PERIMETER FENCING FOR FERAL SWINE

SECTION 1: GRANT INFORMATION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Feral swine are a non-native species and considered one of the most destructive invasive terrestrial vertebrates in North America. They cause substantial damage to agricultural operations, natural resources, and native ecosystems. They also have negative impacts on human and animal health.

On behalf of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), NACD will manage and administer a cost-share program that incentivizes landowners and operators to install or repair perimeter fencing to restrict feral swine access and impacts. The Agricultural Conservation FY2022 Appropriations Bill and Senate report 117-34 directs use of Conservation Operations and Technical Assistance Funds (COTA) for this agreement (CFDA: 10.902).

These federal cost-share dollars cannot be used to offset financial assistance received from other federal programs (e.g., NRCS, APHIS); however, funding may be used to augment state, local, Tribal, or private programs that address and mitigate impacts of feral swine in communities. Funds can be used to increase program reach or help producers meet the non-federal program’s cost-share requirements.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this grant program are to:
- Incentivize landowners and operators to install or repair perimeter fencing to restrict feral swine access and impacts.
- Provide outreach to Tribal and historically underserved producers and communities, ensuring they can participate in this program and benefit from perimeter fencing.
- Provide technical assistance and cost-share opportunities.
- Reduce impacts of feral swine on agricultural operations and natural resources.

SECTION 2: GRANT INFORMATION

2.1 NACD POINTS OF CONTACT

Chloe Hundelt, NACD Grants Specialist, is the primary point of contact for this funding opportunity. Chloe can be reached at conservationprograms@nacdnet.org. NACD members may also reach out to their Regional Representative for questions and guidance.

2.2 AVAILABLE FUNDING

NACD expects to award over $7.5 million in pass-through grants and cost-share.

A commitment to contribute at least 10% percent match from participating recipients is required. This can be provided via cash or in-kind match.
2.3 ANTIMICROBED PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

Projects must be completed within 24 months. This includes implementation and approval of perimeter fencing, as well as distribution of payments to producers.

2.4 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applications may be submitted by one of the following entities:

- Conservation Districts
- Conservation Districts’ respective state associations or state agencies (e.g., State Departments of Natural Resources, State Departments of Agriculture), so long as a Conservation District is engaged at the local level
- Resource Conservation & Development Councils
- Indian Tribal governments or intertribal consortia
  - Note: This includes Federally Recognized Indian Tribal Governments and State Designated Indian Tribes. Intertribal Consortia must meet the definition for eligibility in the Environmental Program Grants for Tribe Final Rule (40 CFR 35.504, 66 FR 3782, January 16, 2001 (FRL-6929-5)) and be a non-profit organization within the meaning of 2CFR 200.

NRCS is committed to advancing equity, justice, and equal opportunity by sustaining fairness in the way programs, services, and technical assistance are delivered, within agency policies and practices. Consistent with NRCS’ equity and Justice40 objectives, the ability to reach historically underserved producers and communities will be considered and evaluated. Developing local partnerships and strengthening collaborations with underserved producers and producer groups is highly encouraged.

2.5 ELIGIBLE GEOGRAPHIES

Eligible geographies include anywhere in the United States, including the territories of Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Priority will be given to locations where there are high concentrations of feral swine.

2.6 USE OF FUNDS

Projects may include the following types of activities:

- Outreach and education on the impacts of feral swine, as well as programs available to assist landowners and operators
- Technical assistance associated with enrolling producers in this cost-share program (or associated state, local, Tribal, or private program), as well as the design, implementation, and approval of practices

Funds may be used for salaries, fringe, cost-share payments, supporting contracts, and indirect costs. Cost-share dollars may be utilized to augment existing state, local, Tribal, or private programs that address and mitigate impacts of feral swine in communities. NACD will assess limited requests for supplies. Examples of supplies may include related office supplies/outreach materials.
National Association of Conservation Districts

Funding may not be utilized for:

- Equipment and accountable personal property, including capitalized and sensitive personal property
- Any purchases or activities deemed unnecessary to accomplish grant purposes as determined by NACD or EPA, including any grantee expenses that are not directly linked to the implementation of the proposed activities
- Private ceremonies, parties, celebrations or related expenses
- Previous obligations and/or bad debts
- Expenses related to overtly religious purposes
- Expenses intended to influence the outcome of elections or other political processes
- Fines and/or penalties
- Creation of endowments
- Alcoholic beverages
- Real property (land, including land improvements, and structures thereto)
- Leases

Note on Indirect Costs
Please see NACD’s Guidance for Indirect Costs for more information on the requirements for requesting indirect costs.

