

Grant Opportunity

California Association of Resource Conservation Districts Solicits Applications for Specialty Crop Technical Assistance Hubs Grant.

The application can be accessed here:

<https://www.gotomygrants.com/Public/Opportunities/Details/9bf795dd-2aad-4288-90c6-59fe4258e637>

1. Summary and Background

The California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) is currently accepting applications from collections of regional technical assistance providers (TAPs) to form a cohesive agricultural TA support hub and convene at least five farm demonstration event field days in partnership with [specialty crop](#) farms.

Applications will be accepted until **5pm on August 7, 2020**. The grant period will be September 2020 through February 2022. CARCD will grant four awards to regionally diverse hubs in the amount of \$35,000 each. In addition, each participating farmer will receive a \$1000 stipend from CARCD (not to exceed five farmers per project awarded) for time spent hosting the event and coordinating with the technical assistance provider(s).

The purpose of this Grant Opportunity is to solicit project proposals from various candidate organizations, conduct a fair and extensive evaluation based on the criteria embedded in the application, and select the candidates who best represent the direction from the California Farm Demonstration Network (CFDN) signatories.

The signatories of the CFDN's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) include: CARCD; The University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR); University of California, Davis; California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA); the California Farm Bureau Federation; and the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service. These entities signed an MOU in 2017 to memorialize an agreement to collaborate in support of the California Farm Demonstration Network.

CARCD is the project manager of a federally funded California Specialty Crop Block grant which will advance the agreements put forth in the MOU. The contracts awarded from this solicitation will be funded from this source.

CARCD is the membership organization for 95 Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) in California, who have been specializing in on-the-ground conservation work for the past 75 years. This Grant Opportunity is directed not just to RCDs: CARCD welcomes all qualified entities from around the state of California to respond to this Opportunity. CARCD can be found on the web at carcd.org

2. Project Purpose and Description

Purpose:

The effects of climate change have eroded carbon and decreased soil health which in turn has lowered water and nutrient capacity causing environmental damage and decreasing profitability. Farmers need more tools, examples, and resources to implement new conservation management practices, as well as an opportunity to see those practices in action on-farm. Many groups offer tools for conservation practice adoption, however, they are not comprehensive nor farmer led, which makes them less effective. This project is intended to engage farmers and specialty crop industry representatives through on-farm demonstration events to demonstrate practices and share resources to help specialty crop growers increase their adoption.

The project will provide an opportunity for farmers to find and connect with other farmers interested in implementing similar practices. These field level trainings and support will increase the adoption of conservation practices while creating climate resilient and adaptive farms.

This project addresses the priority of providing training to support specialty crop producers in adopting farming methods responsive to the impacts of climate change. The farm demonstration events will equip specialty crop farmers with climate resilience tools and knowledge that are specific to growing regions, crop type, and conservation focus including but not limited to: soil health, irrigation efficiency, groundwater recharge, and biodiversity enhancement. Highlighting novel, innovative, and experimental conservation activities for specialty crops is encouraged. Attendance by farmers as well as specialty crop industry representatives is also encouraged.

In addition, the CFDN has created this opportunity in order to spur the creation of cohesive regional hubs of agricultural technical assistance to better respond to the needs of specialty crop farmers and expand the network that is the foundation of the CFDN. The hub should be a collective of agricultural TA organizations that serve the same regional area and with the intention of becoming or nurturing a cohesive body taps the strengths of partners. These hubs can include commodity groups, farmer collectives, and other community based organizations. We encourage non-traditional partnerships. Any organization within the hub is welcome to be the lead applicant. The goal will be to offer TA providers financial capacity to do the demonstration events and use that as an opportunity to develop longer lasting partnerships that can be leveraged for future demonstration projects and conservation management technical assistance.

Project Description

CARCD is seeking Technical Assistance Providers to carry out the work at the local level to facilitate at least five farmer-to-farmer field days on new demonstration sites (also referred to as 'farm demonstration events' or 'events'). Events will demonstrate conservation practices that lead to climate resilience, which includes but is not limited to those that increase the quality of soil health, water, biodiversity and nutrient smart systems for California's specialty crop production.

