

State Fiscal Year 2018

Conservation Assistance Fund Application Instructions

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission established the Conservation Assistance Fund to award grants to SWCDs to be used for the operation of the Soil and Water Conservation District. These funds are to be used in conjunction with local dollars and state matching funds to meet the natural resource goals and objectives as identified in the district's strategic plan and annual plan of work. The goal of this program is to assist districts in difficult financial situations by providing a minimum level of funding for a limited time to SWCDs whose district board and staff are willing to meet program requirements.

WHO CAN APPLY?

SWCDs that have experienced a catastrophic loss of local matchable revenue which has resulted in a greater than 40% reduction over the past three years or districts receiving less than \$ 40,000 from combined local matchable revenue may be eligible for Conservation Assistance Grants from the OSWCC. Districts may apply for up to \$25,000 per year of additional state funds through this policy annually. Districts will be eligible to receive a maximum of \$40,000 in combined state matching funds, flat rate, and conservation assistance funds. Applications should be submitted no later than June 15, 2017. The maximum combined amount shall be reviewed by the Commission on an annual basis for SWCDs experiencing a 40% reduction over the last 3 years and which also will have a combined state match above \$40,000.

ELIGIBLE AMOUNT

Districts may apply for up to \$25,000 per year of additional state funds through this program. Districts receiving less than \$15,000 in local appropriations will be eligible to receive a maximum of \$40,000 in combined state matching funds and conservation assistance funds.

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

Allowable expenses include: Wages and benefits, office expenses (rent, utilities, and supplies), equipment and equipment operation and maintenance, and board member and staff training.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

SWCDs granted these additional funds agree to complete a Sustainability Plan within the first quarter of receiving the first installment of these funds. The Sustainability Plan will include the following:

Two Year Fiscal and Operational Plan

- Will include an in-depth strategy to secure funds from multiple sources, (county, levy, and grants, private).
- Will consider all assets of the district including special and district fund balances, property and equipment.
- Will include a cash flow and expenditures plan.
- Will describe how a base program of conservation in the county will be maintained.

Outreach and Development Plan

- Identify outreach strategy that supports your fiscal plan.
- Identify groups, organizations and other customers not currently being served by the district.
- Develop an action plan to engage these groups and individuals.
- Consult with surrounding districts and explore the possibilities of sharing staff and programs.

SWCD Board Capacity Building Plan

- Budget at least \$1,000 for board member training, for each year grant is received.
- Strongly support board members to attend state and regional training and be working toward graduating from the OFSWCD Leadership Academy.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Applicants must submit their request for Conservation Assistance Funds written and e-mailed, **no later than June 15, 2017**. Applications must be postmarked by the deadline date. At the July 2017 Ohio Soil & Water Conservation Commission meeting, the Division will recommend awardees and funding amounts based on a comprehensive review of the application, consideration of all available district assets, and the total funds requested.

Applicants are required to send one hard copy of the application to the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission, 8995 East Main Street, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068. The e-mailed application should be sent to dswc@agri.ohio.gov and the subject line should indicate the following: "FY 2018 Conservation Assistance Fund Application." Applications received **after 5 p.m. on June 15, 2017** will not be considered.

GRANT ADMINISTRATION

Notification of Award – Grant awards will be approved at the July Commission meeting and e-mails indicating award amounts will be sent within 10 working days.

Payment Schedule – The Commission and Division will transfer these additional funds based on availability, quarterly, if and as the district develops and implements the sustainability plan and on approval of the Program Specialist.

Division and Commission Assistance – The Division, through the Program Specialists and others, will provide administrative and planning support to SWCD boards receiving this grant. Staff will meet quarterly with districts to assist with plan development and implementation.

Quarterly Reviews – The Division, through the Program Specialists will assist applicants with developing the sustainability plan and certify progress each quarter before the next quarterly payment is made. All recipients must submit sustainability and quarterly progress reports one week prior to the regularly scheduled OSWCC meeting and must meet commission policy for reporting progress and accomplishments utilizing the SWIMS program.

**APPLICATION FOR FY 2018 CONSERVATION
ASSISTANCE FUNDS**

REQUEST FOR FUNDS

The _____ SWCD requests \$ _____ Conservation Assistance Funds for state fiscal year 2018. These funds will be used for the operation of the district and will be distributed quarterly if program requirements are being met (as certified by Program Specialist) and funds are available for disbursement.

Applicant: _____ SWCD

Address: _____

Phone: _____

SWCD Website (or social media page) _____

Authorized SWCD Official:

Name: _____ Title: _____

Phone : _____ E-mail : _____

Signature : _____

Contact Person :

Name: _____ Title _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

FOR DIVISION USE ONLY

On July 17, 2017 the OSWCC approved \$ _____ of Conservation Assistance Funds to the _____ District. These funds will be distributed in quarterly upon progress reporting and completion of grant requirements.

OSWCC Executive Secretary

Date