

PUBLIC NOTICE

AGRICULTURE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Notice of Availability of Grant Funds

Animal Waste Management Plan Outreach, Development Assistance, and Implementation Grant

Take notice that, in compliance with N.J.S.A. 52:14-34.4 et seq., the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) hereby publishes notice of grants, subject to the availability of funds, in the following program:

a. Name of Grant Program: Animal Waste Management Plan Outreach, Development Assistance, and Implementation Grant Program for Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem counties.

b. Purpose: New Jersey's Animal Waste Management rules adopted in 2009, N.J.A.C. 2:91, require the implementation of an Animal Waste Management Plans (AWMP) on livestock farms. An AWMP, in part, identifies options to address water quality impacts through Best Management Practices (BMPs). Farms with eight or more animal units or that land apply over 142 tons of manure are required to develop and maintain an AWMP. A BMP is a method, measure, or practice that is implemented to prevent or reduce surface and ground water pollution originating on-farm. A BMP may be used to correct existing problems and to prevent future potential degradation of water resources.

The purpose of this grant is to advance the continued implementation of the NJDA Animal Waste Management rules. There are limited resources to help farmers develop and implement AWMPs. At this time, only NJDA staff are conducting technical assistance for AWMP development, while in the past

external agencies, such as extension agents, played a role. An additional aspect of this grant is to assist with the cost of BMP installation — a major barrier to reducing Nonpoint Source (NPS) pollution on farms. NJDA is looking for a straightforward, cost-effective way to implement BMPs.

The NJDA and Soil Conservation Districts (Districts) have a long-standing statutory relationship (N.J.S.A. 4:24-1 et seq.). Districts are governmental subdivisions of this State. They are semi-autonomous political bodies, which are locally governed, and they play unique role in the protection of New Jersey's natural resources. They serve the agricultural community through a variety of programs aimed at supporting agricultural industries in the State. Districts develop conservation plans for farmland and provide general assistance to farmers dealing with a variety of technical issues. Additionally, districts serve a regulatory role by implementing the State's erosion control laws on construction and development sites (N.J.A.C. 2:90). This background in compliance assistance makes a Soil Conservation District the ideal grantee for this project, which aims to provide both voluntary technical assistance, as well as regulatory support.

The successful grant applicant will engage livestock farmers in educational and outreach programs to assist those without the required AWMPs to develop an AWMP for their operation and to implement BMPs. The grant recipient will identify farms and offer them technical assistance in the development of AWMPs, and provide technical assistance and financial assistance to farms for the implementation of the BMPs identified in their AWMP. BMPs are broken down into six categories in the AWMP; however, for the purposes of this grant program the focus is on the following BMPs:

1. Erosion and sediment control;
2. Nutrient management;
3. Livestock barnyard, manure, and waste management; and
4. Livestock grazing management.

A complete list of BMPs is located in the Appendix at N.J.A.C. 2:91, Criteria & Standards for Animal Waste Management.

The outreach, technical assistance, and financial assistance to be funded under this grant will be available for work with farms with livestock operations that are located in the following counties: Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, and Salem.

c. Potential Funding: A grant award of up to \$100,000 is available to accomplish activities 1-5 listed below over a 24-month period, with the opportunity to seek an extension of the period of performance. Of the up to \$100,000 to be awarded under this grant program, up to \$40,000 shall be available for the completion of activities 1, 2, 3(a), 4, and 5 below, and up to \$60,000 will be available for the financial assistance payments to be used as cost-share payments to farms to further activity 3(b) below.

1. **Outreach:** Conduct outreach, at a minimum, through website and mailing to livestock farms. Materials developed through this grant should indicate grant funding is from the NJDA.

2. **AWMP Development:** Assist at least 11 farms in developing and writing an AWMP and provide technical assistance towards the implementation of BMPs as identified in AWMPs.

3. **AWMP Implementation:**

(a) Identify on-farm BMPs considered for implementation and funding under activity 3(b), review those BMPs with the NJDA to select BMPs for implementation, and monitor BMP implementation.

(b) Provide financial assistance payments from grant funds for BMP implementation. Funds for the implementation of on-farm BMPs are intended to assist multiple farms, but the NJDA understands that

each livestock operation is unique and, as such, may require individualized BMPs varying in cost. The grant recipient will work with farms through the AWMP writing process to identify BMPs. BMPs considered for implementation will be reviewed with NJDA prior to selection. Grant recipient funding of BMP implementation will be provided as a cost-share on the actual cost of projects, for up to 90 percent of the cost of the BMP, subject to the financial assistance limit of up to \$15,000 per farm. Projects with higher funding needs will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4. **Periodic Grant Reporting:** Provide quarterly reporting, which details activities and expenses that align with the project budget.

5. **Final Grant Reporting:** Provide a final report matching a template to be provided by the NJDA. Any unexpended grant funds shall be returned to the NJDA.

d. Organizations that may Apply for Funding from NJDA: Any Soil Conservation District organized pursuant to N.J.S.A. 4:24-1 et seq., may apply. An applicant need not be located in Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, or Salem counties, but the activities to be funded through this grant must be directed at and used exclusively for the benefit of farms that are located in those counties.

e. Qualifications an Applicant Needs to be Considered for the Grant Program: An applicant must be a duly constituted Soil Conservation District with adequate staff, resources, and expertise to carry out the activities to be funded by this grant.

f. Procedure for Organizations to Apply: Applicants shall submit a letter of interest, detailing their qualifications, and accepting the terms and conditions set forth above. Applicants shall submit a

narrative describing how project activities will be completed. Applicants shall also submit a budget for the project activities. A successful applicant will also need to agree to additional grant terms and conditions to be set forth in a formal grant agreement to be provided by the NJDA and signed by the parties. The NJDA reserves the right to require applicants to provide additional information, as needed, in order to more fully evaluate the merits of their application. Applications may be submitted through email in a PDF format (preferred) or through the USPS mail.

g. Address for Submitting Grant Applications:

Email (preferred, through PDF format): denise.cannuli@ag.nj.gov

USPS Mailing Address:

NJDA, Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources

Attention: Denise Cannuli

PO Box 330

Trenton, NJ 08625

h. Deadline by which Applications Must be Received: Applications to the NJDA must be received by the close of business on August 28, 2023.

i. Date by which Notices of Decision Shall be Mailed: Applicants will be notified of the decision on their grant application by September 15, 2023.