



AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE APPLICATION Financial Assistance Program 2019 -2020

Applications accepted October 1st 2019 to December 31st, 2019 Overview

The Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District (VSWCD) financial assistance program is for the preservation of soil and water, and the natural landscapes that protect and enhance the quality and resilience of these critical resources. The program has been developed to promote effective **conservation practices***** that can be used across different landscapes, including rural, urban, wild land urban interface (WUI), rangeland, and agricultural lands within the Middle Rio Grande Valley floodplain, uplands, and mesas. Establishment of these programs has been made possible through the VSWCD mil levy that was approved by referendum vote in May 2013. The Program will continue to be developed to benefit the livelihood and quality of life of the residents of the VSWCD, now and into the future.

The Financial Assistance Program process requires submittal of an application for one of two main categories: **Community Assistance or Agricultural Assistance.**

- **Community Assistance** applications may be submitted by individuals or groups (submitted by a mil levy taxpayer residing within the District area applying as an individual for self or group). Applications are considered 'Community' for residential, commercial, or public lands and when not solely for agricultural use. (For Community Assistance, a separate application is required.)
- **Agricultural Assistance** is provided for individuals for agricultural land or rangeland who may be the lessee farming the land, or managing the range for livestock with landowner permission or the landowner. The property must be located in the District and the individual must provide proof of payment of mil levy taxes on the property.

***Conservation Practice is defined, for this assistance program, as a specific proposed natural-resources management practice or system for conservation, enhancement, or restoration of soil and water, which are the foundation for continued watershed health and productive agriculture.

Financial Assistance Applications will be evaluated based on each application's level of completeness and upon the strength and durability of the conservation practices. Innovation is encouraged. Applications selected for funding will be on a reimbursement basis (except soils testing, see below).

SECTION 1 – About the Program

A) AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE CONSERVATION PRACTICE CATEGORIES 2020:

- **SOILS TESTING:** for rangeland, cropland.
- **EROSION CONTROL:** rangeland and cropland assistance for erosion control projects that have a land use plan (defined in Part B iii following) from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), or equivalent, with support and technical assistance.
- **WATER HARVESTING:** for wildlife, livestock, and irrigation.
- **VEGETATIVE COVER:** for carbon sequestration, water catchment, and pollinator habitat and overall watershed health enhancements, with emphasis on native species.
- **OTHER CONSERVATION PRACTICES:** not otherwise funded in an overall conservation plan from the NRCS, or equivalent, with support and technical assistance.

B) AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES:

Who can apply: Agricultural applicants may apply as individuals only, either as the landowner or as a leaseholder with the written consent of the landowner. The property must be located within the District, with agricultural designation and with proof of payment of mil levy tax.

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Exclusion: *Applicants may not apply for financial assistance for a conservation project funded by another source.*

- i. Applicants must provide a copy of the property tax bill, indicating the VSWCD $\frac{1}{4}$ mil-levy assessment, and proof of payment.
- ii. All applicants must provide proof of agricultural designation of the subject land, either by zoning or tax filing for agricultural earnings.
- iii. If the applicant is not the landowner, the landowner must:
 - a. provide written consent for the proposed project;
 - b. review and sign the application where designated;
 - c. review and sign the agreement if awarded.
- iv. Your application must include a land use plan (or conservation plan) to demonstrate intended use for at least a five-year period so that the implemented practice has a lasting effect. A land use plan may be prepared by you the applicant or a support agency (i.e., technical assistance through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services Los Lunas Field Office, the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, a consultant, etc.). If not available, the VSWCD may be able to provide technical assistance to help create your land use plan.

