

Agreement Opportunities

EQIP Priority Projects

- ND 300-20-23 (due Jan 22, 2021)
- North Dakota specific

The State Conservationist is seeking proposals outside of existing EQIP funding pools to address resources concerns identified by your Local Work Group. Proposals are required to produce outcomes that are measurable and attainable, as they relate to the proposed resource concerns.

Conservation Collaboration Grants and Agreements (CCGA)

- North Dakota specific
- Announced through Grants.gov annually (2018,19,20)
- Funding is determined by the budget each year
- Previously successful proposals descriptions can be found at:
 - <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/nd/people/partners/?cid=nrcseprd1441445>

The purpose of Conservation Collaboration Grants or Agreements is to leverage NRCS and partner resources to:

1. Improve soil health.
2. Improve landscape performance in dealing with water quantity issues; either excess or inadequate, and downstream impacts.
3. Improve water quality.
4. Improve habitat for local wildlife species of concern.
5. Improve the environmental and economic performance of working agricultural lands.
6. Assist communities and groups to build and strengthen local food projects that provide healthy food and economic opportunities.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/rcpp/>

- RCPP is now a standalone program with its own funding--\$300 million annually. Moving forward, landowners and ag producers will enter into RCPP contracts and RCPP easements.
- **RCPP Classic** is the standard version of the program where NRCS and the lead partner both oversee contracts with producers and landowners engaged in RCPP activities. (currently open until Nov 4)
- **RCPP Alternative Funding Arrangements (AFA)** are partner-led projects that propose innovative use of federal assistance to achieve conservation benefits that are not possible under the RCPP Classic construct.
- Three funding pools reduced to two—the National pool was eliminated. Partners must apply to either the Critical Conservation Area (CCA) or State/Multistate funding pool.
- Emphasis on project outcomes—all RCPP projects must now develop and report on their environmental outcomes.
- ND is part of a CCA, the Prairie Grasslands Region

- Conservation Activities
 - Land management/improvement/ restoration practices (EQIP-like or CSP-like)
 - Land rentals (CRP like)
 - Entity held easements
 - US held easements
 - Public works/watersheds (PL566-like)

Conservation Innovative Grants (CIG)

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/cig/>

National Competition - A CIG funding notice is announced each year. Funds for single- or multi-year projects, not to exceed three years, are awarded through a nationwide competitive grants process. Projects may be watershed-based, regional, multi-state or nationwide in scope. The natural resource concerns eligible for funding through CIG are identified in the funding announcement and may change annually to focus on new and emerging, high-priority natural resource concerns. The [funding announcement for 2020 is published on grants.gov](#) 

State Competition - The CIG state component emphasizes projects that benefit a limited geographical area. Participating states announce their funding availability for CIG competitions through their state NRCS offices. ND has not had a state CIG for several years. This is because the funding comes out of our EQIP LWG funds and we choose to focus on EQIP at this time.

On-Farm Trials - Up to \$25 million annually is available for On Farm Trials. Funding announcements are published on [grants.gov](#) 

Newly authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill, On-Farm Trials supports more widespread adoption of innovative approaches, practices, and systems on working lands. On-Farm Trials projects feature collaboration between NRCS and partners to implement on-the- ground conservation activities and then evaluate their impact. Incentive payments are provided to producers to offset the risk of implementing innovative approaches. The Soil Health Demo Trial (SHD) component of On-Farm Trials focuses exclusively on implementation of conservation practices and systems that improve soil health.

Eligible

entities receiving SHD awards agree to follow consistent soil health assessment protocols to evaluate the impacts of practice and system implementation.