

## District Conservation Technician Program

### [Guidelines for 2008 Applications: Newly Applying Districts](#)

The purpose of the funding is to provide funds for TECHNICAL assistance for on-the-ground conservation practices through Farm Bill programs and standard NRCS conservation practices (CTA). This also includes conservation planning through the NRCS 9-step planning process with individual landowners. The program offers an opportunity for increased district capacity to provide technical support, leverage funds and raise your district profile in your community.

### Application Form Questions

#### Question 1

Because these funds are intended for technical assistance we are interested in the current workload demand and staffing capacity of your District for this type of work. Please indicate by suitable measures (acres, contract numbers etc) what your field office workload is for planning and implementing NRCS standard conservation practices through Farm Bill programs and CTA to NRCS standards and specifications. Also indicate the staff positions (District, NRCS, other) in your field office and the average number of hours per year they work e.g. District Conservationist (40hx52wk = 2080), District Manager (30hx52wk = 1560 ), Farm Bill Admin. Clerk (20hx52wk=1040), WAE (40x26wk= 1040), DOW wildlife technician (16hx52hr=832). Add an explanation if you expect next year's workload or staffing to be significantly different.

#### Question 2

What has prompted you to apply for these funds – what need/problem has been identified and why will hiring a technician address the need/problem?

#### Question 3

Describe how your technician would spend their time and how this relates to the purposes of this funding as described at the top of these guidelines.

#### Question 4

This program brings together federal, state and local (district) partners. Please tell us what you believe the benefits would be to your district by being in this program.

#### Question 5

The minimum hard-dollar match the district will need to provide in order to be enrolled in this program is 25% of the overall budget you need to employ the technician. If you need \$30,000 then 75% of that would be your request from the program (\$22,500) and 25% would be the hard cash match from your district (\$7,500). These figures are based on the requirement that federal tax dollars leverage a dollar-for dollar match – e.g. \$100 of federal funds require \$100 match: half of the match (\$50) is provided through CDA-CSCB and forms part of your request to the program (for \$150). The other half (\$50) must be provided by the district. Therefore, the district match (\$50) is 25% of the overall budget (\$200). The district match dollars must come from a non-federal source and since the CSCB contribution is part of your request it is not accountable as district match. Please indicate the sources of district cash match and the amount each source will be contributing. Below is a list of valid hard cash match items for the purposes of this program:

**Cash match is easily identifiable, traceable actual hard cash costs paid by the district or it's non-federal partners that relate directly to the technician position. Indirect costs are not cash match.**

### Valid Cash Match Costs:

- Ø Technician salary
- Ø Technician salary tax and insurance deductions
- Ø Technician health and retirement benefits
- Ø Technician training costs
- Ø Technician discrete operational communication costs (monthly telephone/internet access fees; phone calls; depreciated information technology equipment purchases\*)
- Ø Technician/grant administration costs (payroll, hiring costs, reporting)\*\*
- Ø Office Space for the technician\*\*\* @ at a maximum of \$2000 for a full time position: \$1000 for a part-time position - or 15% of your award – whichever is lowest.

\* note that **equipment** is not purchasable from grant awards and computers must be less than a year old to qualify as match (in accordance with federal rules).

\*\* note that **administration costs** cannot be taken out of the grant itself but may be used as documented cash match (not a percentage of awards). Reasonable hours administrative staff document as spent on such duties, charged at their hourly rate, may be used. Each situation is different but perhaps for example, 0.5 hr per month on payroll, 1.5 hrs per quarter on reports, 1 - 2 days on publicity efforts, 1-3 days for hiring preparation/execution/orientation, might be considered reasonable. Actual timesheet documentation will provide the real figures – so it is wise to estimate conservatively in order not to create a shortfall potential that will have to be made up from elsewhere. Board members cannot be paid for their time and so their time cannot be used as hard cash match. Note; applying for funds is a cost of doing business - not administering the program.

- Ø \*\*\* note that **office space** for the technician space can only be applied IF THE DISTRICT OWNS THE BUILDING AND RECEIVES NO BUILDING RENTAL INCOME . Office space match may be applied at the rate of at a maximum of \$2000 for a full time position: \$1000 for a part-time position - or 15% of your award – whichever is lowest.