2.7 COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, JUSTICE, AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

NRCS and NACD are committed to advancing equity, justice, and equal opportunity by sustaining fairness in the way programs, services, and technical assistance are delivered. "Equity" means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian American and Pacific Islander persons and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; women and girls; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; persons who live in United States Territories and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality. Equity ensures that all individuals and communities have the opportunities and resources they need to reach equal outcomes.

Some groups of people are identified in Farm Bill legislation and in USDA policy as being Historically Underserved. Members of these groups have been historically underserved by, or subject to discrimination in, Federal policies and programs. Four groups are defined by USDA as "Historically Underserved," including producers who are: Beginning; Socially Disadvantaged; Veteran; and Limited Resource. See the NRCS website for further explanations and eligibility criteria: [https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/underserved-farmers-ranchers](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/underserved-farmers-ranchers)

SECTION 3: ADHERENCE TO NRCS PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

3.1 REQUIREMENTS FOR A FARM/TRACT NUMBER AND HELC/WC COMPLIANCE

All participating producers must have a USDA-issued farm and tract number to participate in this cost-share program. This is required so that USDA can track benefits and ensure duplicate payments are not made.
If a producer does not have a farm and/or tract number, the recipient is expected to support the producer through this process which is managed by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). This often entails helping the producer with paperwork and serving as a liaison/advocate with the local FSA office to ensure progress is made on their case. Training will be jointly provided by NACD and FSA; additional resources may be found at: https://www.nacdnet.org/perimeter-fencing-for-feral-swine-grant-program/

In order to receive a farm and/or tract number the producer will need to submit:

- Proof of identity (e.g., an official ID such as driver’s license, passport)
- Customer Data Worksheet for New Producers (AD-2047)
- Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification (AD-1026)
  - Note: The local NRCS will complete the NRCS-CPA-026e to certify completion of HELC/WC
- Proof of land control (recorded deed or rental agreement as evidence of land ownership or control)
- Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource, Beginning, and Veteran Farmer or Rancher Certification (CCC-80-01/11/23) (optional)

If the producer is applying as an entity, they must also provide:

- Copy of legal entity documents
- Proof of signature authority (e.g., articles of incorporation, charter, bylaws, partnership or trust agreements, wills, and similar legal evidence to document membership shares and authority)

If an individual will be signing on behalf of the program participant, a Power of Attorney Form (FSA-211) may also be needed.

3.2 ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS

If a recipient is utilizing this funding to augment an existing state, local, Tribal, or private program, requirements for eligibility will follow those program rules.

If a recipient is seeking cost-share dollars to utilize within the community (without augmenting an existing program), NACD will make the eligibility determination. This includes:

- If a producer is already enrolled in USDA programs and has current farm/tract number(s), they may submit their subsidiary report. If the producer does not have a copy of their current subsidiary report, they must request this from their local FSA office.
- If a producer is in the process of obtaining a farm or tract number(s) from FSA, it must also submit proof of:
  - Landowner concurrence (NRCS-CPA-1257) to document that the producer has control to implement, operate, and maintain the structural and vegetative practices on rented land
  - US citizenship (if applying as an individual)
  - US ownership and control (if applying as an entity)

The following forms are not required to determine producer eligibility for the purposes of this program (please note that these forms are generally required to participate in USDA Farm Bill programs such as EQIP, CSP, etc.):

- Adjusted Gross Income (CCC-941)
- Members’ information for entity and joint operations (CCC-901)
3.3 CONSERVATION PLANS, ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATIONS, NRCS PRACTICE STANDARDS, AND PAYMENT SCENARIOS

If a recipient is utilizing this funding to augment an existing state, local, Tribal, or private program, those program policies, requirements, standards, and cost-share rules shall take precedence.

