

**2020 Virginia Agricultural Resource Management Plan
Certification and Development Project
for Outside the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Region
Request for Applications (“RFA”)**

Sources of Funding: State WQIF Funds

Issued By:

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
Division of Soil and Water Conservation
600 E. Main Street, 24th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

RFA and Grant Project Awards Timeline

DCR OCB Resource Management Plan Writing & Certification Project Timeline	
<u>Date</u>	<u>Target Dates</u>
September 3, 2019	DCR - Issue request for applications
October 4, 2019	Applicant - proposal submission deadline
November 15, 2019	DCR - publicize award recommendations in 30-day Notice of Intent to Award "NOIA"
January 1, 2020	Project Sponsors - (aka "grantees", "certified plan writers") begin executing project agreements
April 15, 2020	Project Sponsor - Activity and Reimbursement Report Due
July 15, 2020	Project Sponsor - Activity and Reimbursement Report Due
October 15, 2020	Project Sponsor - Activity and Reimbursement Report Due
October 15, 2020	Project Sponsor – Final Deadline for all RMP plan review and RMP inspection submittals
December 31, 2020	Project Sponsor - Project completion date (Stop work by this date)
January 15, 2021	Project Sponsor - Final Activity and Reimbursement Report Due

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A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this Request for Applications is to solicit applications to establish agreements through competitive negotiation for the certification and development of Virginia Resource Management Plans (RMPs) for agricultural operations.

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is making program funding available for approved Resource Management Plan Development by DCR-certified planners. Applications by businesses, corporations, individuals or non-governmental organizations are being solicited for funding to complete duties associated with certification of already-approved RMPs and also to develop new agricultural RMPs. Under this funding program, RMPs are to be certified and developed for agricultural operations **Outside of the Chesapeake Bay (OCB) watershed region of Virginia** to include cropland or specialty crops, hayland, or pasture land uses.

Applications received in response to this RFA will be considered for funding for an award beginning January 1, 2020. Any resulting contracts will include a specific number of RMPs and associated acres to be certified and a separate specific number of RMPs and associated acres to be developed.

Funding is available for certification of already-approved RMPs and for the development and approval of new RMPs only; no other activities will be funded.

Funding will be targeted to:

- Virginia Certified Resource Management Plan Developers in the private sector (References section on Page 5 contains a web link with further information about RMP Developer certification)
- Resource Management Plans developed in accordance with the Virginia RMP Program regulations (4VAC50-70-10 et seq.) pursuant to the Code of Virginia §10.1-104.7-104.9
- Resource Management Plans developed for farming operations outside of the Chesapeake Bay watershed region of Virginia

B. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

This funding initiative is targeting private businesses, corporations, and non-governmental organizations. They will be scored accordingly (see Section H. for criteria scoring). Virginia soil and water conservation district directors, associate directors or employees are not eligible to conduct project work in this contract in the particular Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) with which they are affiliated. The applicant does not need to be certified as long as they have an RMP-certified employee or RMP-certified contractor developing the plans. All applicants must submit a photocopy of a Resource Management Plan Developer(s) certification(s) for the employee/contractor who will be submitting the RMPs. In addition to having a valid RMP developer certification at the time of RFA submittal, certification must remain valid when submitting plans for approval. Before the contract becomes effective, any awardee must complete an online IT Security Awareness Training provided by DCR.

C. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Through this RFA, DCR will award funding for the certification of existing approved RMPs and also for the development and approval of RMPs outside of the Chesapeake Bay watershed region of Virginia.

Contracts may contain both certification activity and development and approval activity. Certification activity includes verification of RMP implementation by the RMP developer, any necessary revisions and or modifications needed, District Board or review authority verification of implementation, and participant receipt of an RMP Certificate of Implementation on an existing RMP. Development and approval activity includes submission of a complete RMP to the review authority and providing any necessary RMP revisions until the RMP is approved by the review authority.

Emphasis will be placed on funding certification activity. An applicant who has previously developed RMP must submit an application which contains certification activity.

