



# State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program

CDFA OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL FARMING & INNOVATION

## Request for Grant Applications

Release Date: January 5, 2024

Applications are due on a first come first served basis until all funds have been allocated.



Resource Conservation District of Tehama County (RCDTC)

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## Summary of Program Updates from Previous Solicitations

1. Same process as the first-come, first-serve process used in 2021.
2. Revise the scoring criteria to a benefit-focused rubric that incorporates “additional considerations”.
  - The primary intent of this revision is to create a simplified rubric that will allow technical reviewers to focus on validating the water and GHG benefits and advance projects with greater estimated benefits.
  - The updated rubric will provide more guidance to applicants than the more subjective criteria table from the past.
  - The budget portion of the rubric encourages applicants to propose a well-rounded project that will have lasting benefits tied to irrigation improvements. To receive maximum points in the budget category, all the major components of the project must be identified, and costs associated with irrigation water management will be less than 40% and for renewable energy will be less than 65% of the grant request.
3. Applicants will now use the new SWEEP Project Assessment Tool to quantify the benefits of their project instead of the two excel-based tools.
  - The new tool includes N<sub>2</sub>O emission calculations. This may help additional farmers to be eligible for funding by providing a new pathway to GHG emission reductions.
4. Parcels that have previously been funded may receive additional funding, if the recipient does not remove the previously funded project within 10 years of installation.
  - CDFA has excluded parcels from receiving SWEEP funding more than one time resulting in the exclusion of recipients from early funding cycles that have only one farmed parcel. This change will allow producers with one or a few parcels to receive additional support to build upon a past project. Additionally, this can help with flexibility and drought resilience.
5. RCDTC will prioritize Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers through a carve out of 25% of funding. SDFRs that do not receive funding in that first 25% will also compete for funds with the non-SDFR applicants.
  - In the previous solicitation CDFA prioritized SDFRs for funding, with at least 25% of the funds dedicated to SDFRs. The top scoring applications from SDFRs be awarded from the 25% carve out. Other applications from SDFRs will compete with non-SDFR applicants for the remaining 75% of funding.

6. Strengthen limits on application submission and awards for the funding cycle. RCDTC has aimed to limit an applicant to receiving a single award within a funding cycle. This has been enforced using tax identification number as a reference. This strategy has had limited success as individuals utilize multiple tax identification numbers. Moving forward, SWEEP will limit a user to one application submission. Additionally, RCDTC will use mailing address and contact name as two other reference points to ensure that a single individual is not receiving multiple awards within a funding cycle.
  - It is incumbent upon the RCDTC to distribute grant funds widely and equitably. Efforts to limit awards to one per individual per funding cycle using tax id have been unsuccessful as SWEEP sees in each funding cycle, individuals indicated as the authorized individual or grant manager on multiple grant agreements. While being mindful that California's agricultural operations take many different financial structures, adding both contact name and mailing address as cross-reference points for applications may help to distribute funding more widely.

## **Background and Purpose**

The Resource Conservation District of Tehama County (RCDTC) is pleased to announce a competitive grant application process for the State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEEP). CDFA's Office of Environmental Farming and Innovation (OEFI) administers the program. SWEEP's objective is to provide financial incentives for California agricultural operations to invest in irrigation systems that save water and reduce GHG emissions.

## **Funding and Duration**

Funding for this solicitation comes from California's General Fund as was appropriated to SWEEP through the 2022 and 2023 state budget process. Through this solicitation of SWEEP the RCDTC will award approximately \$4.4 million to agricultural operations in Tehama County investing in irrigation systems that reduce GHG emissions and save water.

- The maximum grant award is \$200,000.
- The maximum grant duration is 18 months. Recipients must complete projects no later than 18 months after the start of the grant agreement. The anticipated start date is in late spring of 2024.
- RCDTC will not reimburse any costs incurred before the beginning of the grant agreement.
- RCDTC reserves the right to offer an award different than the amount requested.

## **Priority Funding for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SDFRs)**

RCDTC will reserve twenty-five percent (25 percent) of the funds for farmers and  
State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program  
RCD Tehama County

ranchers who identify as belonging to a socially disadvantaged group. The 2017 Farmer Equity Act ([AB 1348 \(Aguiar-Curry, 2017\)](#)) defined a socially disadvantaged group as including:

- African Americans
- Native Indians
- Alaskan Natives
- Hispanics
- Asian Americans
- Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders

The definition of a socially disadvantaged group does not include gender, gender identity, nor sexual orientation. SDFRs that do not receive funding through the prioritization process will also compete for funds with all other applicants for the remaining 75% of funding.

