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NRCS Accepts Applications

U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will provide up to \$25 million in grants to help develop and demonstrate cutting-edge ideas to improve conservation on private lands.

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) are available for state and local governments, federally recognized Indian Tribes, non-governmental and educational organizations, private businesses, and individuals. CIG applications are due **Friday, March 22**.

Of particular interest are applications for innovative demonstration partnerships on energy conservation, nutrient management, soil health, wildlife habitat, and adaptive management.

"These grants are critical for developing and demonstrating out-of-the-box ideas for conservation on America's private lands and strengthening rural communities," NRCS State Conservationist Eric B. Banks said. "They inspire creative problem-solving that boosts the production of our farmers and ranchers and ultimately improves our water, air, and soil."

NRCS has offered this grant program since 2004, investing in ways to demonstrate and transfer efficient and environmentally friendly farming and ranching. In the past eight years, the grants have helped develop trading markets for water quality and have shown precise ways to farm and use fertilizer, water, and energy more efficiently.

The grants are funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and are awarded through a competitive process.

At least 50 percent of the total cost of CIG projects must come from non-federal matching funds, including cash and in-kind contributions provided by the grant recipient.

For more on this grant opportunity, visit <http://go.usa.gov/4Kvx>. To apply electronically, visit <http://www.grants.gov> or contact a local NRCS office.