



# Sustainable Farms and Fields

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Updated April 2026*

Please see [SFF programmatic guidelines](#) for additional details.

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## General Questions

### Who is eligible to apply for Sustainable Farms and Fields funding?

The Sustainable Farms and Fields program is open to conservation districts and other public entities who possess the expertise to provide technical assistance and/or capacity to implement climate-smart practices for farmers and ranchers. Eligible public entities include conservation districts; state agencies; colleges, universities, and extension offices; federally recognized tribes; counties, cities, towns, and other municipalities; special purpose districts. We encourage producers or nonprofit organizations interested in the program to reach out to their local conservation district or other public entity providing technical assistance in climate-smart agricultural practices.

### Is this funding from the Climate Commitment Act?

The round of SFF funding with an application deadline of May 15, 2026 is from the general fund and does not involve the CCA requirements.

## Timeline

### What is the application deadline?

The cutoff to be considered in the review of applications is **5:00 pm on May 15, 2026**.

### Why is the cutoff for project completion in the middle of the growing season — June 30? This makes it difficult to apply for certain practices that may not fit that schedule.

The reason the deadline is June 30, is because Sustainable Farms and Fields is funded in the Washington state operating budget, the funding cycle runs July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027. We recognize that this may create some limitations in terms of the types of projects that can be implemented within that time frame.

### What is the date the project needs to be completed?

The round of funding is opening April 2026's funding is tied to fiscal year 2027. That means that all projects and practices must be completed no later than June 30, 2027. All technical assistance costs must be vouchered for in the month following the when the spending occurred.

### For equipment purchased, does it have to be received or ordered by June 30, 2027?

All equipment needs to be ordered and delivered (you must have it in hand) by June 30. This is a state purchasing requirement.

## **When will successful applicants be notified?**

All applicants will receive a notification of their application status. Successful applicants will receive an email with their award notification that includes information about next steps and their reporting requirements. We expect that all notifications will occur in late June 2026 for both successful and unsuccessful applicants.

## **Funding Limits**

### **What is the maximum amount for applications?**

No more than 20% of the total annual program funds may be awarded to any single grant applicant (i.e., conservation district or other public entity). For fiscal year 2027, a single applicant will not receive more than \$112,000 (based on \$560,000 net amount for fiscal year 2027). However, because this is a popular program, it is extremely rare for one applicant to receive 20% of the funds. The maximum cost-share per landowner or operator per fiscal year is \$100,000 (across SCC programs) unless a waiver is provided by the SCC Executive Director or their delegate.

### **If two districts are partnering on an application, can the total be more than \$112,000?**

State law says, "No more than 20 percent of the funds may be awarded to any single grant applicant." To be compliant with the law the \$112,000 cap could not be lifted. In subsequent fiscal years if the program receives more funding, then that cap would be higher.

### **Is the funding for demonstration projects included in the \$112,000 cap?**

Yes.

### **Are all types of technical assistance funding included in the \$15,000 per applicant limit?**

Due to reductions in funding for SFF, this fiscal year each grant applicant (e.g., conservation district) will be limited to a maximum of \$15,000 in technical assistance-only funding - technical assistance and/or outreach with no Best Management Practice (BMP) implementation. The technical assistance funding supporting other types of projects with BMPs will not count towards the \$15,000 limit.

### **Is alternative manure management included in the funding cap?**

No, alternative manure management will be a separate round of funding and allocations for projects specific to this funding do not impact your application limits.

# Eligible Project Types

## What kind of projects can be funded through Sustainable Farms and Fields?

Currently, five types of projects can be funded, 1) technical assistance, 2) cost share, 3) materials and supplies, 4) equipment sharing, and 5) demonstration. See the [SFF programmatic guidelines](#) for a description of each project type. Applicants may submit multiple applications per fiscal year.

## What are climate-smart practices?

The list of eligible climate-smart practices for fiscal year 2027 are listed in the [SFF Eligible Practices and GHG Tools](#) document. If there is a practice not on this list, you can apply for it as Type B demonstration project. If you have additional practices that you expect to sequester carbon and/or decrease greenhouse gas emissions, you should submit those by Feb. 1 to be considered in the next fiscal year's list of eligible practices.