## Technical Assistance Resources

CDFA contracts with California academic research institutions, Resource Conservation Districts, and non-profit organizations to provide one-on-one technical assistance through CDFA's [Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance Program](#) (CSA TAP). Through these technical assistance providers (TAPs), SWEEP applicants may obtain free assistance with the development and submission of a SWEEP grant application and implementation of an awarded project. Visit the [SWEEP webpage](#) to view a list of TAPs.

CDFA also partners with the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources to support a statewide group of [Climate Smart Agriculture Community Education Specialists](#) (Community Educators). Like TAPS, Community Educators provide SWEEP application and implementation assistance to farmers and ranchers.

## Eligibility and Exclusions

- California farmers, ranchers and California Native American Tribes are eligible to apply.
  - An applicant must be at least 18 years old.
  - An applicant cannot submit more than one application with a unique user account in the application portal. RCDTC will cross reference tax identification number, mailing address and contact name to ensure that an application does not receive multiple awards.
  - An agricultural operation or individual cannot receive a total cumulative SWEEP award amount of more than \$600,000 since the CDFA initiated the SWEEP program in 2014. RCDTC

will submit approved applications to CDFA to determine the progress towards this cap using tax identification number.

- The proposed SWEEP project must be on a California agricultural operation.
  - For the purposes of this program, CDFA defines an agricultural operation as row, vineyard, field and tree crops, commercial nurseries, nursery stock production, and greenhouse operations producing food crops or flowers as defined in Food and Agricultural Code section 77911.
  - Medical and recreational cannabis crops are not eligible for funding.
  - The farm location and the business mailing address must be in California.
- Universities, research institutions, and state governmental organizations are not eligible for funding.
- Applications may build upon a previously funded SWEEP project directly affecting the same Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs), but recipients may not remove projects components funded by SWEEP within the previous ten years.
- Recipients may combine SWEEP funds with other incentives for the same project, such as funds from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). However, Recipients may not use SWEEP funds to cover costs funded by other federal or state grant programs.
- Projects must reduce on-farm irrigation water use and reduce GHG emissions.

CDFA prohibits SWEEP recipients from using grant funds to:

- Expand existing agricultural operations (producers must not use funding to convert additional new acreage to farmland).
- Install new groundwater wells or increase well depth.
- Test new technology or perform research.

*Executive Order N-6-22 – Russia Sanctions On March 4, 2022, Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order N-6-22 regarding Economic Sanctions against Russia and Russian entities and individuals. “Economic Sanctions” refers to sanctions imposed by the U.S. government in response to Russia’s actions in Ukraine, as well as any sanctions imposed under state law. By submitting a bid, proposal, or application, Bidder/Applicant represents that it is not a target of Economic Sanctions. Should the State determine Bidder/Applicant is a target of Economic Sanctions or is conducting prohibited transactions with sanctioned individuals or entities, that shall be grounds for rejection of the*

*Bidder's/Applicant's bid/proposal/application any time prior to contract/agreement execution, or, if determined after contract/agreement execution, shall be grounds for termination by the State.*

## Timeline

During the application period, the RCDTC will host one informational workshop to provide an overview of program guidelines and resources. The grant application workshop will be scheduled for January 5<sup>th</sup> at 9am. For more information and details visit the RCDTC website at

<https://www.tehamacountyrcd.org/>

During the informational workshop, RCDTC staff will be available to answer programmatic questions and provide one-on-one assistance as time permits.

Program Activity	Tentative Timeframe
Release Request for Grant Applications (RGA)	January 5, 2024
RCDTC application workshop	January 5, 2024 (visit the RCDTC webpage for details)
Open application period	January 5 – until funds are accounted for.
Administrative and technical review	January – February 2024
Announce and award funding	February/March 2024
Award Process Timeline	See <a href="#">Award Process</a>

## Strategies for Water Savings and GHG Reductions

CDFA has identified the strategies that address water conservation and GHG emission reductions from irrigation systems. Applicants should consider incorporating several strategies to achieve the required water conservation **and** GHG emission reductions.