- v. If you require our assistance with your land use plan, please work with us well before the final application deadline: no incomplete applications will be accepted after December 31st.
- vi. Applicant must attach an itemized budget, organized by conservation practice. Some practices may require an engineered design and drawings. These need to be obtained by applicant or with VSWCD assistance from Supply Company, agencies, private engineers as applicable. VSWCD reserves the right to determine level of engineering for consideration of application and may require this be done before review of application.
- vii. Applicants may submit up to two soil sampling requests per year and may request sampling as part of land use plan for application consideration. If soil testing completed within year of this request, please attach results to application.
- viii. Any noxious weed control request must be coordinated with the Valencia County Noxious Weed Coordinator (NMDA designate) and have an approved plan for consideration within request and before starting practice.
- ix. Only complete applications (including fully prepared land use plans) submitted by the application deadline for the year will be accepted for evaluation and possible award. For 2020, the application period is from October 1st 2019–thru- December 31st 2019. You are responsible for contacting the VSWCD to ensure your application is complete and ready for consideration by the committee.
- x. A conservation practice or practices for a piece of land is approved for a five-year life for that practice for the applicant so that the implemented conservation practice has a lasting effect.
- xi. Applicant may submit multiple applications within a five-year period. For example, if you are only able to complete a portion of the total land area for your project presented in your application in the VSWCD program budget year (July 1st to June 30th of the following year), then only apply for that portion for that year.
- xii. Financial assistance limits and rates per conservation practice do apply. Applicants may apply for more than one conservation practice per application. The financial assistance limit per agricultural conservation practice per fiscal year will be determined annually.

For 2020, the following financial assistance limits and rates apply for each Conservation Practice Category:

1. **Limit:** the 20120 financial assistance limit is \$5,000 per Conservation Practice, excluding soils testing (the latter of which is at cost, for testing and shipping, and is 100% paid by VSWCD).
2. **Rates** per conservation category are as follow:
 - a) SOILS TESTING:
 - 100% paid by VSWCD for up to two samples tested per year, per applicant, including shipping to a lab that is able to test New Mexican soils.
 - More details on the soil sampling and testing program are available through the District office or on our website at www.valenciaswcd.org .
 - b) EROSION CONTROL PROJECTS:
 - For up to 5 acres, cost share rates based on priority of practice(s) of plan.
 - c) For more than 5 acres, cost share rates based on priority of practice(s) of plan and determined annually by VSWCD.

- 75% is paid by VSWCD reimbursement, and 25% paid by the applicant.
- Technical assistance is available for devising the water harvesting system design and plan. Please contact the VSWCD office for more information.

d) **VEGETATIVE COVER PROJECTS:** A land use plan (as defined above) is required in order to determine project feasibility. VSWCD can assist with preparing the plan or finding a suitable partner agency or other source to assist.

- For up to 5 acres of land, cost share rates based on priority of practice(s) of plan

- For more than 5 acres of land, cost share rates based on priority of practice(s) of plan

e) **OTHER CONSERVATION PRACTICES NOT OTHERWISE FUNDED:** Agricultural lands that have an overall conservation plan from the USDA NRCS¹, or VSWCD, with support and technical assistance, are eligible as follows:

- For up to 5 acres of land, cost share rates based on priority of practice(s) of plan.
- For more than 5 acres of land, cost share rates based on priority of practice(s) of plan

Note 1: U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

SECTION 2 – Application for Agricultural Assistance

Note: Applications for agricultural assistance are for individuals only

All support documentation and information requested must be submitted for consideration of your application. For submittal of your completed application to the District office, hand-delivery, e-mail, or mailing of applications are all acceptable. If any questions while completing your application, please contact our office in person, by phone at 505-864-8914 or by email at valenciaswcd@live.com.

*** Would you like technical assistance from VSWCD? (Yes /no /not sure)_____.**

If so, please contact our office as soon as possible to complete this application.

1) Date: _____

2) Name of Applicant: _____

3) Phone Number: _____

4) Email: _____

5) Mailing address of Applicant:

6) Other contact information, if helpful (not required) such as best time to contact you or secondary phone, preferred contact method (phone, email, text).

7) Are you the Landowner or Lessee? _____

If you do not own the land for this request, the Landowner must:

- a. provide a signed statement (affidavit) of landowner's permission and agreement with the proposed actions of this request. Have you attached signed statement? _____
- b. review and sign this application below the applicant's signature at the end.
- c. If part or all of a conservation practice will be built on adjoining land, then a written letter of granting permission for this work to proceed must be obtained from that landowner PRIOR to the starting the work. A copy of this written permission must be provided to the VSWCD.

8) Address or location of land to which application applies (if different from mailing address). Only one application will be accepted per location per year. If no address associated with the land, please provide nearest crossroads and directions to visit the site.