## Should I apply for projects involving multiple funding types (e.g., materials and supplies as well as technical assistance) in the same application?

Yes, but only if funding all parts of the project dictates whether the project can move forward. If the different parts of the project could be funded as stand-alone pieces, they should be submitted as separate applications.

## How can I figure which project category to use?

Check out the [decision tree](#) for applicants that can help you determine the appropriate funding category for your proposed project. If you still have questions, please reach out to Karen Hills at [khills@scc.wa.gov](mailto:khills@scc.wa.gov).

## If I am applying for materials and supplies, like cover crop seed, and include a budget for staff time (technical assistance) to implement the project, is this still materials and supplies?

Yes, you can include technical assistance funding with any of these categories. But if you need staff time to implement the materials and supplies project, or if you need staff time to implement equipment share, make sure to include that in your budget. Also, include the justification details to explain how you're getting to the number that you're requesting.

## What is a DIP and should I use this funding?

From the [SCC Grant and Contract Policy and Procedure Manual](#), "A district-implemented project (DIP) is a project where the district is the lead planner and implementer of the work. A DIP is different

from a cost-share project where the landowner is in the lead. Instead, the district is taking full responsibility for installation and/or the construction of the project.” Activities include but are not limited to the following: acquiring permits, bidding and purchasing processes, and prevailing wage requirements.

A district-implemented project must not include cost sharing or cash reimbursement to a landowner(s) or land manager(s) with SCC funds. The district assumes all responsibility for project planning and construction. The DIP project structure option is only available to conservation districts.

Please see the SCC Grant and Contract Policy and Procedure Manual for additional details on DIPs, consult the [NRI Decision Tree](#), and contact your [Regional Manager](#) if you need more guidance.

## Estimating Greenhouse Gas Impact

### How should I estimate my project’s impact on carbon dioxide equivalent emissions?

The primary goal of Sustainable Farms and Fields is to reduce carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) impacts from agricultural land. Thus, all project types, except for technical assistance, are expected to estimate their CO<sub>2</sub>e impacts.

As a place to start, please see the [SFF Eligible Practices and GHG Tools](#). When available, applicants can use other tools to estimate climate impact of practices not included in [COMET Planner](#) or [COMET Farm](#). You can submit your application without an estimate, but this might affect the project’s ranking in the evaluation. Scoring for GHG impact is outlined in [SFF Prioritization Metrics Detail](#).

#### New for Fiscal Year 2027:

For projects involving a change in energy efficiency or fuel use (from baseline) to implement practices, please use [COMET Energy](#) to estimate the impact on GHG emissions related to energy/fuel use **over the lifespan of the practice**. In some cases, COMET Energy should be used in addition to COMET Planner/Farm and in other cases you will only be one of these tools. Attach the output from the tool(s) you used to support the project’s impact estimate.

#### Example 1:

A project is using practice SCC64 (temporary fencing). The applicant uses the COMET Planner to estimate that the GHG impact for implementing prescribed grazing on the 100-acre project area is 7 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e per year. The lifespan of SCC64 is 5 years.

To calculate the estimated impact over the lifespan of the practice:

7 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e/year x 5 years = **35 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e** due to prescribed grazing

#### Example 2:

A project is using practice SCC52 (GPS Precision Guidance System) and will result an estimated reduction in fuel use (compared to baseline) of 100 gallons of diesel per year. Using COMET Energy, the estimated impact of this reduction in fuel use is 1 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e/year.

To calculate the estimated impact of reduction in fuel use over the lifespan of the practice:

1 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e/year x 10 years = **10 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e** due to reduced fuel use

In some cases, projects that result in impact from both carbon sequestration or reduced GHG emissions from soil and vegetation *and* reductions in emissions from fuel use. In these cases, estimating the impact over the lifespan of the project may involve using multiple tools.

## What about technical assistance projects?

In the case of technical assistance projects, you do not need to estimate carbon dioxide equivalent emissions.