### Water Savings

#### 1. Tools for Irrigation Scheduling

- Examples: the use of soil moisture or plant sensors (USDA NRCS Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) [449](#) may apply) with electronic data output, the use of weather station(s) linked to an irrigation controller to ensure efficient irrigation scheduling or the use of evapotranspiration (ET) based irrigation scheduling, such as the California Irrigation Management Information System (CIMIS) to optimize water use efficiency for crops.
- Telemetry components that allow the electronic communication between technology devices are eligible for funding through SWEEP.
- For use of ET-based irrigation scheduling, applicants should provide sufficient documentation to show that water deliveries can be made



on a consistent basis to accommodate scheduling.

## 2. Irrigation System Changes

- Examples: the conversion to a more water efficient irrigation method or improvement of existing method to conserve water.
- Projects should follow USDA NRCS CPS [441](#), [442](#), [443](#) specifications.
- CDFA encourages applicants currently utilizing surface water (e.g., canal or river water) to flood irrigate crops to maintain flood irrigation infrastructure along with proposed efficient micro/ drip irrigation system(s) to facilitate groundwater recharge when surface water is available for recharge.
- Critical components of irrigation systems such as, but not limited to, flow meters, filters and pressure sensors are allowable costs.

## Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions

### 1. Fuel Conversion

- Examples: pump fuel conversion resulting in reduction of GHG emissions such as replacing a diesel pump with an electric pump and/or the installation of renewable energy.
- Renewable energy systems that power irrigation systems are eligible for SWEEP funding.

### 2. Improved Energy Efficiency of Pumps and the Addition of Variable Frequency Drives

- Examples: retrofitting or replacing pumps or the addition of variable frequency drives to reduce energy use and match pump flow to load requirements.
- USDA NRCS CPS [372](#) or [533](#) may apply.

### 3. Low Pressure Systems

- Examples: the conversion of a high-pressure sprinkler system to a low-pressure micro-irrigation system or lower pressure sprinkler system to reduce pumping and energy use.
- Projects should follow USDA NRCS CPS [441](#) or [442](#) specifications.

### 4. Reduced Pumping through Water Savings Strategies

- Example: improved irrigation scheduling leading to reduced pump operation times.

### 5. Reduced Nitrous Oxide Emissions

Nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), a potent greenhouse gas, is released from soils due to microbial processes. In irrigated settings, N<sub>2</sub>O emissions increase because of nitrogen fertilizer applications and soil wetting. Agricultural N<sub>2</sub>O

emissions may be reduced when farmers apply less fertilizer and use micro irrigation, including sub-surface irrigation. Applicants may utilize the new SWEEP calculator tool to estimate water savings and GHG emissions reductions, including N<sub>2</sub>O reductions associated with the proposed project. For more information see [Greenhouse Gas Emission Documentation](#)

### **Other Management Practices**

CDFA supports innovative projects and recognizes there is variability in irrigation systems throughout California. For this reason, applicants may propose project components that do not fit into the above strategies as long as the comprehensive project will result in estimated water savings using the SWEEP quantification tools. Examples of components that CDFA may fund through SWEEP as part of a comprehensive water-saving and GHG-reducing project include:

- On-farm water storage (e.g., rainwater capture, surface water reservoir)
- Irrigation automation
- Surface water interconnection or recycled water interconnection
- Sub-surface drip irrigation including manure effluent mixing and application systems

### **Program Requirements**

An agricultural operation can only submit one grant application. The RCDTC will cross-reference information with CDFA on tax identification number, mailing address and primary contact name to ensure only one award per applicant.

If an agricultural operation is a sole proprietorship, the applicant individual should use the last four digits of their social security number (e.g., XXX-XX-1234) as their unique business identification number in their grant application. An agricultural operation must use the operation's legal business name and associated tax identification number in the application. If selected for an award, RCDTC will extend a Grant Agreement to the business name provided in the application. RCDTC will not transfer awards to other business names or individuals.

Applicants must include flow meters in their proposed project or demonstrate that existing flow meters measure water use at the project site. See [Project Design](#) for more specifics on project design requirements.

Applicants must use and submit the SWEEP quantification tools/report to estimate water and GHG benefits of projects. Applicants must gather baseline information such as utility records and pump efficiency tests to complete these tools.

RCDTC requires recipients to:

- Meet with RCDTC staff associated with SWEEP for a pre-project consultation to confirm project information and discuss implementation plans. During the pre-project consultation RCDTC may require the recipient to provide additional information on the proposed project (e.g., assessors maps, photographs of the site, or quotes).
- Complete a post-project verification site visit with RCDTC staff associated with SWEEP, to evaluate the completed project.
- Provide post-project information or records (e.g., water use, energy use, energy generation) to an RCDTC staff associated with SWEEP to evaluate project outcomes for three years after the completion of the project.
- Use and maintain the SWEEP project system for an expected project life of 10 years.

