

MN CREP Outreach and Implementation Program

Request for Proposals

General Information

As a MN Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) within the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) project area, you are invited to submit a proposal for funding under the CREP Outreach and Implementation project (as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) and funded through the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF)). The purpose of this project is to accelerate staff capacity to deliver the MN CREP. SWCDs may choose to realign existing staff priorities to focus on CREP and/or secure new staff. Up to \$2,930,927 is currently available.

Grant Execution

Successful respondents will be required to develop and submit a work plan in eLINK prior to execution of the grant agreement.

New (as of August 23, 2018) policy for participating in the program (*Farm Bill Assistance and CREP Outreach Program Policy*) can be found at: <https://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/crep-outreach-and-implementation>. Successful respondents are subject to this policy.

Project Period

The project period starts when the grant agreement is executed, meaning all required signatures have been obtained. Work that occurs before this date is not eligible for reimbursement with grant funds. All grants must be completed by June 30, 2020.

Payment Schedule

- This program operates on a quarterly reimbursement basis for actual hours worked under the agreement. All grantees are required to report quarterly on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments via an invoice to receive reimbursement.
- State funds will cover up to 90% of the employee's billable rate(s), not to exceed the wage, benefits, and leave rate or the calculated grant maximum based upon amount requested and available funds. ENRTF funding cannot be used to pay for space and other associated overhead costs; therefore, billing rates charged to these grants may only include the employee's base hourly rate, plus benefits and leave.
- A minimum of 10% match is required from non-state funds. The anticipated source(s) for this match shall be identified in the grant work plan. Required match can be provided through facilities and administration costs such as space, vehicle, computers, and other associated overhead costs.
- For SWCDs electing to enter into a subcontract with a partner organization for this work, reimbursement will be made according to the terms of that agreement, not to exceed the total grant award.
- MN CREP Outreach and Implementation Program grants can only be used for the MN CREP program and not for other Federal or State programs.

Incomplete Proposals

Proposals that do not comply with all requirements, including incomplete or missing proposal components, will not be considered for funding.

Project Reporting Requirements

- All grantees are required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments of MN CREP Outreach and Implementation Program grants. All BWSR funded projects will be required to develop a work plan, including detail of each eligible activity, a description of the anticipated activity accomplishments, and grant and match funding amounts to accomplish each of the activities. All activities will be reported via the eLINK reporting system. For more information about eLINK, go to: <https://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/elink>.
- Additional accomplishment reporting for all projects and assistance provided by the MN CREP Outreach and Implementation Technician(s) for the calendar year is also required. The procedures and templates for accomplishments reporting will be provided by BWSR.
- BWSR MN CREP Outreach and Implementation Program funds will be administered via a standard grant agreement. BWSR will use grant agreements as contracts for assurance of deliverables and compliance with appropriate statutes, rules and established policies. Willful or negligent disregard of relevant statutes, rules and policies may lead to imposition of financial penalties on the grant recipient.

Grants and Public Information

Under Minnesota Statute 13.599, responses to a Request for Proposals are nonpublic until the application deadline is reached. At that time, the name and address of the applicant, and the amount requested becomes public. All other data is nonpublic until the negotiation of the grant agreement with the selected grantee is completed. After the application evaluation process is completed, all data (except trade secret data) becomes public. Data created during the evaluation process is nonpublic until the negotiation of the grant agreement with the selected grantee(s) is completed.

Conflict of Interest

State Grant Policy 08-01 (see <https://mn.gov/admin/government/grants/policies-statutes-forms/>) Conflict of Interest for State Grant-Making, also applies to BWSR grantees. Grantees' conflicts of interest are generally considered organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

1. A grantee is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice due to competing duties or loyalties,
2. A grantee's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties, or
3. A grantee or potential grantee has an unfair competitive advantage through being furnished unauthorized proprietary information or source selection information that is not available to all competitors.

Submittal

To submit a response, complete the attached form and email a PDF of the completed form to Dusty Van Thuyne, FBAP/CREP Implementation Coordinator, at dusty.vanthuyne@state.mn.us.

Evaluation and Selection

All complete proposals submitted will be reviewed by BWSR staff. The successful respondents will be selected by BWSR based on:

1. Responses to the questions on the MN CREP Outreach and Implementation Program response form (found here: <https://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/crep-outreach-and-implementation>; failure to provide a completed form that addresses each of the elements below will be considered an incomplete proposal):
 - a. Is your SWCD located within the 54 county MN CREP area?
 - b. Will this be a SWCD or Contract positions? If Contract, which organization?
 - c. Will the MN CREP Outreach and Implementation Program grant fund parts of more than one position? If so, explain how time will be allocated and funds utilized.
 - d. Does your SWCD currently have access to a NRCS computer seat? If no, do you need an NRCS computer seat and is there office space to support the computer seat?
 - e. Does your SWCD currently have Job Approval Authority for practices utilized in your office? If yes, which practices? If no, explain the status of gaining Job Approval Authority.
 - f. What are your goals for CREP implementation (e.g., landowner contacts, outreach events, CREP contracts and acres)?
 - g. What is the requested FTE %, budget, available match, and billable rate(s)?
2. Pending workload to justify a MN CREP Outreach and Implementation Program grant
3. Historical performance

BWSR Grant Administration

BWSR reserves the right to partially fund any and all proposals based on the number of eligible proposals submitted, anticipated staff time requirements, and the amount of funding available. Proposals that are deemed complete may be considered for future proposal periods.

Timeline

- June 3, 2019 – Proposal period begins
- July 15, 2019 – Proposal deadline
- June 30, 2020 – Grant agreement expiration

Questions

For more information concerning the request for proposal, contact BWSR's FBAP/CREP Implementation Coordinator: Dusty Van Thuyne, dusty.vanthuyne@state.mn.us or 507.344.2819.