## How should I estimate carbon dioxide equivalent impact for equipment sharing projects when the exact acreage is unknown?

In this case, it is appropriate to estimate carbon dioxide equivalent impact on a per-acre basis, rather than for the entire project. Where possible, you should estimate acreage or number of landowners that might use the equipment, though we understand that this type of estimation is not always possible.

## Application Evaluation

### How are applications being evaluated?

A committee consisting of SCC, Washington State Department of Agriculture, Washington State University, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Washington State Fish and Wildlife staff will review applications and prioritize them based on the prioritization metrics outlined in the [SFF programmatic guidelines](#). Also, see the [SFF Prioritization Metrics Detail](#) for more information on application scoring.

## Equipment Sharing Applications

### In addition to applying for rental program equipment, could I also apply for funds for a trailer to move the equipment?

Yes. Applications for equipment sharing projects may include funding for trailer or for staff time to set up the rental program (if needed). However, insurance and registration fees for equipment/trailer would not be eligible for funding through Sustainable Farms and Fields.

### Can I apply for maintenance funding of shared equipment that is owned by a district?

This grant award is just for the fiscal year, so you won't be able to get funding on an ongoing basis to support the maintenance of a piece of equipment. If a district has a piece of equipment that they've purchased in a prior round of Sustainable Farms and Fields funding, and an issue has come up with it,

or they need to put some staff time into getting the word out about that equipment, that can be applied for in this funding round.

## Materials and Supplies Projects

### For DIP cover crop implementation, could the district buy services from an agronomy store, etc.?

A district can pay for a contractor to do work to install practice(s) as part of a DIP. The district has to pay the contractor directly – not through a landowner/farmer and it can't be a landowner/farmer doing work on their own land treated as a contractor.

### How do materials and supplies projects work in terms of how the funding and reporting are structured?

Materials and supplies (such as cover crop seeds) can be distributed to landowners for implementation of climate-smart practices. These grants can be structured using one of three approaches:

#### Approach #1: Cost Share

The district applies for materials and supplies funding through the program for one or more landowners (usually identified at the application stage). The district completes cost-share agreements with landowners, landowners purchase seed materials and supplies on their own, then get reimbursed at the district cost-share rate. A CPDS entry and contract for cost-share required. See all cost-share requirements in the Grants and Contracts Policy and Procedures Manual. You will need to implement the best management practice (BMP) before June 30, 2027, and you also need to take photos to show the BMP on the ground.

#### Approach #2: District-Implemented Project (DIP)

The district applies for materials and supplies funding through the program for one or more landowners as a DIP.

The district purchases materials and supplies AND implements the best management practice (BMP) (e.g., planting seed, trees, or shrubs, or spreading compost). The award indicates that funding is a DIP. The district enters projects in CPDS and completes district-created landowner agreements. CPDS entries need to be done by closeout. The [DIP closeout form](#) is submitted identifying landowners and dollars spent toward each landowner's project. See all DIP requirements in the [SCC Grant and Contract Policy and Procedure Manual](#).

The BMP must be implemented prior to June 30, 2027, and photos taken to show it on the ground.

#### Approach #3: Goods and Services

The district applies for funding to provide materials and supplies and distributes small amounts of materials and supplies (what constitutes a small amount is defined by district but is meant for trialing a practice) for implementing BMP in a non-identified location(s). The award has funding in the Goods and Services category. You do not need to enter this into CPDS. The district needs to report on the landowners, BMPs and acres in [SFF Program Reporting](#).

For purchase of materials such as seeds or amendments without a specific site identified, the Cultural Resources compiled form is not required. All materials and supplies must be purchased and received by the district by June 30, 2027.

# Demonstration Projects

## What qualifies as a demonstration project?

Demonstration projects are for practices that are not commonly used in an area.

### Type A demonstration projects

Type A projects are focused on outreach and education and must be for a practice that is currently eligible for SFF funding.

### Type B demonstration projects

Type B projects are used to gather more information about the feasibility and impact of a practice that is not yet eligible but shows promise as a climate-smart practice.