The certification payment rate has been established at \$3.00/acre for all acres included in an RMP which becomes certified in this project. Certification is to be conducted on plans which the planner has already developed and had approved and must include all land units included in the RMP. Payment may not be issued for any certification work that does not result in the participant receiving an RMP Certificate of Implementation. Planners must follow the certification process as described in the Resource Management Plan Regulations (4VAC50-70-10 et seq.) and according to the workflow established in the Department's RMP Module. The RMP participant is eligible for RMP-2 VACS payments on the same acres included in a contract; however, the RMP developer is not eligible for VACS payment for any work conducted in the scope of the contract.

The development payment rate has been established at \$10.00/acre for all acres included in an RMP which is developed and approved in this project. RMP development payments will be capped at a maximum of \$6,500.00 per plan. Multiple plans can be developed to cover a single farming operation. It will be the responsibility of the applicant to acquire clients, obtain the information necessary to develop the plan, and submit the plan to the appropriate review authority for approval. DCR will only pay for plans that have been reviewed and approved by the appropriate review authority. RMP regulations state the required components and format for an RMP. There is an expectation that developers continue to be involved with the participant beyond RMP approval, assisting the participant in reaching certification status.

To be eligible for funding and payment under this RFA, RMPs must be prepared by a developer who has been issued a current Resource Management Plan Developer Certificate by DCR. RMPs must be written to comply with all requirements set forth in the Resource Management Plan Regulations (4VAC50-70-10 et seq.) and according to the workflow established in the Department's RMP Module. The main components of an RMP are noted here,

but the regulations should be referenced for details on all of the requirements. (See Page 5, Section I. for the Reference information link)

Newly-developed RMPs should be submitted to the District review authority with adequate time for the SWCD to conduct a review, but no later than October 15, 2020. Certification inspections should also be completed no later than October 15, 2020 to allow the District adequate time to conduct inspections.

Reporting and funding reimbursement requests will be required periodically, on or before the following dates:

April 15, 2020

July 15, 2020

October 15, 2020

January 15, 2021

D. INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Development activity on RMPs that have received RMP-1 (Resource Management Plan Development) through the Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share program, regardless of operation owner or operator. Planners can develop plans for either program, but an individual plan can only be funded through one program.
- Plans submitted that are developed without the collaboration and support of the operator.
- Plans submitted for reimbursement that have not been created or maintained in the RMP computer module.

E. AVAILABLE FUNDING

\$100,000 is available this project. Award amounts could be extended and/or increased if additional funding becomes available. Successful applicants will enter into an agreement for RMP development at a rate of \$10.00 per acre up to a maximum of \$6,500.00 per approved plan. Applications must provide work estimates. Applications should contain the number of plans the applicant intends to have developed and approved during the grant time period, the total number of acres for all the approved plans, and then request the total dollar equivalent for those acres for each watershed area.

Please submit estimated workload in the following format as an attached Excel file:

Outside the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Workload – Certification Activity					
Producer	County	Acres	# Plans	Funding requested	Anticipated month of plan submittal
<i>Sally Clay</i>	<i>Albemarle</i>	<i>1250</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>\$3,125.00</i>	<i>August</i>
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>King William</i>	<i>2600</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>\$6,500.00</i>	<i>October</i>

Outside the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Workload – Development Activity					
Producer	County	Acres	# Plans	Funding requested	Anticipated month of plan submittal
<i>Sally Clay</i>	<i>Albemarle</i>	<i>1250</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>\$12,500</i>	<i>August</i>
<i>Unknown</i>	<i>King William</i>	<i>2600</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>\$26,000</i>	<i>October</i>
Total		<i>3850</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>\$38,500</i>	

It is preferable that the applicant submit a defined projected workload, however, there may be a situation in which the RMP developer requests funding, but his/her project workload is not yet finalized. For example, the applicant already has a contract or agreement with *Sally Clay* and knows the number of plans and acreage. The applicant also plans to do more RMP development work from either an existing client list or for new clients, but the project workload has not been finalized. The applicant must submit a funding request amount to include the estimated number of plans and acres. In this case, the Producer as should be listed as *Unknown* and the sum number of plans and acres included.

