Indian Tribes, States, local unit of governments, non-governmental organizations, or individuals.

Q. How is the State CIG announced?

- A. State-level competitions will be announced through public notice. All information regarding the State CIG will be available on the Oregon NRCS Web site at: www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig. The state program will be announced separately from the national program.

Q. What type of projects does the State CIG emphasize?

- A. The State CIG program will emphasize projects that demonstrate the use of innovative technologies or approaches to address natural resource concerns in conjunction with agricultural and forestry production.

The State CIG will feature the Natural Resource Category of CIG. This includes natural resource concerns relating to: Water Resources, Soil Resources, Atmospheric Resources, Grazing Land, Forest Health, Wildlife Habitat, and an additional state Priority Issues category. These categories also include applications that focus

on Market Based Approaches. The Oregon NRCS Web site (www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig) will provide further information on these categories.

Q. What is the amount available for individual State CIG grants?

- A. The State CIG awards must be \$75,000 or less. This limit is established to allow for streamlining of grants administration. It is anticipated that the range of funding for the State component will be between \$5,000 and \$75,000.

Q. What is the length of a State CIG grant agreement?

- A. Applicants selected for funding will enter into a grant agreement with NRCS. Grant agreements can be one to three years in duration. The applicant must specify the length of the project in their proposal.

Q. Are applicants required to provide matching funds?

- A. Yes. Selected applicants may receive CIG grants of up to 50 percent of the total project costs. Applicants must provide non-Federal funding (matching funds) for at least 50 percent of the project cost. Up to half of the applicant's matching funds (up to 25 percent of the total project cost) may be from in-kind contributions, such as donated equipment, materials and labor.

Q. Is the State CIG component offered every year?

- A. Oregon will offer a State component CIG program for FY 2009. The availability of a State CIG component in future years will depend upon the interest in the program and the availability of EQIP funds.

Q. Can applicants apply for both National CIG and the State component CIG?

- A. The state CIG component is for grant awards that do not exceed \$75,000 and are not multi-state in scope. Applications that are \$75,000 or less must compete in the state CIG competition and will not be accepted in the national CIG competition.

Q. Who qualifies as a beginning farmer or rancher?

- A. The basic criterion for a beginning farmer or rancher is an individual or entity that has operated a farm or a ranch for less than ten years, and will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch. For additional information go to: <http://www.lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/Beginning-D.htm>.

Q. What is the definition of socially disadvantaged farmer and ranchers?

- A. A farmer or rancher who has been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as a member of a group without regard to their individual qualities. Those groups include: African American, American Indian or Alaskan Natives, Hispanic, and Asians or Pacific Islanders. For additional information go to: <http://www.lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/SDFR-D.htm>.

Q. Are additional considerations provided for any specific groups?

- A. Proposals may be given special consideration if the applicant or participants involved are Beginning Farmers or Ranchers or Socially Disadvantaged farmers or ranchers.

In addition, an exception regarding matching funds may be made for projects funded for these groups. Up to three-fourths of the required matching funds for such projects (up to 37.5 percent of the total project cost rather than 25 percent) may derive from in-kind contributions.

Q. How will grant applications be evaluated?

- A. CIG applications will be reviewed by a basin working group in the area where the application originates. Recommendation from the basin working group will be forwarded to the grant review board where applications will be scored and ranked using the Criteria for Proposal Evaluation identified in the State CIG funding announcement. The announcement is available on the NRCS website at: <http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig>. The Grant Review Board will then forward award recommendations to the NRCS State Conservationist, who will make the final award decisions.

Q. How do people apply for CIG?

- A. Applications should include the following information:
- ✓ Application cover Sheet (Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance)
 - ✓ Project Summary Sheet (One page maximum)
 - ✓ One-Page Abstract (Summary of the project, expected outcomes and benefits)
 - ✓ Project Description (10 pages maximum, double spaced, single sided, 12 point font)
 - ✓ Budget Information (Standard Form 424A, Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs)
 - ✓ Budget Narrative (maximum of 3 pages)
 - ✓ Declaration of Beginning Farmer or Rancher OR Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher (a statement declaring your status)
 - ✓ Declaration of Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Eligibility (parties involved in the project must be eligible for EQIP)
 - ✓ Certifications (Standard Form 424B, Assurances-Non-Construction Programs)
 - ✓ DUNS Number
 - ✓ Required Central Contractor Registration (CCR) Registration

Further details regarding application information and links for the forms listed above are available in the Announcement for Program Funding and on the NRCS Web site at: www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig

For More Information

If you need more information about CIG, please contact:

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E-mails may be sent to:
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Additional information is also available on the Web at:

www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig



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