



COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE APPLICATION

Financial Assistance Program 2018

Application submittal period October 1st – December 15th, 2017

Overview

On February 22, 2016, The Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District (VSWCD) approved implementation of a financial assistance program 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 **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 or Agricultural Assistance.**

- Applications are considered 'Community' for residential, commercial, or public lands and when not solely for agricultural use. 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).
- Agricultural Assistance is provided for individuals for agricultural land or rangeland who may be the leasee farming the land, or managing the range for livestock with landowner permission or the landowner. For Agricultural Assistance, a separate application is required.

*****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.**

SECTION I – About the Program

A) **COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE CONSERVATION CATEGORIES 2018:**

- **SOIL TESTING:** for non-commercial or potential commercial use of soils.

- EROSION CONTROL: projects where a watershed-wide erosion concern is identified, properties are at risk, and improvements enhance watershed health and reduce erosion.
- WATER HARVESTING: for landscaping and garden use.
- POLLINATOR ENHANCEMENT HABITAT AND GARDEN PLANTINGS.
- RIPARIAN RESTORATION MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR WATERSHED HEALTH, HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS, and SAFETY (including fire risks to property).

B) COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES:

Who can apply: Individual landowners, leaseholders (with the landowner’s written consent), and group applicants. Groups may include schools, community gardens, senior centers, community centers, home-owner associations, or other similar groups. All agricultural and residential Mil-levy contributors are eligible for assistance and applications reviewed annually in accordance with budgeted funding determined by July 1st, the beginning of the fiscal year for VSWCD.

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 mil-levy assessment and proof of mil-levy payment.
- ii. Groups must provide a signed affidavit that the majority or 3/4 of the participants reside within the District, and at least one of the participants must provide his or her property tax bill, indicating the VSWCD mill-levy assessment, and proof of mil-levy payment. The group applicant may request assistance for private, commercial, or public lands. Lands for group projects are considered community (residential, commercial, public), when not for agricultural use.
- iii. Your application must include a land use plan intended use for a period of at least a five year period. 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). If not available, the VSWCD may provide technical assistance to create a land use plan.
- iv. If assistance with the plan is required, the land use plan must be completed by the final 2018 deadline for applications.
- v. 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. In 2018, the application period is from October 1st thru December 15th 2017. You are responsible for contacting the VSWCD to ensure your application is complete and ready for consideration by the committee.
- vi. Determinations for 2018 applications will be made by February 15th 2018.

- vii. A conservation practice or practices for a piece of land is approved for a five year life for that practice for the applicant; i.e. if you are only able to complete a portion of the total land area for a practice in the VSWCD program budget year (July 1st to June 30th of the following year) then only apply for that portion for that year. Exceptions may apply for subsequent applications for considerations that were beyond the control of the applicant.
- viii. Applicants may submit up to two soil sampling requests per year and up to one application for each of the other identified conservation categories for a five-year period (Note: An applicant may submit a soil sample as an individual and still be part of a group application for another conservation practice.)
- ix. Assistance limits and rates per conservation practice do apply, although applicants may apply for more than one conservation practice. The cap or limit for a conservation practice per fiscal year is determined annually.

For 2018 the following financial assistance limits and rates apply for each category:

a) SOIL 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: For 2018, the financial assistance limit is \$5,000, with the following conditions:

- For up to 5 acres, 75% is paid by VSWCD reimbursement, with 25% of the costs paid by applicant.
- For more than 5 acres, 50% is paid by VSWCD reimbursement, with 50% paid by the applicant.

c) WATER HARVESTING: For landscaping and garden use, the 2018 financial assistance limit for water harvesting projects is

- \$1,200 total allowable reimbursement with 75% paid by VSWCD reimbursement, and 25% costs paid by the applicant.
- Technical assistance is available for devising the water harvesting system design and plan for residential landscaping and garden use. Please contact the VSWCD office for more information.

d) POLLINATOR ENHANCEMENT HABITAT AND GARDEN PLANTINGS: For pollinator habitat and garden plantings, the 2017 financial assistance limit is

- \$600, with 75% of costs paid by VSWCD reimbursement, and 25% paid by the applicant.
- Technical assistance is available for developing a pollinator enhancement habitat landscape or garden plantings design and plan. Please contact the VSWCD office for more information.

e) RIPARIAN RESTORATION MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR WATERSHED HEALTH, HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS, AND SAFETY: For 2017, the financial assistance limit is \$5,000, with the following conditions:

- For up to 5 acres, 75% is paid by VSWCD reimbursement, with 25% of the costs paid by applicant.

- For more than 5 acres, 50% is paid by VSWCD reimbursement, with 50% paid by the applicant.

SECTION 2 – Application for Community Assistance

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? If so, please call our office as soon as possible to complete the application.**

1) Date: _____

2) Name of Applicant: _____

3) Mailing address: _____

4) Address or location of land to which application applies (if different from mailing address). Only one application will be accepted per location per year.

5) Phone Number: _____

6) Email: _____

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

8) Community assistance designation: Please select if this is for just the applicant or a group:

Individual _____ Group _____

If group assistance, please list ALL participants:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- If more group participants, attach complete list.

9) Where is the property for this request located? If no address associated with the land, please provide nearest crossroads. Also please provide directions for visit to the site.

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

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

12) What Program conservation category or categories are being addressed (soils testing, erosion control, water harvesting, pollinator enhancements, and/or riparian restoration)?

13) Is the property tax bill showing the VSWCD mill-levy assessment for individual or group representative, and proof of mil-levy payment attached to this applications? (Yes/ No) _____

14) Affidavit for group Community Assistance applicants:

The majority of participants for this community assistance application (3/4 of listed participants) reside within the District.

Signature of Applicant

Date

15) Provide a brief narrative describing the proposed project and attach to this application with item # referenced.

16) Please provide any existing land use plan you have created or provided by another agency or consultant.

17) Attach an estimated cost of your project to complete and an itemized budget organized by conservation practice for the overall plan.

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

SECTION 3: Application Submittal Process

- i. Written notice of application acceptance or rejection will be provided by the annual determined deadline; **for 2018 determinations are provided by February 15th 2018**. 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.
- ii. All applications are reviewed for approval or rejection within the VSWCD fiscal year **funding available from July 1st to June 30th annually**. Project proposals and budgets may be modified by the VSWCD, and a project agreement will be provided for the applicant's approval. Applicant signature completion of the agreement is required prior to the start of any practice(s) or project.
- iii. Projects are expected to be completed within the current VSWCD fiscal year (from July 1st to June 30th), or an application would need to be submitted for the subsequent year. Exceptions may apply and 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, a new application may be submitted.

- iv. Approved assistance requests are paid by reimbursement, upon completion of a project. A full and detailed accounting of all expenses (with 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.
- v. All recipients of VSWCD financial assistance will provide an IRS W-9 form to VSWCD and 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.
- vi. 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.
- vii. 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 application process for this application. My signature following is to attest to my review and understanding and is required for submittal of this application for assistance.*

Applicant Signature

Printed Full Name

Date

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