[See Project Implementation](#) for more details regarding project implementation requirements.

## How to Apply

The RCDTC uses an online application platform through Jotform to receive SWEEP applications. Applicants access the application at the RCDTC's webpage: <https://www.tehamacountyrcd.org/cdfa-sweep-state-water-efficiency-enhancement-program>

Applicants must create a user account to submit a grant application. All applications, supporting documents and submissions may be subject to public disclosure through the Public Records Act.

To ensure successful submission of applications and attachments, RCDTC strongly encourages applicants to comply with the computer system recommendations provided by Jotform. RCDTC cannot guarantee that the Jotform system will be compatible with other browsers or operating systems. Jotform recommends that applicants:

- Use Chrome, Firefox, Edge or Safari
- Avoid using an iPad, iPhone or similar mobile device
- Save work often, as the system will time out after a period of time and applicants will lose any unsaved work

## Application Questionnaire

The application questionnaire includes questions that address applicant contact information and demographics, project location, description of the current irrigation system, and summary of the proposed irrigation system improvements

including the details of all proposed components. Prior to completing the online application questionnaire, RCDTC encourages applicants to gather all required information using [Appendix A: Grant Application Checklist](#) to facilitate effective and timely submission of the grant application.

Applicants must submit the following attachments:

- Project design
- Completed [Budget Worksheet](#)
- Quotes for all major components
- Completed [SWEEP Project Assessment Tool](#)
- Twelve consecutive months of baseline GHG emission/energy documentation for any pumps that provide water to the project location
  - Fuel receipts or utility bills
- Pump efficiency tests for existing pumps
  - Test paperwork must be within the last 2 years
- Pump specification documents for any proposed pumps

As outlined under [Disqualifications](#), RCDTC will disqualify applications that are incomplete or lacking required attachments. More details about each required attachment follows below.

### **Project Design**

Applicants must submit a project design for the proposed irrigation system. Project design costs are at the expense of the agriculture operation. Applicants may utilize commonly available mapping or imagery platforms to create a holistic project design.

Project designs must include the following:

- Labeled Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs)
- Schematic of the locations of proposed or improved infrastructure and technology including irrigation piping, reservoirs, pumps, and sensors
- Pertinent agronomic information, such as the crop and water source
- Location, engineering, and energy output specifications of any proposed renewable energy installations
- Location of pump and existing and/or proposed flow meters

### **Water and Energy Use Calculations and Supporting Documentation**

Applicants must submit supporting documentation to substantiate water savings and GHG reductions calculations. Specific requirements pertaining to water and GHG documentation follow.

## Water Use Documentation

Applicants must complete the recently developed [online SWEEP Project Assessment Tool](#). In addition to completing and uploading the assessment tool, an applicant may attach supplementary information that will allow technical reviewers to refine water savings estimates.

### The SWEEP Project Assessment Tool (PAT)

CDFA developed this spatial tool in collaboration with Colorado State University to estimate both water savings and GHG emission reductions. It includes spatial layers that are important to a SWEEP project such as soil texture, assessors' parcel numbers, and legislative district. SWEEP applicants may use the resulting map as the foundation for a SWEEP project design. Applicants will complete the tool by identifying the project location and entering critical information about crops, irrigation management and systems. Visit the tool's landing page for instructions.

## Greenhouse Gas Emission Documentation

To determine the impact of the proposed project on GHG emissions, applicants must use the [online SWEEP Project Assessment Tool](#). In addition to completing the assessment tool, applicants must attach supporting documentation that will allow a technical reviewer to replicate the GHG emission calculations.

### The SWEEP Project Assessment Tool (PAT)

CDFA developed this spatial tool in collaboration with Colorado State University to estimate both water savings and GHG emission reductions. In addition to calculating GHG benefits that are due to changes in energy use from irrigation pumps, this tool will estimate the N<sub>2</sub>O reductions of a project that would result from changes in crop or irrigation method. Applicants will complete the tool by identifying the project location and entering critical information about crops and irrigation systems. Detailed instructions can be found at the tool's landing page.

