NACD has secured an additional cooperative agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to assist with high priority customer workloads and further build and enhance conservation district technical assistance across the nation.

Funds will be awarded directly to conservation districts to hire staff where additional capacity is needed to improve customer service and reduce workload pressure.

This agreement includes:

* $15 million for Conservation Technical Assistance (COTA), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
* A 20 percent match will be required for each agreement. Match is preferably cash, but in-kind or a combination will be considered. Contracts will cover funding for at least one-year and may be longer if sufficient funding is available.

Funding will be awarded through two opportunities. Initially, state/territory and tribal conservation partnership leaders will have an opportunity to direct additional funding to their previously identified priority locations.

Any remaining funds will be available through an RFP after the initial awards are announced. NACD will ask state/territory and tribal conservation partnership leaders to identify additional high-priority locations for the use of these funds. Funding will be awarded after proposals are received and evaluated by a partnership panel, with attention to workload parity across the country.

For tribal conservation district applications, state/territory partnership leaders must inform tribal leaders of this opportunity. Contact NACD Projects and Partnerships Coordinator, Meg Leader at meg-leader@nacdnet.org, for guidance.

NACD’s goal is to get the $15 million in the hands of conservation districts by the end of the summer so they can hire employees to help carry out the objectives of this agreement. NACD anticipates that the funding will employ about 270 Full-Time Equivalents (FTE). Some employees will likely be part-time and/or cover multiple districts.

**Initial Implementation Steps: This may be modified without notice of a new brief, but current information will continue to be on the NACD website and the brief on the site will be updated.**

* January 8, 2021: Start collecting priority requests from active TA grantees interested in continued funding. Deadline is February 21, 2021.
* March 1, 2021: Share information from interested active TA grantees with State/Territory leadership for local priority review.
* Late March 2021: Announce continued funding awards
* April 1, 2021: Distribute RFP announcement, briefing materials and project FAQs to all state/territory partners if there is funding unallocated.
* April-May 2021: State/Territory partnerships begin determining workload priorities and conservation district participants,
* June 1, 2021: Application deadline
* June-July 2021: Evaluation period
* July 31, 2021: Goal date to have any remaining funds awarded.