For either type of demonstration project, the applicant should describe how the project meets the criteria. For projects that involve evaluating the impact of a project in terms of CO2e emissions, we encourage you to partner with a college or university.

Please refer to the [SFF decision tree](#) to determine which funding category best fits your project.

# Reporting

## What are the reporting requirements for an SFF project?

Use the table below for an overview of reporting requirements for each funding category.

Funding Category	Reporting Platform	Anticipated Reporting Metrics	Requirement for Continuous Reporting?
Technical Assistance Only	Formstack	Number of producers receiving TA; Number of acres managed by producers receiving TA; Number of carbon plans or specific BMPs recommended as a result of TA provided; Number of producers who received TA interested in submitting SFF applications.	N
Cost Share	Formstack & CPDS	Landowner name; BMP(s) and associated unit of measurement; Riparian and/or pollinator habitat created; Estimated CO2e impact.	N

Materials and Supplies	Formstack & CPDS (DIP & Cost share only)	Total number of farms that received materials/supplied through this project; Names and farm acreage for producers benefitting from project and amount/dollar value of materials/supplies received by each; BMP(s) implemented as a result of project and associated units of measurement; Riparian and/or pollinator habitat created; Estimated CO2e impact.	N
Equipment Sharing	Formstack	Number of producers that used equipment by reporting date; Number of producers/acres expected for annual equipment usage; BMP(s) to be implemented with equipment purchased; Estimated CO2e impact.	Y - reporting of shared equipment use may be required for up to 10 years or the length of time that the piece of equipment is part of the equipment sharing program.
Demonstration Type A	Formstack & CPDS	Metrics related to outreach components: number of people reached through outreach activities (and type of outreach provided); Any products created for outreach; Information on impact of practice and feedback from producer (as outlined in application); Riparian and/or pollinator habitat created.	N
Demonstration Type B	Formstack (& CPDS if practice is available)	Report detailing CO2e impact and/or feasibility of practice feedback from producer and other information collected (as outlined in application); Riparian and/or pollinator habitat created.	N

## Eligible Expenses

### Can soil sampling be funded through SFF?

Yes, soil sampling can be included in the application. It will be important to detail how you will use the soil sampling and what your goals are for this project.

## **Can I request funds for staff to provide technical assistance (TA) for my project that is in one of the funding categories other than TA only?**

Cost-share projects are eligible to receive up to 25% of project costs for technical assistance for implementation. For example, if the funds for the project requested were \$10,000, then you could request up to \$2,500 for technical assistance. Projects that use the DIP funding model or are for equipment-sharing don't have any technical assistance included. If you want to request that funding, you should explain why in the budget justification.

## **Can we cover staff training with this funding?**

Sustainable Farms and Fields does not normally cover staff training or out-of-state travel with program funds.

From the [Sustainable Farms and Fields programmatic guidelines](#), "SFF funding may be used for conference attendance if the applicant is speaking or presenting at the conference with information about projects/programs that have been or will be implemented under SFF. The expenses related to conference attendance should be included in the project budget at the application stage with sufficient detail for review and pre-approval by the program manager."

## **Is funding to facilitate Coordinated Resource Management groups (CRMs) eligible for SFF?**

If there is a tie-in with climate-smart practices and working with landowners and land managers on climate-smart practices, then spell that out in your application and make that connection clear.

## **Could a liquid manure separator be submitted under SFF or under the Alternative Manure Management grant due June 1?**

You may apply for a manure separator through this program, though depending on program demand, the program manager may work with an applicant to transfer the application to the Alternative Manure Management (AMM) grant as needed. The next application deadline for AMM funding is 5 pm on June 1, 2026.

## **Budget**

### **Cost share projects must meet NRCS specs, but should we use NRCS payment rates when developing a budget?**

The Sustainable Farms and Fields program is looking at what the cost of implementation is, regardless of what the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) payment rate is. The project budget should be based upon the actual cost for implementing the practice such as cross fencing and associated supplies for prescribed grazing.