## Supporting Documentation for GHG Calculations

Applicants must submit supporting documentation that relates to baseline energy use. Supporting documentation must be sufficient to allow for reviewers to replicate the GHG calculations. RCDTC requires applicants to attach the following supporting documents:

- Utility bills, actual fuel receipts, and/or field operational logs covering the previous growing year (12 months; January to December 2023).
  - In situations where the project involves crop rotation, applicants may provide up to three years of supporting documents to substantiate a representative baseline of energy use from pumping.
  - Documents must capture actual, not estimated or modelled,

- energy use information (e.g., gallons, kWh, etc.).
- Documents must indicate a specific time period (e.g., months/dates) for the on-farm energy use. For months with no on-farm energy use, indicate “no usage” for those months during the growing season.
- RCDTC defines field operational logs as on-farm data compiled during a growing season and maintained as a common business practice by the agricultural operation to capture an actual time period (e.g., months and dates) of on-farm energy use values (e.g., gallons, kWh, etc.). RCDTC does not consider documents that provide estimates to be field operational logs.
- Pump and motor specifications for proposed pumps.
- Pump efficiency tests for existing pump(s) related to the project.
  - Pump efficiency tests should be no older than 2 years.

Applicants must describe how the on-farm energy documentation attached to their application supports the baseline GHG calculation.

### **Budget Worksheet**

Applicants must download and complete a SWEEP [Budget Worksheet](#). The Budget Worksheet includes a breakdown of grant funds budgeted for each of the categories described below and itemization of all costs included in the proposed project. Applicants will attach the Budget Worksheet to their application in Microsoft Excel format and be consistent with the project design and application narrative. RCDTC will not accept budget worksheets from past solicitations.

### **Quotes for Proposed Renewable Energy**

If the project involves the installation of a renewable energy system, the applicant must submit a quote to verify the system capacity (kW). The quote must also itemize any tax incentives or rebates that the applicant will receive from the installation.

### **Budget Cost Categories:**

#### **Supplies and Equipment**

Itemize the estimated purchase cost of supplies and equipment by providing a description and quantity. Supplies include all consumable materials with an acquisition cost less than \$5,000 per unit (e.g., pipes, tubing). Recipients must use supplies exclusively for the project. Equipment is an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property with a useful life of more than two years and an acquisition cost which equals or exceeds \$5,000 per unit (e.g., solar panels, irrigation pumps). Equipment must have a useful life of two years or more.

## Labor

Labor costs cannot exceed 25 percent of the total SWEEP grant request. Recipients will cover labor costs in excess of 25 percent of the total SWEEP grant with cost share funding. Applicants must estimate the cost for any work on the project performed by individuals associated with a contractor. Provide a brief description of services and the cost/hour necessary for installation (e.g., labor for electrician, concrete work).

## Other

Itemize the estimated cost of any other allowable expenses not covered in the previous budget categories necessary for project implementation. Project cost typically listed under this category include, but are not limited to, permits and equipment rental.

## Allowable Costs

Applicants must itemize project costs and costs must clearly support installation or improvement of irrigation systems, including supplies, equipment, labor, and any other allowable cost necessary for project implementation. Project costs must be reasonable and consistent with costs paid for equivalent work on non-grant funded activities or for comparable work in the labor market.

Examples of allowable costs include:

- Installation of photovoltaic panels to power irrigation systems
- All components of irrigation systems
- Sensor hardware and telemetry
- Software associated with sensors and weather stations
- Flow meters
- Permits

## Unallowable Costs

Examples of unallowable costs, include:

- Project design costs (e.g., engineering)
- Costs associated with technical assistance or project management, including drive time and fuel cost
- Post-project service charges and maintenance costs associated with the irrigation system
- Non-labor costs (e.g., management) and fees associated with project oversight
- Labor costs in excess of 25 percent of the total SWEEP grant request
- Any labor provided by the applicant or applicant's employees (RCDTC categorizes these costs as "in-kind")
- Supplies and equipment costs not related to irrigation or water distribution systems



- Tools and equipment with useful life of less than two years
- Costs associated with drilling of new or lowering groundwater wells
- Irrigation training courses
- Pump efficiency tests
- Purchase of trees, crops, or seeds
- Purchase of soil amendments or implementation of soil management practices
- Costs associated with installing a groundwater recharge basin

## **Review Process and Notification of Application Status**

### **Administrative and Technical Review**

RCDTC will conduct two levels of review during the grant application review process. The first level is an administrative review to determine whether application requirements were met. The second level is a technical review to evaluate the benefits of the proposal, including the potential for the project to save water and reduce GHG emissions. The technical reviewers are agricultural irrigation water system specialists and experts familiar with SWEEP.

