

State of Hawaii
Department of Land and Natural Resources
Division of Forestry and Wildlife
P.E. No. 10-076-D a1

REQUEST FOR REIMBURSEMENT No. CREP-CS-2014

HAWAII CREP COST-SHARE REIMBURSEMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

DUE BY 4:00 PM (HST) on April 14, 2014

TO THE
State Department of Land and Natural Resources
Division of Forestry and Wildlife
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 325
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Requests must be delivered by the above deadline and designated location. Timely receipt of requests shall be evident by the date and time registered by the Division of Forestry and Wildlife time stamp clock or by the date and time of email received; proposals postmarked by **April 14, 2014** but not received by location will not be considered for award and will be returned to Applicant unopened. Please account for postal and routing delays when submitting via a postal service. Please submit final proposals to both points of contacts for this solicitation.

Registration and Inquires

If you intend to respond to this request for proposals, please contact Irene Sprecher at the address below, or by phone at (808) 587-4167, or email Melissa.I.Sprecher@hawaii.gov to register your interest otherwise you will not receive notification of any changes or addendums. You may also contact Marissa Chee at the address below, or by email at Marissa.M.Chee@hawaii.gov.

The primary contact for this request is:

Irene Sprecher
Cooperative Resource Forester
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 325
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 587-4167
Fax: (808) 587-0160
melissa.i.sprecher@hawaii.gov

Marissa Chee
Forestry Planner
1151 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: (808) 587-4186
Fax: (808) 587-0160
marissa.m.chee@hawaii.gov

1. INTRODUCTION

The State of Hawaii, Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) is pleased to announce a request for state cost-share reimbursements for the Hawaii Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) participants in cases where conservation practices exceed allowed cost-share rate as established by the USDA under the CREP conservation plan **OR** in cases where the CREP participant is not eligible to receive the full Practice Incentive Payment (PIP) due to annual payment limitations. The request for reimbursement is open to all qualified Hawaii CREP participants and entities, and evaluation and selection will be based on comparative evaluation criteria. Multiple awards may be made under this request and all awards under this request are subject to availability of funds. The Department's Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) will evaluate all submitted reimbursement requests and manage any of those selected for award. Copies of this request are available at 1151 Punchbowl Street Room 325, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 or by contacting Irene Sprecher at melissa.i.sprecher@hawaii.gov

2. CANCELLATION

This request may be cancelled and any or all proposals rejected in whole or in part, without liability, when it is determined to be in the best interest of the State.

3. HAWAII CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The Hawaii CREP is a 20-year incentive program administrated by the State of Hawaii and the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The program encourages farmers and ranchers to voluntarily remove sensitive lands from production and enact watershed conservation practices for the purpose/objective of increasing groundwater recharge, restoring native habitat, controlling the spread of invasive species, enhancing stream water quality, reducing coral reef degradation and enhancing near shore coastal waters. Eligible farmers/ranchers are asked to enter into 14 to 15 year contracts with both the State of Hawaii and USDA for which they receive an annual rental payment, cost-share reimbursement as well as additional incentive payments for the implementation of conservation practices on their land as described in their CREP conservation plan of action. Eligible lands for the Hawaii CREP include lands that are physically and legally capable of agriculture production on the islands of Hawaii, Maui, Molokai, Lanai, Oahu, and Kauai. Under the Hawaii CREP Agreement, funds may be available to assist with additional reimbursements of conservation practices for eligible CREP projects. More information on Hawaii CREP is available at www.hawaii.gov/dlnr/dofaw/crep.

4. SCOPE OF WORK

The Department's principal objective for this request is to further the Hawaii CREP goals and objectives through the support of restoration of degraded agricultural lands. Enrolled participants are provided with technical and financial assistance to install conservation practices as described under their conservation plan of action. In some cases reimbursements from FSA may not equal the exact percentage amount allowed under the program (50% for cost-share reimbursement and 40% for practice incentive payment). For cost-share reimbursement, the participant's total installation cost may be higher than allowed practice payment rates. For PIP, the participant may not be eligible for the 40% practice incentive payment (PIP) due to annual payment limitations. In these cases, the State of Hawaii is authorized to assist participants with additional state cost-share reimbursements based on a competitive evaluation process as

described in Section 6. **Note: In no case will an applicant be reimbursed for the total cost of the conservation practice.**

Costs associated with conservation practice installation are eligible for reimbursement under Hawaii CREP provided that work is directly associated with practices as described under the Hawaii CREP conservation plan and as detailed in Section 5. Conservation practices eligible for State reimbursement include:

- CP3A Hardwood Tree Planting
- CP22 Riparian Buffer
- CP23 Wetland Restoration (floodplains)
- CP23A Wetland Restoration (non-floodplains)
- CP25 Rare and Declining Habitat
- CP29 Wildlife Habitat Buffer
- CP30 Wetland Buffer

5. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Under this request, applicants must meet the following requirement to be eligible for award.

