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USDA-NRCS Announces Funding of up to \$450,000 in 2021 Caribbean Area Partners for Conservation Program

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The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced that the NRCS Caribbean Area Partners for Conservation Funding Opportunity, Opportunity Number USDA-NRCS-PRCPC-21-NOFO0001067, has been posted to Grants.gov and is open for applications through May 31, 2021.

The purpose of the Caribbean Partners for Conservation awards will be to leverage NRCS and partner resources on proposals that address the following goals:

1. Increase implementation of conservation practices that promote the four Soil Health Principles (Disturbing Soil Less, Diversify Soil Biota, Keep Living Roots and Keep the Soil

Covered).

2. Increase the implementation of conservation practices that aid in adapting to and mitigating
3. against increasing extreme weather events and promoting drought resiliency measures.
4. Increase productivity of grasslands and improve animal husbandry.
5. Provide habitat for local wildlife species of concern as listed in Puerto Rico and USVI State Wildlife Action Plans.
6. Increase urban farming and conservation in Puerto Rico and the USVI.

“We see positive impacts when we work with our conservation partners to deliver conservation education and assistance to our clients,” said Luis Cruz-Arroyo, NRCS Caribbean area director.

“These focused partnerships allow us to maximize the delivery of our conservation efforts and achieve greater improvements to soil, water and habitat quality, which benefits participating producers, the public, and our islands’ natural resources,” he said.

Priority will be placed on projects that:

1. Provide support to both Puerto Rico and USVI field offices and/or clients.
2. Provide support to Landscape Planning efforts at the watershed or landscape level that reduces sediment, and nutrient loading by assisting with technical assistance, Farm Bill program promotion, innovative conservation approaches, evaluating conservation outcomes, and/or demonstration farms.
3. Conduct conservation planning, on-site (field) practice certifications and/or follow up with producers on establishment of conservation practices. All proposals that include conservation planning assistance must specifically include:
 - What steps of the NRCS 9-step conservation planning process are included in the project proposal;
 - Who will have responsibility for completing each step and a description of the training and certifications of the staff performing the conservation planning work; and
 - Details in the project methodology on how each step will be executed.
4. Build tools and technical capacity of NRCS and partner field conservation employees.
5. Build the capacity of local watershed groups to develop and implement effective projects.
6. Conduct surveys and gather materials costs for conservation practices (electronic Field Office Technical Guide) that will serve NRCS to include cost analysis in the conservation plans.

NRCS said it anticipates that the amount available for support of this program in FY 2021 will be up to \$450,000.00. Proposals are requested from city or township governments, county governments, Federally recognized Native American tribal governments, state governments, nonprofits having a 501 (c)(3) status with the IRS (other than institutions of higher education), or institutions of higher education for competitive consideration of awards for projects between 1 and 3 years in duration. Organizations may use this opportunity to request additional funding for existing agreements in the Caribbean Area.

Applicants must submit their applications via Grants.gov by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on May 31, 2021. For technical issues with Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts. Questions regarding this notice of funding opportunity (NFO) may be submitted until April 15, 2021.

Responses to questions posed will be posted on Grants.gov approximately two weeks before the application due date. The agency anticipates making selections by June 30, 2021 and expects to execute awards by August 1, 2021.

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