

SWEEP Block Grant Funding Opportunity Information for On-Farm Improvements



Program Background

Stockton East Water District (SEWD), South San Joaquin Irrigation District (SSJID), and North San Joaquin Water Conservation District (NSJWCD) are pleased to administer the State Water Efficiency & Enhancement Project Block Grant for our constituents. The State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEET) Block Grant Pilot is a part of the SWEET, which was first developed in 2014 in response to severe drought. SWEET provides financial incentives for California agricultural operations to invest in irrigation systems that save water and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Through the SWEET Block Grant Pilot Program the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) aims to support regional capacity building and provide opportunities for regional strategic use of SWEET funding to address local concerns regarding water conservation and water efficiency by providing funding to organizations to provide both technical and financial assistance.

Grant Details

Lead Organization:	Stockton East Water District
Partner Organizations:	South San Joaquin Irrigation District, North San Joaquin Water Conservation District, San Joaquin Farm Bureau, UC Kearney
County Served:	San Joaquin County
Dates:	Application opens February 1 st , 2024. Applications accepted and evaluated on a rolling basis. The quarterly due dates are: May 15 th , 2024 August 15 th , 2024 November 15 th , 2024 February 15 th , 2025 May 15 th , 2025 August 15 th , 2025
Recipient Cost Share:	There is no cost share required.
Funding Amount:	The award range is \$20,000 to \$200,000 per project.
Estimated Number of Agreements to be Awarded:	Approximately 35 projects will be awarded.
Eligible Projects:	Any project that involves water and energy savings. Examples of eligible projects include but are not limited to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Converting from a groundwater source to surface water. • Installing a variable frequency drive. • Irrigation system improvements, such as, changing from flood irrigation to a micro sprinkler system. • Installing soil moisture sensors, flowmeter, ET sensors, weather station, telemetry, etc. • Changing crop type. • Utilizing a renewable energy source.

SWEEP Block Grant Purpose and Objectives

The objective of this funding opportunity is to invite eligible applicants to utilize state funds on projects that seek to conserve and use water more efficiently, conserve energy, increase the production of renewable energy, mitigate climate change impacts, enable farmers to make additional on-farm improvements, and accomplish other benefits that contribute to sustainability.

Selection Process

There will be a review committee with a representative from each district. The committee will review applications after each submission due date and utilize a competitive selection process.

The applications will be scored based on Quantifiable Project Benefits, Project Design, Project Implementation Schedule, Detailed Budget, SDFR/Disadvantaged Community, and Climate Resiliency and groundwater sustainability. The highest scored applications will be awarded with a minimum of 25% of the awards going to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers.

Application Scoring Criteria:

Category	Evaluation Criteria: Scoring Summary	Points
1	Quantifiable Project Benefits	20
2	Project Design	15
3	Project Implementation Schedule	15
4	Detailed Budget	10
5	SDFR/Disadvantaged Community	20
6	Climate Resiliency and Groundwater Sustainability	20
	Total	100

1. Up to 20 points will be awarded based on the evaluation of the *quantified project benefits* that are expected to result from the proposed project. This criterion evaluates the extent to which the project will improve irrigation efficiency and/or reduce greenhouse gas emissions through irrigation system improvements. This evaluation criterion includes the evaluation of the water and energy savings tools. These tools can be found within the application documents on the District's websites.
2. Up to 15 points will be awarded based on the evaluation of the *project design* status. A fully designed project will receive maximum points, whereas a conceptually designed project will receive the minimum points.
3. Up to 15 points may be awarded based on the extent to which the proposed project is prepared to commence upon entering into a financial assistance agreement based on the *Project Implementation Schedule*.
4. Up to 10 points may be awarded based on the financial backup and descriptions included in the *detailed budget*.
5. Up to 20 points may be awarded to an applicant that is SDFR or Disadvantaged. The United States Department of Agriculture defines socially disadvantaged farmers and

ranchers (SDFRs) as those belonging to groups that have been subject to racial or ethnic prejudice. SDFRs include farmers who are Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Hispanic or Latino, and Asian or Pacific Islander. All the points will be awarded to an applicant that is SDFR. Half of the points will be awarded to an applicant that is disadvantaged. No points will be awarded for this section if the applicant is not SDFR nor disadvantaged.

6. Up to 20 points may be awarded to the projects that are expected to result in improving *climate resiliency or groundwater sustainability*. To receive maximum points projects must demonstrate a reduction of groundwater pumping, identify an ability to perform on-farm recharge, and be part of a conjunctive use plan.

Detailed Budget Requirements

The budget template provided on the District's website must be used to outline the project's budget. The budget template includes the following cost categories: Supplies and equipment, labor, and other. The budget should also reflect the costs anticipated with each of the following water conservation and/or GHG reduction strategies: irrigation system improvements, irrigation water management tools, pump and energy improvements, solar/renewable energy, and other management practices.

Examples of allowable on-farm costs associated with SWEEP projects 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 on-farm project costs include, but are not limited to:

- Project design costs (e.g., engineering)
- Costs associated with technical assistance or project management, including drive time and fuel cost
- Post-project service charges or subscriptions that extend past the end of the grant term 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 on-farm project costs
- Any labor provided by the Grant Beneficiary's employees (such costs could be categorized as "in-kind")
- Supplies and equipment costs not related to irrigation or water distribution systems (e.g., lighting, water efficiency improvements related to food processing)
- Renewable energy may only be funded where water pumping is, or will be, electric.

- Tools and equipment with useful life of less than two years
- Costs associated with drilling or expanding groundwater wells
- Irrigation training courses
- Pump efficiency tests
- Leasing of weather, soil and irrigation water-based sensors for irrigation scheduling
- Purchase of trees, crops, or seeds
- Purchase of soil amendments
- Research
- Conversion of land to agricultural production

Required Application Attachments

1. Proof of property ownership or lease agreement.
2. Itemized budget including itemized costs and total cost.
3. Project Design including site map with associated APNs listed.
4. Copies of the Water and Energy Savings Tools.
5. 12 Months of Energy Use Documentation with actual energy use data (ex. Utility Bills, Fuel Receipts, Field Operational Logs) [Where crop rotation is used up to 3 years of documents may be provided].
6. Pump efficiency tests for existing pump(s) related to the proposed project.
7. Pump and motor specifications for any proposed pumps.

Submission

The application may be submitted one of the three ways:

1. Email the application and attachments to sweep@sewd.net.
2. Hand deliver a hard copy of application and attachments to Stockton East Water District at 6767 East Main St. Stockton CA 95215.
3. Mail a hard copy of application and attachments to Stockton East Water District at PO Box 5157 Stockton, CA 95205.

Contact Information

Please reach out to one of the following contacts with questions regarding the SWEEP BLOCK application or grant process.

San Joaquin Farm Bureau Jessica Coit jessica@sjfb.org (209)931-4931	UC Kearney Agricultural Research and Extension Center Brady E. Holder beholder@ucanr.edu (559)646-6541	Stockton East Water District Kent Norman knorman@sewd.net (209)986-6089	North San Joaquin Water Conservation District Steve Schwabauer steve@nsjwcd.com (209)368-2101	South San Joaquin Irrigation District Julie Vrieling Julie.vrieling@ssjid.gov (209)249-4600
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