- 5.1** Applicant must currently be enrolled in the Hawaii CREP.
 - 5.2** Applicant is actively implementing conservation practices as described in their CREP conservation plan.
 - 5.3** Applicant has completed at least one practice under their conservation plan and has received cost-share reimbursement payment from FSA for that practice.
 - 5.4** The reimbursement request must meet one of the following:
 - 5.4.1** Cost-share reimbursement payment from FSA must be less than 50 percent of the total/actual installation cost as described under the CREP conservation plan.
- OR**
- 5.4.2** The Practice Incentive Payment (PIP) payment issued from FSA is be less than 40 percent of the total/actual installation cost as described under the CREP conservation plan due to annual payment limitations.

Note: The State may only award a partial reimbursement request from a participant depending on availability of funding.

6. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Please submit reimbursement requests to DOFAW by April 14, 2014 at 4:00pm Hawaii Standard Time (HST) at the addresses listed on the cover page. Requests must be received at the location by April 14, 2014 at 4:00pm HST to be considered for award; this shall be evidenced by a DOFAW time stamp clock or email documented time. Submitted requests shall include a transmittal cover letter signed in ink by the applicant who has the authority to officially submit the proposal. Please include on the cover letter a point of contact, title of Hawaii CREP project, type of reimbursement request (e.g.: 50% cost-share reimbursement or 40% PIP reimbursement),

and total amount requested for reimbursement. Please account for postal and routing delays when submitting via postal mail. Requests may also be submitted via email to melissa.i.sprecher@hawaii.gov and marissa.m.chee@hawaii.gov.

This section outlines conditions and considerations that should be incorporated into proposals made in response to the request for reimbursement. Proposals that do not comply with all the stated minimum acceptable conditions may be eliminated from further consideration.

- 6.1 General Procedures and Submission Deadline.** Requests shall be prepared in English. If submitting via postal mail or for hand delivered requests, please use a sealed package that state somewhere on the outside the following: “**Hawaii CREP Reimbursement Request Enclosed**.” For emailed requests please include “**Hawaii CREP Reimbursement Request Enclosed**” in the subject of the email. All financial information shall be provided in U.S. dollars. All correspondence and submittals relating to this request for reimbursement shall be made to the addresses provided below. Only typed, written responses to requests shall be considered official. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all required submittals are received on time.

Submittal address: Division of Forestry and Wildlife
Hawaii CREP Coordinator
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 325
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
ATTN: Irene Sprecher

melissa.i.sprecher@hawaii.gov
marissa.m.chee@hawaii.gov

- 6.2 Eligibility Requirements.** All requests for reimbursement shall include a statement and associated documentation on how the applicant meets the eligibility requirements as detailed in Section 5.
- 6.3 Conservation Plan.** All proposals shall include a copy of the participant’s conservation plan, noting the associated sections/practices being requested for reimbursement.
- 6.4 Detailed Description of Reimbursement Request.** All proposals shall include an a detailed description of the conservation practice(s) eligible for reimbursement and shall contain the following elements:
- 6.4.1 Conservation Practice.** Provide a brief description of the project site, the Hawaii CREP conservation practice components (eg: brush management, site preparation, fence length, planting, etc), success of installation, completion date, and other relevant information pertaining to the project.
- 6.4.2 Total Cost of Practice Installation.** Provide a description of total cost for the conservation practice. Description shall include explanation of any unforeseen costs, if any, and how the participant used the most efficient and

effective methods to complete the conservation practice.

- 6.4.3 Reimbursement Amount Received from FSA.** Include the total amount reimbursed by FSA including any cost-share reimbursement and/or PIP received for the conservation practice. Please also provide the calculated percentage reimbursed from FSA based-off the total cost of the practice.
- 6.4.4 Amount Requested for Reimbursement by the State.** Please state the exact amount requested for reimbursement from the State. **Note: In no case will an applicant be reimbursed for the total practice cost.** The State may subsequently enter into further discussions to refine potential reimbursement amount with prospective Applicants. Final prices will be specified in a notice of award.
- 6.4.5 Recipes.** Include all receipts association with the requested reimbursement. Copies may be supplied for proposal review, but originals may be requested upon award.

