Technology Grants for Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Program Guidelines

This grant enables local soil and water conservation districts to secure financial assistance for the purchase of equipment and design software to assist with the implementation of the Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP).

Funding for this program is provided by AgWRAP technical assistance state appropriations in the amount of $115,750.

Eligibility Requirements

North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Districts are eligible to apply for the grant. The maximum award is $7,500.

A 25% local match is required. A greater match amount will factor into the rank of application and award. Other state funds including those received from the Division of Soil and Water Conservation cannot be used as match for this grant.

How Funds Can Be Used

Technology Grant funds will only be awarded to those applicants applying for financial assistance for the purpose of building district capacity through the purchase of equipment and design software for the implementation of conservation practices through AgWRAP.

Approved reimbursable expenses include those associated with equipment and design software. Equipment may include but is not limited to: total station, data collectors, tripods, survey rods. Design software may include but is not limited to computer aided design (CAD) products.

Grant funds may be used to purchase new computers if the application demonstrates that a new computer is needed to operate equipment and design software. This is not intended to be a computer upgrade program.

Grant funds may be used for training provided by vendors to operate software and/or equipment if justified in application.

Unallowable costs include NRCS computer seat expenses, vehicles, all terrain vehicles, and personnel costs.

Grant Proposal

All grant proposals must contain the following elements.

1. Cover Letter from District Board (include signature)
2. Proposal
3. Budget
4. Quotes (Follow your county purchasing policy regarding how many quotes are needed)

Elements should appear in a single document in the order indicated above. Cover letter first, then proposal, then the budget etc. Specific formatting requirements for each element are detailed below.

The proposal must not exceed 5 pages and must be divided into sections that answer the following questions.

1. **How is the district currently implementing AgWRAP?** This section should describe previous and current activities related to the implementing AgWRAP BMPs. It should also include any training the district personnel has attended to support AgWRAP and acquired job approval authority which supports the implementation of AgWRAP BMPs.

2. **How are the district's technological limitations currently impacting the ability to implement AgWRAP?** This section should describe the district's current situation in regards to technological equipment, software and/or other related operator skill sets. Consider including information such as condition and age of equipment, whether it is district owned or borrowed from another agency, and availability challenges if borrowed. This section should specifically detail how the current situation is impacting the implementation of AgWRAP.

3. **Describe the requested purchase.** This section should include the specific equipment and/or software that are being requested. It should discuss the compatibility of the purchased items with current equipment/software as well as the district personnel's technical skill level to effectively utilize the equipment purchased. For example, personnel may be experienced with AutoCAD but not with the newest version available for purchase.

4. **How will this technology increase the capability of district staff to implement AgWRAP?** This section should include a discussion about the district's current dependency on outside engineering assistance and anticipated dependency changes with this grant. Explain what services are currently being requested by other agencies and what portion of this would be decreased/eliminated with the increased district technology resources.

5. **Describe the availability of required match.** This section should include the source and the availability of the required match. For instance, are the funds already available, do you have a commitment from county/district finance department in future budgets, etc.

6. **Estimated timeline to purchase.** This section should describe the district's readiness to purchase, if the purchases will be made at one time or over a several budget years.

7. **Proposed Budget.** Budget content must include the following:
   Total Amount of Purchase (specific by item)
   Total Grant Request
   Total Local Match (25% required)

Submitting Grant Proposal

Grant proposals must be sent to Natalie.Woolard@ncagr.gov as a single file no later than February 20, 2015 by 5:00 PM EST. Applications not received by the proper method by the February 20th deadline will not be reviewed.

Grant Program Timeline

TARGET DATE	GRANT ACTIVITY
November 21, 2014	Information, guidance document and application packets are made available
February 20, 2015	Only applications received by 5:00 PM EST on February 20th will be considered for funding.
March 18, 2015	Grant award announcements
May 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016	Purchases must be completed between these dates
	Invoices for reimbursement must be submitted to the division 60 days after purchase but no later than August 31, 2016