



**Natural Resources Conservation Service**

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# NEWS RELEASE

## **USDA to Invest \$15 Million in the Future of Conservation Through Innovation Grants Program Proposal Deadline: July 19, 2021**

**NASHVILLE, May 24, 2021** – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is investing up to \$15 million to support the development of new tools, approaches, practices and technologies to further natural resource conservation on private lands through the Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) program.

CIG partners use creative problem solving and innovation to address our nation’s water quality, air quality, soil health and wildlife habitat challenges, all while improving agricultural operations. This year, funded CIGs will focus on climate-smart strategies for water resources, soil health (focused on carbon sequestration and climate resilience), nutrient management, grazing lands conservation and strategies to increase conservation adoption.

*“Through Conservation Innovation Grants, we’re able to co-invest with partners on the next generation of agricultural conservation solutions,”* said Sheldon Hightower, State Conservationist, Tennessee NRCS. *“Using creative problem solving and innovation, CIG partners work to address our nation’s most pressing natural resource concerns, all while helping to ensure the health and longevity of American agriculture.”*

All U.S.-based non-Federal entities and individuals are eligible to apply. **Proposals must be submitted through Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. ET on July 19, 2021.**

Complete funding announcement information can be accessed through the [Conservation Innovation Grants webpage](#).

### **About the CIG Program**

The CIG program has three components, CIG Classic, CIG On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials and state-level CIG. Today’s funding opportunity announcement is for CIG Classic, which supports early pilot projects or demonstrations of promising new conservation approaches, tools and technologies.

CIG Classic grantees must match each federal dollar invested at least one to one.

NRCS intends to expend at least 10% of the total funding for CIG Classic on projects that are focused on providing conservation benefits to historically undeserved producers.

In April, USDA announced \$25 million [for CIG On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials](#), which features 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 new approaches. The On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials funding opportunity deadline is June 21, 2021.

### **More Information**

For more information on CIG, please visit the [CIG website](#).

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is engaged in a whole-of-government effort to combat the climate crisis and conserve and protect our nation's lands, biodiversity and natural resources including our soil, air and water. Through conservation practices and partnerships, USDA aims to enhance economic growth and create new streams of income for farmers, ranchers, producers and private foresters. Successfully meeting these challenges will require USDA and our agencies to pursue a coordinated approach alongside USDA stakeholders, including State, local and Tribal governments.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).

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