CARCD plans to award four proposals across regions of California: northern, southern, central valley, and central coast.

Required Elements

- Create a multi organizational regional hub of TAPs/other ag industry support.
- Create physical and electronic targeted messaging on demonstration events to encourage farmer participation and provide technical information for all participants.
- Work with CARCD to determine the most effective mechanism for messaging.
- After demonstration events, follow-up with attendees via phone/email to inquire about receiving more TA services.
- Attend CFDN TA workshops and trainings. Please include about 5 hours of staff time per partner.
- Recruit farmers who will share: Contact info, commodity, acreage, management practice, agronomic improvements (acre feet saved, less synthetic pesticide, carbon sequestered, etc) on the CFDN website.
- Host at least five demonstration events.
- Collect pre and post surveys from attendees to determine effectiveness of demonstration events and if participants intend to implement conservation practice(s) (surveys supplied by CARCD).
- Show 20 growers/producers indicating adoption of recommended practices.

Project Timeline

- Grant Opportunity announced on July 6, 2020.
- Applications due by August 7th, 2020 at 5:00pm
- Awards announced by August 14, 2020
- Project funds must be spent and final reports submitted by February 28, 2022

2. Grant Guidelines

Applications will be accepted until August 7, 2020 at 5:00pm via the submission portal. Any proposals received after this date and time will not be considered.

Funds cannot be used to supplement farms with existing CDFA Healthy Soils Demonstration Projects and cannot overlap with the CDFA Technical Assistance Program. To clarify, funding cannot be used toward already-funded demonstration projects but can be used to showcase implementation of CDFA funded incentive projects.

If the organization submitting the application will outsource or contract any work, this must be clearly stated in your application. All costs included in the proposals should note the outsourced or contracted work, name and description organization and be noted as such.

3. Application Questions and Evaluation Criteria

Criteria are embedded in the application questions. Each question will be evaluated and scored by a review team and totaled for a complete score. If information is considered incomplete, CARCD reserves the right to follow up for missing information before submitting a final score for consideration of award, or disqualify the application.

The application and submission portal are accessed here:

<https://www.gotomygrants.com/Public/Opportunities/Details/9bf795dd-2aad-4288-90c6-59fe4258e637>

Application Questions:

1. Provide an **abstract** of your project, including geographic location, crop types, and (if known) the practices that might be demonstrated, partners involved, and a general timeline. (0 points. 250 words.)
2. Explain the **barriers or** challenges to adopting conservation practices (economic, social, or environmental) and how this project will address it/them. Innovative and experimental practices are encouraged though not required of this project. (15 points. 250 words.)
3. Who is the **target farmer population**? Is the target population generally underserved by existing local, state and federal programs that incentivize, educate or encourage these types of management practices. (15 points. 150 words.)
4. Who are the **partners** in this hub? Please describe the resources they provide. How will you collectively extend the reach of this hub beyond traditional approaches? (Please upload Letters of Commitment from each partner in one PDF). (15 points, 350 words.)
5. How will these funds establish or grow a working multi-organizational TA service hub as a go-to regional leader in sharing climate resiliency strategies among farmers beyond the life of this grant? (15 points 250 words.)
6. Please describe your **outreach strategy**. It should lead to participation at the demonstration events, as well as physical or electronic technical guides/information that will be used beyond the grant timeline. Explain how it will benefit at least 200 individuals through the course of the grant. (15 points. 250 words.)
7. What types of **learning materials** will you develop or adapt to support the learning at your events by participants? Will these materials be provided in more than one language? If so, what are they? (10 points. 150 words.)
8. How do you plan on supporting growers with technical assistance in pursuit of confirming that 20 growers **have indicated adoption** of recommended conservation practices? (10 points. 150 words.)
9. Describe your **qualifications** to carry out the project. (10 points. 150 words.)