### **Scoring Rubric**

The technical reviewer(s) will validate water and GHG calculations based upon the supporting documentation and project design provided by the applicant. Reviewers will score projects based on the rubric below.



Category and Criteria	Points Available
<b>Overall merit and feasibility (up to 10 points)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the project meet the goals of SWEEP?</li> <li>Is the project well balanced?</li> </ul>	10
<b>Quantity of Estimated Water Savings (acre-inch per acre)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less than 1 = 0 points - <b>Project is Not Eligible</b></li> <li>1 to 4 = 5 points</li> <li>&gt;4 to 8 = 10 points</li> <li>&gt;8 to 12 = 15 points</li> <li>&gt; 12 = 20 points</li> </ul>	20
<b>Quantity of Estimated GHG Reductions (MTCO<sub>2</sub>e per acre)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less than .01 = 0 points - <b>Project is Not Eligible</b></li> <li>.01 to .05 = 5 points</li> <li>&gt;.05 to .1 = 10 points</li> <li>Between .1 and .5 = 15 points</li> <li>&gt; .5 = 20 points</li> </ul>	20
<b>Project Expected Benefits (max 20 points)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Groundwater Sustainability:</b> The project reduces groundwater pumping in a <a href="#">critically over-drafted groundwater basin</a> = 2 points</li> <li><b>Energy Efficiency:</b> The project improves pump efficiency. Examples: pump retrofit, installation of VFD, replacement of pump = 2 points</li> <li><b>Renewable Energy:</b> The project includes installation of renewable energy = 2 points</li> <li><b>Protects Water Quality:</b> The project will protect water quality through improved nutrient management. Examples: sub-surface drip of manure effluent, change to more precise water application to crop = 2 points</li> <li><b>Water Recycling:</b> The project site will utilize recycled water = 2 points</li> <li><b>Air Quality:</b> The project will reduce fossil fuel combustion. Example: Conversion from fossil fuel to electricity = 2 points</li> <li><b>Climate &amp; Drought Adaptation:</b> Making systems more resilient to environmental changes. Examples: surface water</li> </ul>	20

<p>storage or interconnecting pumps or water sources. = 2 points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Irrigation Training*</b>: The applicant commits to take irrigation training during the course of the agreement = 2 points</li> <li>• <b>Irrigation Efficiency</b>: Irrigation upgrades that are not captured in the PAT. Examples, replacing impact sprinklers on solid set systems with rotators, replacing old/work micro system components with new ones = 4 Points</li> <li>• <b>Using Automation</b>: Automating valves or pump stations to improve flexibility and control = 2 points</li> <li>• <b>Participation in Irrigated Land Program</b>: Membership in local (state mandated) program, STWEC = 4 points</li> <li>• <b>Small Farms and Ranches</b>: Total farm size under 250 acres = 2 points.</li> <li>• <b>No previous SWEEP funded projects</b>: Farming operation has never received any SWEEP funds = 2 points.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Complete Application</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application is thorough and complete (10)</li> <li>• Minor errors (6-9)</li> <li>• Significant errors and/or missing attachments (0-6)</li> <li>• Incomplete application (applications will not be reviewed)</li> </ul> <p>Balance and Irrigation-Focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renewable energy components are greater than 65% of the grant request = -5 points</li> <li>• Irrigation scheduling tools are greater than 40% of the grant request = -5 points</li> </ul>	10

### Irrigation Training

Irrigation training is a critical component to irrigation management and agricultural water conservation. RCDTC strongly encourages applicants to participate in an irrigation training course to maximize the benefits of a well-designed and maintained irrigation system. The scoring rubric offers applicants two points if they commit to taking an irrigation training course during the term of the grant agreement.

If an applicant commits to completing training, the irrigation training course will become part of the Grant Agreement between the agricultural operation and RCTC. Therefore, project completion will be conditional upon completing the required training course during the grant term. Recipients must provide evidence (i.e., certificate of completion) confirming attendance. RCDTC encourages agricultural operations to consider having both the agriculture operation's manager and irrigator attend a training course; however, RCDTC requires only one agriculture operation representative to attend. Recipients will submit an irrigation training certificate to RCDTC within 30 days from the date of project verification.