### Examples of Costs Not Valid as Cash Match:

- Ø Communal/shared utility, costs
- Ø Communal/shared equipment use costs
- Ø Board member technician supervisory time (not actual cash cost)

### Question 6

In the interests of identifying skills the District may already have in managing staff, particularly technical positions, we would like to know of any past experience the district has for permanent or temporary positions. For similar reasons, we are interested in how the district manages their staff in order to maximize and retain good human resources.

### Question 7

CSCB values districts working together as a way to develop strong partnerships for mutual goals and development. Please indicate other districts who are partnering with you in this application – as a provider of cash match or/and sharing the technician resource.

### Question 8

It is important that the District has, or can obtain, administrative support for managing the payroll and associated necessary paperwork for the conservation technical position. Please answer “yes” to confirm that the District is able to carry out these duties, or identify whoever will be doing them.

### Question 9

If the district is under reimbursement option for employee unemployment benefits, the liability for any claim pay-out will be through other district funds and not through any funds associated with this award (although award funds can be used to make quarterly payments under the contribution (taxing option)). If the district is under reimbursement option, it must agree to this condition of funding in order to be considered for enrollment in the program  
Please call Pam in our office if you have any questions about unemployment coverage or liability.

### Question 10

The amount you are requesting as an award from this program, plus your hard cash match, is the budget you will be expected to expend over the period of any award contract (Jan 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 – December 31<sup>st</sup> 2008). Using the template provided, please account for all this expenditure over the 12-month contract period. You may add categories if you need to (except “other” or “miscellaneous”) and please remember that training costs are expected to be those related to any per diem/lodging etc since training will be provided largely free-of-charge from NRCS. Fill in all categories that apply and be sure to enter all mandatory expenses (technician salary, employer social security etc., workers compensation, unemployment insurance (note if reimbursement)).

**EXAMPLE APPLICATION FORM:** Application Form Adapted As Applying for Elf Help For Distributing Christmas Gifts To Children. Please note that this subject change has been done in order not to imply suggested desired application content. However, the answers written in such a way as to show what kind of elements are expected in order to properly answer the questions – for example, in answering question 2 how a “need and reason” might be fully explained.

### [ELF HELP PROGRAM APPLICATION FORM](#)

Fill out the form electronically by typing in the expandable yellow blank fields after each question.

If you do not want to submit the form electronically, you may either send a printed hard copy or answer the questions on separate sheets of paper.

1. **Describe the current workload** of your office for distributing Christmas gifts to children. List the types and numbers of gifts you distribute. Explain if you have reason to expect a significantly different workload next year. Indicate how many staff you have and the number of hours they work per year.

Total points possible – 20

#### Christmas 200X Workload:

Very Good Little Girls: 1000 teddy bears; 1,000 computer games; 500 ponies

Very Good Little Boys: 1000 teddy bears; 1,000 computer games, 500 pedal vehicles

Quite Good Little Girls: 2,000 pairs of shoes, 2,000 picture books

Quite Good Little Boys: 2,000 pairs of shoes, 2,000 picture books

#### Staffing:

10 elves (10,000 hours per year)

8 fairies ( 8,000 hours per year)

Regional Christmas Manager: ( 500 hours per year)

Santa Claus Oversight: (1500 hours per year)

Total hours: 20,000

#### Projection for Christmas 200X :

This area is experiencing a population boom and we expect an additional 100 families above

normal growth rates to be in the area by Christmas 200X. This would add a further 1,000 hours to our requirement in labor hours for distributing

**2. Describe why you are applying for these funds;** explain the reason and need.

Total points possible – 10

As described in question one, we are expecting an increase in workload for next Christmas and have a need for 1,000 more labor hours. Without more help we are in danger of not being able to deliver all the gifts during the one night of the year (December 24<sup>th</sup>) in which we are limited to providing them. If we do not have more labor, some of the quite good little girls and boys may not receive the gifts they have earned. We believe this would create short term distress to the about 50 children who would not receive their earned presents, and long-term hardship in families. It has been shown that children behave better when they receive gifts at Christmas that are linked to good behavior. The disappointment these children will feel and express could make the holiday season and beyond unpleasant for their parents and siblings. The goal of Santa Claus Inc. is to spread family happiness and our ability to deliver timely gifts to well-behaved children is critical to this goal.