10. Please provide a bulleted **summary** timeline and work plan noting important milestones. (10 points. 250 words.)
11. What unknowns or **uncertainties** remain with your project design and how will you address or minimize them? (10 points. 150 words.)
12. Please provide your **budget** and justification for costs in the budget template. (*An Excel budget template will be available in the submission portal.*)

4. Budget

CARCD plans to award four project proposals in the amount of \$35,000 each

Allowable costs

Budget items may include such items as: workbooks, chair and table rental, lunch, portable toilet rentals, event outreach, interpreter, mileage, transport of participants, staff coordination, and fringe benefits. Coordination may include, but is not limited to: time spent identifying farms/farmers, pre-event site visits, follow-up with producers that attended a demonstration event to provide technical assistance and/or to inquire about practice adoption, and pre/post event surveying.

Farmer Stipends

Farmers partnering with TA providers on this project will be compensated with a stipend up to \$1,000 each. The stipend is intended to cover the cost of time away from farming activities while coordinating the event with the TAP and other preparation as needed. This cost is in addition to/outside of the \$35,000 request encompassed by this grant opportunity. Please include this mandatory farmer stipend up to \$5,000.

Conflicting funding

As stated above, please note that funds cannot be used to supplement farms with existing CDFA Healthy Soils Demonstration Projects and cannot overlap with the CDFA Technical Assistance Program.

Unallowable Costs

Unallowable costs include those that do not solely benefit specialty crops. Additionally, unallowable costs include, but are not limited to: sponsorships, hospitality suites, incentives, donations, gifts, giveaways, alcoholic beverages (except when the costs are associated with enhancing the competitiveness of a processed product), costs of entertainment (including amusement, diversion and social activities, and any costs directly associated with such costs such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities), costs associated with promoting an organization or membership building, costs associated with lobbying, costs for organized fundraising including financial campaigns and solicitation of gifts. Additional guidance regarding allowable and unallowable costs and activities is available on [CDFA's SCBGP website](#).

Match/Cost Share

No match or cost share is required. Providing it will not impact the score of the application and will not be considered nor accepted.

Indirect Cost Rate

Indirect costs are limited to a maximum of eight percent (8%) of the total amount of Salary and Wages plus Fringe Benefits. Indirect costs may not be increased from the originally approved budget amount. This also applies to the Recipient's subcontractors/consultants.

Use of federal pass through funds

Guidance for the use of these federal pass through funds is published in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The CFR is accessible through the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations at www.ecfr.gov.

Grant funds awarded to state, local, and tribal governments; public and private colleges and universities; and non-profit organizations are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards contained in 2 CFR part 200 and 2 CFR part 400.

Federal funds passed through to for-profit organizations are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements contained in 2 CFR part 200 and 2 CFR part 400, and the Cost Principles contained in the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 31.2, Contracts with Commercial Organizations, codified at 48 CFR 31.2.

Recipients are responsible for the consistent application of federal regulations to the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program grant funds. Recipients are responsible for ensuring their contractors/consultants comply with federal regulations.

Budget Spreadsheet will be available in the grant portal as a downloadable Excel Sheet.

CARCD's Specialty Crop Technical Assistance Hubs Grant from CARCD				
Lead Applicant				
Project Title				
Category	Per Unit Value (Dollar Amount) :	Units (Number of Hours, Miles, Months, Etc)	Total	Justification (Please provide a short justification of budget item and cost)
<u>Lead Applicant Staff time</u>			\$ -	
<i>List staff position here. Add lines for each staff person</i>			\$ -	
<u>(Staff A)</u>	\$ -	0	\$ -	
<u>(Staff B)</u>	\$ -	0	\$ -	
Subtotal			\$ -	
Fringe			\$ -	
Subtotal			\$ -	
Indirect*	8.00%		\$ -	
Total			\$ -	
<u>Contractors</u>			\$ -	
<i>Please add line for each contractor</i>			\$ -	
			\$ -	
<u>Supplies</u>			\$ -	
<i>Please add line for each item</i>			\$ -	
			\$ -	
<u>Mileage</u>			\$ -	
			\$ -	
Subtotal **			\$ -	
Farmer Stipend***			\$ -	
Project Total with Stipends			\$ -	

*Indirect: Indirect costs are limited to a maximum of eight percent (8%) of the total amount of Salary and Wages plus Fringe Benefits. Indirect costs may not be increased from the originally approved budget amount. This also applies to the Recipient's subcontractors/consultants.

**Subtotal not to exceed \$35,000

***Farmer Stipend total not to exceed \$5000