F. APPLICATION PACKAGE REQUIREMENTS, PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

The application package for the “2020 Virginia Agricultural Resource Management Plan Certification and Development Project for Outside the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Region” RFA includes several required components. All required components must be submitted in order for the application to be considered for review. Optional submission components may enhance the application package but ultimately decisions will be based upon the required submission components.

REQUIRED APPLICATION DOCUMENTS:

All components **must be in an electronic** format. Microsoft Word and/or Microsoft Excel is the preferred documentation format. If an award is offered and the application is not in “Word” or Word/Excel, a revised format in Word or Word/Excel will be required.

1. Project Application Narrative (Maximum length is 3 pages, 12 pt font. Guidelines are provided in Section J.)
2. Name(s) of certified Virginia Resource Management Planner(s) or name(s) of those who will be submitting developed plans
3. Planned or anticipated client list (farm name and acreage) to document ability/outreach completed (See table in Section E.)

The application package must be submitted by email to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation **by midnight on Friday, October 4, 2019**. Incomplete applications and those that are not delivered as specified above will be disqualified.

Email application packages to: barbara.mcgarra@dcv.virginia.gov

Please use the email subject line: 2020 RMP OCB Certification and Development RFA_<insert name of Planner>

G. DCR CONTACTS

General questions regarding this request for applications and the awarding process can be directed to Barbara McGarry barbara.mcgarry@dcr.virginia.gov. General questions on the Resource Management Plan Program and the specific details of this RFA should be directed to Barbara McGarry, (barbara.mcgarry@dcr.virginia.gov), or Scott Ambler (scott.ambler@dcr.virginia.gov).

H. EVALUATION AND AWARD CRITERIA

Contract applications will be scored based on the evaluation criteria sections listed below, in order to prioritize projects for the distribution of available funds. A team of DCR staff will evaluate and rank the applications. Final decisions for contract selection are the discretion of the DCR Director or his designee. All contracts contingently approved for funding through this RFA will be made available for 30 days of public comment prior to executing grant agreements. The recommended award list will be posted for public comment on the DCR web site:

http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil_and_water/rmp.shtml

Evaluation criteria

1. Applicant is a private business, corporation, or non-governmental organization
2. Prioritization of certification activities of RMPs included in the Northern Neck RMP Bundle Pilot Project
3. Committed workload, indicated by including a farm/producer name in the workload table
4. # of Plans to be developed and approved
5. Propose to work throughout multiple counties
6. Propose to write plans on multiple types of agricultural land uses

I. REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Thorough information on the Virginia Resource Management Plan Program can be found at http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/soil_and_water/rmp.shtml. This site includes information about the program, information about RMP Developer Certification, RMP program regulations, and other resources for RMP Plan Developers.

J. APPLICATION NARRATIVE GUIDELINES

The project application narrative should not exceed three pages using 12-point font. Below is an outline that serves as the application narrative guidelines. Applications submitted that do not follow the exact outline will still be considered, but must address the same content as below. Microsoft Word and/or Microsoft Excel is the preferred documentation format. If an award is (DCR199-229) (12/2017)

offered and the application is not in “Word” or Word/Excel, a revised format in Word or Word/Excel will be required.

1. **Applicant Information**

Name of Organization/Individual:					
RMP developer certificate number:					
Mailing Address:					
City, State, Zip:					
Contact Person:				Work Title:	
E-mail:					
Phone Number:				Fax Number:	
Type of Organization (check one):	☐ Individual	☐ Company, Business	☐ SWCD	☐ Non-profit	☐ Other

2. **Project Information**

- A. Describe the committed workload.
- B. Are you willing to work in multiple counties?
- C. If no, what counties will you work?
- D. On what type of farming operations are you willing to develop RMPs?
- E. Total number of acres to be developed in RMPs
- F. Total number of acres in RMPs to be certified

3. **Work Plan and Timeline**

The Work Plan needs to provide a detailed explanation of the activities for the period of the project. Include a Timeline that links each of the pertinent activities to a date.

The Work Plan should include at least a paragraph description of who will be doing the work (who is certified) and how clients will be acquired. Project information provided above in number 2 can be expanded upon to provide additional details.

The timeline should be a schedule of planned activities throughout the period of the grant. This timeline will be used for tracking progress throughout the project. It can be in a table or list format within the Work Plan.