

## USDA Seeks Applications

USDA is offering grants for innovative conservation technologies and tools. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) plans to invest \$10 million in the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program. Grant proposals are due February 26, 2018.

"I know individual Kansans, non-profits, universities and state partners have great ideas and projects that need funding," said Sheldon Hightower, Kansas NRCS Acting State Conservationist.

"These grants have tremendous value because the projects are closely tied to practical applications for producers. Last year, Kansas State University received \$672,000 for a project to implement new irrigation technology."

According to Hightower, "the grants are very competitive, so potential applicants need to get started now in preparing their proposal. I encourage potential applicants to sign up for the free webinar in January."

NRCS is hosting a webinar for potential CIG applicants on January, 11, 2018, at 3 p.m. Central. Information on how to join the webinar can be found on the [NRCS CIG Webpage](#).

This year, NRCS is focusing its funding in these areas:

- **Grazing Lands:** Helping livestock producers make grazing management decisions, encouraging prescribed burning as a grazing management practice, and improving access to conservation planning tools used for developing grazing management plans.
- **Organic Agriculture Systems:** Helping organic producers develop innovative cropping and tillage systems, edge-of-field monitoring, crop rotations, and intercropping systems.
- **Soil Health:** Supporting both cropping and grazing systems, in a variety of climatic zones, that incorporate soil health management systems for addressing specific resource concerns like nutrients and availability. Evaluating multiple soil health assessment methods to assist in the development of new soil health indicators and thresholds.

Potential applicants should review the announcement of program funding available at <https://www.grants.gov/> which includes application materials and submission procedures.

All U.S.-based entities and individuals are invited to apply, with the sole exception of Federal agencies. 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.

CIG is authorized and funded under the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP). Projects can last up to three years. The maximum award amount for any project this year is \$2 million.

For more information, go to the [Kansas NRCS Web site](#) or visit your local U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Service Center. To find a service center near you, go to [offices.usda.gov](#).