Applicants may consider training resources provided on the program website at <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/sweep/IrrigationTechnicalResources.html>. However, applicants may also select an alternative training course that best meets the needs of their operation. The applicant may submit a certified USDA NRCS Irrigation Water Management plan as evidence of completing irrigation training.

## **Funding Recommendations**

RCDTC will consider the following criteria when developing funding recommendations for SWEEP:

1. Score
2. Previous award status – RCDTC will recommend applicants that have never been awarded a SWEEP grant above equally-scoring applicants that have received a previous award.

RCDTC may take into consideration the past performance of applicants, if applicable. Past performance may include timely and satisfactory completion of funded activities and reporting requirements, data on meeting funding priorities, quantity and quality of past project performance including project termination or incomplete projects, or unresponsiveness.

## **Notification and Feedback**

### **Disqualifications**

During the administrative review, RCDTC will disqualify applications that meet any of the following conditions:

- Incomplete grant applications: applications with one or more unanswered questions necessary for administrative or technical review.

- Incomplete grant applications: applications with missing, blank, unreadable, corrupt, or otherwise unusable attachments.
- Applications requesting funding for more than the maximum award amount.
- Applications that include activities outside the grant duration
- Applications with unallowable costs or activities necessary to complete the project objectives.
- Applications that do not provide primary applicant contact information in the application.
- Applications that do not comply with Eligibility or meet Program Requirements and Restrictions.
- Applications from applicants that apply more than one time during the funding cycle.

### **Appeal Rights**

Applicants can appeal to RCDTC over any discretionary action taken within ten (10) days of receiving a notice of disqualification. The appeal must be in written form and signed by the responsible party named on the grant application, or by an agent whom the applicant has authorized in writing. It must state the grounds for the appeal and include any supporting documents and a copy of the RCDTC decision being challenged. The submissions must be emailed to [agriculture@tehamacountyrca.org](mailto:agriculture@tehamacountyrca.org). RCDTC does not receive appeals within the time frame provided above, it will not consider the appeal. Appeal rights are only afforded to disqualifications.

### **Award and Regrets Notices**

RCDTC will notify successful applicants of their grant award through email and will initiate the grant agreement execution process. At the time RCDTC announces awards, RCDTC will also notify unsuccessful applicants. Unsuccessful applicants may request feedback on their applications.

## **Award Process**

### **Grant Agreement Execution**

RCDTC estimates that the process of executing a grant agreement will take several weeks up to 2 months. A RCDTC staff member will contact each Recipient to schedule a pre-project consultation to confirm project site information and discuss implementation plans. RCDTC may require applicants to provide additional information to confirm project location site or provide additional quotes. Following finalization of the scope of work and budget, RCDTC will send the recipient a Grant Agreement package with instructions

regarding award requirements including information on project implementation, verification, and payment process.

### Award Timeline

Grant Agreement Stage	2024 Key Dates Estimated
Application review and award notifications	Feb - March
Grant packet creation and completed contract	March- May
Project implementation start	April–June
Processing advance payments – After the grant term begins, recipients may request an advance payment. If RCDTC approves the advance, it will take up to 8 weeks to process this payment. ( <a href="#">See Payment Process</a> ).	After signed contract completed

### Project Implementation

Once RCDTC has fully executed the Grant Agreement, the grant recipient can begin implementation of the project if it is after or on the official project start date. During project implementation, grant recipients must maintain frequent communication with RCDTC staff about the SWEEP project. RCDTC staff may regularly send emails or surveys to gauge project progress in addition to quarterly invoicing. Recipients must be responsive.

Recipients are responsible for the overall management of their awarded project, ensuring all project activities, including labor associated with installation, are complete no later than March 31, 2026. For projects involving utility interconnection, recipients must take the necessary steps to begin the interconnection process quickly after execution of the Grant Agreement. Recipients must complete all proposed activities including activities related to cost share by the end of the grant term. Awardees must contact RCDTC staff for approval if any changes to the scope of work are necessary. RCDTC will work with awardees through the scope of work revision process. Applicants that deviate from the approved scope of work will not be reimbursed.

The grant recipient, the grant recipient's authorized representative or RCDTC staff will initiate all communications (oral and written) related to the grant activities including reimbursements.

Recipients must install the project on the parcels (APNs) identified in the Grant Agreement's Scope of Work (SOW). RCDTC will withhold all or any portion of the grant funding or terminate the Grant Agreement if the recipient fails to install a project on the APNs identified in the scope of work.