If the recipient is not augmenting an existing program, the following program structure applies:

- A conservation plan is not required; however, a schedule of operations is required to document the work done with each producer participating in the program. The schedule of operations shall be retained by the recipient, but does not need to be submitted to NACD as part of its reporting.
- An Environmental Evaluation (CPA-52) may not be required for each producer. After proposals are submitted, grantees should work with their local NRCS office to determine which projects may require an environmental evaluation.
  - If a CPA-52 is required, recipients shall help producers fill out the CPA-52 through Section O for each field. The local NRCS office will then review and approve all evaluations before on-the-ground work can begin.
  - At this time, grant recipients should not include the cost of performing CPA-52s in their budget. Once NRCS confirms whether this is required (by project or project area), NACD will work with recipients to adjust their budget accordingly.
- NRCS practice standards and scenarios shall be applied (practice code 382).
  - For historically underserved producers, NACD will provide up to 90% in cost-share; producers will be responsible for the remaining 10%.
  - For other producers, NACD will provide up to 70% in cost-share; producers will be responsible for the remaining 30%.
  - NACD will provide advance payments for historically underserved producers upon request. The producer can also request that payments be made directly to a third-party (e.g., to an implementation partner, contractor installing the practice).
- Recipients are responsible for monitoring progress and approving completion of the final project. Please use the check-out deliverables established in the state-specific practice standards.
- Limitations on payments have not been established for this grant program.

3.4 PRODUCER CONTRACTS

Recipients may utilize the terms and conditions of the producer contract/agreement associated with an existing program that incentivizes installation/repair of perimeter fencing. If one does not exist, recipients will enter into a contract/agreement for cost-share with NACD and be required to utilize the NACD contract.

Note: A copy of the contract will be shared with recipients prior to subawards.

3.5 ADMINISTRATION OF PAYMENTS

NACD can administer cost-share payments directly to producers or contractors upon request. Alternatively, recipients with existing infrastructure may choose to administer producer payments themselves.
Section 4: Application Timelines, Evaluation, & Award

4.1 Anticipated Milestones & Timelines

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anticipated Dates</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
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<tr>
<td>August 24, 2023 4pm ET</td>
<td>NACD will host a webinar to discuss this RFA and answer any questions. All interested parties, both eligible entities and partners, are welcome to join. Register here: <a href="https://nacdnet.app.neoncrm.com/np/clients/nacdnet/eventRegistration.jsp?event=1941">https://nacdnet.app.neoncrm.com/np/clients/nacdnet/eventRegistration.jsp?event=1941</a>&amp;</td>
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<td>The webinar will be recorded and posted to NACD’s website: <a href="https://www.nacdnet.org/perimeter-fencing-for-feral-swine-grant-program/">https://www.nacdnet.org/perimeter-fencing-for-feral-swine-grant-program/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>October 9, 2023 11:59pm ET</td>
<td>Applications due via <a href="https://nacd.formstack.com/forms/perimeter_fencing_application_2023">https://nacd.formstack.com/forms/perimeter_fencing_application_2023</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>October – November, 2023</td>
<td>Application clarifications, evaluations, and selections</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 11, 2023</td>
<td>Applicants notified of selection</td>
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<tr>
<td>January, 2024</td>
<td>Final award</td>
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Eligible entities must submit their applications using the links above by the deadline. Upon successful completion of the application, applicants will automatically receive an email confirmation with a PDF of the application attached.

4.2 Evaluation Criteria

NRCS and NACD will collaboratively review and assess application and needs across the country to determine how funding will be equitably distributed. The applications will be evaluated based on:

- Estimated density of feral swine within the covered geography – 40%
- Strength and clarity of strategy for conducting outreach – 25%
- Impact on Tribal and historically underserved producers and communities – 25%
- Cost effectiveness of budget – 5%
- Past performance with NACD grants (if applicable; there is no disadvantage if you have not had a grant with NACD previously) – 5%
SECTION 5: OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 PARTIAL FUNDING

NACD reserves the right to partially fund an application.

5.2 PREAWARD COSTS

Recipients may not incur pre-award costs.

5.3 POST-AWARD REPORTING

Subawardees will be responsible for quarterly reporting to NACD. At minimum, quarterly progress reports shall include a description of work accomplished (including photographs, when possible), a summary of outcomes achieved compared to the targets, costs incurred, and a brief description of work anticipated during the next quarter. The final report template will be provided prior to award.