9) What is total area of interest for this request (acreage or square footage)?

10) What is the current physical condition of the site?

11) How is the land currently being used/managed?

12) What Conservation Practice Category or Categories are being addressed (soils testing, erosion control, water harvesting for livestock and/or wildlife, pollinator enhancements, and/or other conservation practices)? Also state if this land can continue to be irrigated without any encumbrances (yes or no). If any encumbrances state what those are.

13) Please attach a brief narrative describing the proposed project. (Required)

14) Please attach any existing land use plan you have created or provided by another agency or consultant. (Required)

15) Attach any additional drawings/designs of the project and maps of the property with project areas identified. (Recommended)

16) Attach a budget that is itemized and also organized by conservation practice category. (Required)

17) Attach proof of VSWCD mil-levy tax assessment for the property attached. (Required)

18) Attach proof of agricultural designation of land, either by zoning or tax filing for agricultural earnings. (Required) If practicing agriculture within other zone designation or if there are no agricultural earnings, please explain (ex. if you are a new or beginning farmer).

19) Have you done soils testing for the property within the last year? ____If you have tested your soils within the last year, please attach a copy of testing results with this application OR indicate here if tested through VSWCD. _____

20) If you have not tested your soils within the year, will you be requesting a soil test your soil as part of this application? _____

a. If yes, attach the completed VSWCD soils testing application to this application for submittal, provided by VSWCD.

21) When do you want to start and complete the project presented in this request?

22) Please let us know how you heard about this program. Check all that apply: __word of mouth, __friend, __newsletter, __newspaper, __radio, __seminar or workshop, __other – state here please_____.

SECTION 3: Application Submittal Process

- i. Applications must be submitted to VSWCD via email, mail or in person by **December 31st, 2019**.
- ii. Written notice of application acceptance or rejection will be provided by the annual determined deadline; **for 2019-2020 determinations are provided by February 15th 2020**. Applications rejected because of insufficient funding may be resubmitted upon funding availability. Projects may be determined to be eligible for partial funding, as determined by the VSWCD.
- iii. Project proposals and budgets may be modified by the VSWCD and VSWCD will create a project agreement for the applicant's approval. Applicant's signature of the agreement is required prior to the start of any practice(s) or project.
- iv. Projects are expected to be completed within the current VSWCD fiscal year, by **June 30th 2020** or an application would need to be submitted for the subsequent year. Extensions may be granted if applicant makes the request in writing (email is sufficient) prior to close of fiscal year, June 30th annually. Extension approval is at the discretion of VSWCD. If extension into the new fiscal year is not granted, the agreement will become void and a new application may be submitted for the following fiscal year.
- v. Approved assistance requests are paid by reimbursement, upon completion of a project within **three months** of applicant's delivery to the District of expense report with receipts. A full and detailed accounting of all expenses (supported by receipts) must be submitted at project completion. Any contractor invoicing is considered summarized, but all other receipts must be submitted with a summary page, including all charges and their explanation, in order for the project to be deemed completed. Assistance is not provided on gross receipts tax. Gross receipts must be itemized on invoicing and summary pages and, if not, it will be assumed to be included and removed for calculation of reimbursement. 7
- vi. All recipients of VSWCD financial assistance will provide an IRS W-9 form to VSWCD and be issued a subsequent 1099 miscellaneous income notice in the January following project completion, if their total assistance for all conservation practices is greater than \$600. VSWCD is required to report this funding to the IRS.
- vii. If additional applications for different projects are submitted, reference to previously approved assistance projects must be provided including year of award and general address for award.
- viii. VSWCD may request site visits for all financial assistance requests, before start of project, following completion of the project, and during the life of the practice (depending on the scope of the project). Applicants must agree to site visits, or applications will not be approved. This VSWCD oversight of public funds allows evaluation of the effectiveness of financial assistance programs in supporting best conservation practices within the District.

Statement of Applicant: *I have reviewed and understand the guidelines and process for this application. My signature following is to attest to my review and understanding and is required for submittal of my request for assistance.*

Applicant Signature

Printed Full Name

Date

Landowner Signature (if applicable)

Printed Full Name

Date

******THANK YOU******