RCDTC may conduct an on-site visit and inspection of records, upon reasonable notice at any time during the project term. The purpose is to determine whether deliverables are being met and evaluate project progress. RCDTC may require recipients to submit financial records and project documentation to ensure that Recipients use SWEEP funds in compliance with the Grant Agreement terms and conditions.

## **Payment Process**

SWEEP is a reimbursement-based grant program. RCDTC will provide the grant recipient with the necessary grant award and invoicing documents for reimbursement process. RCDTC processes reimbursements on a quarterly basis and requires supporting documentation of actual costs associated with the purchase and/or installation of project components. RCDTC will withhold 10 percent from the total grant award reimbursement until the verification requirement is complete and meets the expectations agreed upon in the Scope of Work.

## **Advanced Payments**

If selected for funding, recipients may be eligible for an advance payment of up to 25 percent of the grant award, subject to the provisions of Section 316.1

"Advance Payments" of the [California Code of Regulations, Division 1, Chapter 5](#). If appropriate justification is submitted and recipient follows grant management requirements, RCDTC may issue additional advance payments in accordance with CDFA regulations.

## **Project Verification**

Following project implementation, the grant recipient must inform the assigned grant specialist that the project is complete and operational. A RCDTC staff specializing in SWEEP, will then initiate the verification process. The verifier will visit the project site and inspect the completed project to ensure design specifications were met and the system is working effectively. In addition, the verifier will take photographs to document project completion. The grant recipient or a documented authorized representative of the agricultural operation must be present during the time of verification. If RCDTC determines that remote verification is required, the grant recipient will submit geotagged photos of critical project components so that RCDTC can verify that the project is complete on the intended APN. RCDTC must complete the project

verification by April 30, 2026. Recipients must allow sufficient time for verification.

## **Post-Project Requirements**

### **Project Outcome Reporting**

RCDTC requires all recipients to maintain documentation related to the funded project, including energy and water use documentation and to be responsive to requests for information about the project. In the three years after project completion, RCDTC may request information about the use and maintenance of the project and may request water and energy records associated with the project site.

RCDTC will consider failure to provide project-related documentation to SWEEP staff or RCDTC designee as non-performance. In the event of non-performance, RCDTC may take any action deemed necessary to recover all or any portion of the grant funding and may deny eligibility for future funding.

### **State Audit and Accounting Requirements**

In addition to SWEEP program requirements, awarded projects may be subject to State Audit and Accounting Requirements listed below.

#### **Audit Requirements**

Projects are subject to audit by RCDTC and/or the State annually and for three (3) years following the final payment of grant funds. If the project is selected for audit, RCDTC will contact the recipient in advance of audit-related requests or visits. The audit shall include all books, papers, accounts, documents, or other records of recipient, as they relate to the project. The recipient must make available all project expenditure documentation for an audit, whether paid with grant funds or other funds.

The recipient must have project records, including source documents and evidence of payment, readily available and must provide an employee with knowledge of the project to assist the auditor. The Grantee must provide a copy of any document, paper, record, etc., requested by the auditor.

#### **Accounting Requirements**

The recipient must maintain an accounting system that:

- Accurately reflects fiscal transactions, with the necessary controls and safeguards.
- Provides a good audit trail, including original source documents such as purchase orders, receipts, progress payments, invoices, employee paystubs and timecards, evidence of payment, etc.

- Provides accounting data so the total cost of each individual project can be readily determined.

### **Records Retention**

Recipients must retain records for a period of three (3) years after final payment and at least one (1) year following an audit.



## Appendix A: Grant Application Checklist

### **Application Components**

- Completed Online Application

### **Application Attachments**

- Project Design
  - Map detailing locations of all components to be added or replaced
  - The Project Assessment Tool can be used as a base map.
- [Budget Worksheet](#)
- Quotes for all major components
  - Solar, irrigation supplies, pumps, monitoring equipment...
  - Quotes need to be broken down into parts and labor
- Utility bills and/or fuel receipts to document GHG usage
  - Field operational logs, etc. covering 12 months of peak irrigation season)
- Pump Efficiency Test(s)
  - Pump efficiency test for current pumps (good for 2 years)
  - Pump and motor specifications for any proposed pumps
- [Project Assessment Tool](#)

### **Optional Application Attachments (only if applicable to project)**

- Cost Share (optional)
- Letter of Support from Groundwater Sustainability Agency  
Supplemental information to support water use baseline
- Irrigation evaluation reports detailing DU rating
- All Other Supplemental Documents