Elves are notoriously fast workers. Although fairies have more magical powers, we have found that in high workflow areas where we especially need help (such as ponies) elves tend to perform better.

**3. Describe the elf's main job duties** and what percentage of their time will be spent on each. Indicate how the duties relate to the purpose of this funding – distributing gifts to children.

Total points possible – 10

The elf will be working in the department of pony distribution. This is one of our higher labor requirement gift areas but it has proven to be of high value in motivating little girls to be good. He will be brushing out manes and tails prior to distribution (10% of time), checking receiving sites for hay availability (30% of time), and loading and delivering ponies to the sites (60% of time). Checking sites and actual delivery of ponies is directly related to logistical distribution. Brushing manes and tails is an integral last-minute part of the distribution process to ensure delivery of the highest quality product. It cannot be separated from the distribution process because it is done after the ponies are loaded.

**4. Describe your view** on the way(s) the elf would benefit your operation.

Total points possible - 4

By improving pony delivery systems we have an opportunity to better service some of our most important customers – very good little girls. We hope in the long-term to increase the availability of ponies because of their high value to our customers, and by bringing on a new elf we hope to begin to bring in more skills to move in that direction.

**5. A minimum of non-federal 25% hard cash match is needed** to obtain these funds.

(Example: a \$22,500 request would require a \$7,500 match for an overall budget of \$30,000).

List the source(s) of hard cash and the dollar amount of hard cash match that the office will provide.

Total points possible - 2

Budget is \$1,000: Request \$750: Match \$250

Match sources:

Christmas Inc. hard cash match is \$100: will be secured following donations drive in April

Christmas Inc. is providing office space for the requested full-time elf position: \$5

County Commissioners \$45: secured

Parents Need Patience (non-profit): \$100: secured

**6. Describe your past experience** in the hiring and management of similar positions for which the funds are being requested.

Total points possible - 2

We already have 10 elves employed for the distribution of gifts – two of which are in the Ponies Department. These are the same type of position for which we are applying for funding. We have employed these elves for 250 years and have almost 0% turnover of staff. Elves have performance reviews every year and we have a training program that allows for them to develop professionally.

7. **If this is a joint application**, identify which other offices are partnering with you and indicate whether they are housed in the same or different field offices.

Total points possible - 2

The Mountain Office, housed in the same field office as we are, is partnering in our application.

8. **Do you have in place the administrative support** for elf payroll processing and program reports necessary for this program?

*If no, please describe who will be responsible for these administrative duties.*

Required

Yes – we have an administrative assistant to do payroll and reporting.

9. **If your office uses reimbursement option for unemployment insurance** for their employees, are they willing to pay out any unemployment insurance claim from funds other than those connected in any way with this application?

Required

NA: We have contribution option for unemployment insurance

10. **Budget:** submit a proposed budget as laid out below for expenditure between January 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> 200X. Fill in categories as appropriate – “Other” or “Miscellaneous” are not valid categories.

Total points possible - 10

Award requested	\$750
Match	\$250
Total Budget Amount	\$1000
Elf Gross Salary	\$810
Employer social sec/Medicare/PERA	\$100
Employer Health/Retire Benefits Contribution	\$45
Workers Compensation	\$10
Unemployment Insurance	\$5
Elf General Liability Insurance	\$10
Hiring Advertising	\$5
Elf Training	\$10
Administration (must equal office cash match admin offer in question 5)	\$0
Elf Office Space (full-time position)	\$5
	\$
Total Expenditures	\$1000
Total Elf Hours Jan – Dec 200X	1000
Notes: Training: We expect to hire an experienced elf who has thorough GPS experience. However we anticipate providing at least “Safe Pony Handling” and “Pony Presentation for Big Smiles” – a total of 3 days per diem. A further 3 days per diem estimated for individual developmental training.	