The awarded applicant(s) must also submit compliance information as detailed in Section 8 upon award.

Note: Financial information submitted to the Department shall be kept confidential and will be treated consistently with HRS Chapter 92. Consistent with HRS Chapter 92, financial information shall not be released without the expressed written consent of the applicant.

7. SELECTION PROCESS AND COMPARABLE EVALUATION CRITERIA

This section describes the selection process and outlines the criteria to be used in the selection process.

- 7.1 Evaluation Committee.** An evaluation committee will make all recommendations on decisions regarding the evaluation, the acceptability of proposals for comparative evaluation, and the selection of proposal(s), if any. The evaluation committee may be assisted by other parties that are involved in the Hawaii CREP including representatives from FSA, NRCS, or other officers, employees, and agents of the State.
- 7.2 Opening of Proposals and Confidentiality of the Evaluation Process.** Proposals will not be publicly opened. Only the members of the evaluation committee or state personnel having legitimate interest in this procurement will be provided access to the proposals and evaluation results during the evaluation period. All proposals, evaluation worksheet and subsequent Best and Final Offer, if any, and including documentation, correspondence and meetings, will be kept confidential until after the award. All proposals will be made public only after the review and selection process is completed.
- 7.3 Compliance with Minimum Criteria.** The criteria to be used in the comparative evaluation process and the relative weight/significance assigned to each criteria is detailed below. Each proposal request will be evaluated as to its conformance with the

weighted criteria (totaling 100%). The goal of the comparative evaluation process is to select the “best” proposal(s) based on a set of defined criteria. The criteria to be used is:

- 7.3.1 Conservation Practice.** The participant used the most efficient and effective methods to complete the conservation practice. (weight: 40%)
 - 7.3.2 Projected Cost.** The projected cost compared to actual cost of estimated conservation practice based on the project’s conservation plan. (weight: 20%)
 - 7.3.3 Justification.** The participant provided sufficient documentation to account for the cost of conservation practice. Documentation can include, but is not limited to, three bids for cost of implementation, explanation of cost, etc. (weight: 20%)
 - 7.3.4 Total Cost.** The total cost per acre of the Hawaii CREP project. (weight 20%)
- 7.4 Compliance with Minimum Criteria.** Proposals will be reviewed for conformance with the instructions and requirements of this request for reimbursement. Those proposals meeting the minimum criteria will be eligible for a priority list for funding. Discussions may be held with “priority-listed” applicants. The objective of these discussions is to clarify issues regarding the applicant’s proposal and reimbursement request.
- 7.5 Acceptance/Rejection of Proposals.** The State reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to undertake discussions with one or more Applicants, and to accept that proposal or a modified proposal which, in its judgment, will be most advantageous to the State and the selection criteria considered. The State also reserves the right to waive any defects or accept all or portion of any proposal.
- 7.6 Method of Award.** The Evaluation Committee will review all of the requests proposals that meet the minimum eligibility criteria listed in Section 5 and 6; and rank them according to the comparative evaluation criteria, as detailed in Sections 7.3. The evaluation committee will then enter into discussions with the applicant(s) to verify and clarify said proposal(s) and to discuss the final terms and reimbursement for approval. The evaluation committee will award, if any, one or more requests at the end of the evaluation period.
- 7.7 Notification.** All applicants will be notified of award determinations via U.S. Postal Service. If receiving an award letter, please note that this letter does NOT constitute a release of funds. Once a contract is executed, DOFAW will issue a Notice to Proceed.
- 7.8 Proprietary Information.** If proprietary data or information is included in the proposals, please identify appropriate sections with a label stating “Proprietary Information.” Unless otherwise identified as “Proprietary Information,” please note that your proposal and contract become public documents and are available for public inspection once awards are posted. Additionally, all photos developed/used/submitted for the RFP become property of DOFAW.

8. RESPONSIBILITY OF APPLICANT

Reference §103D-310(c), HRS. If compliance documents have not been submitted to the Department prior to award, prospective Applicant(s) shall be asked to produce documents to the procurement officer to demonstrate compliance with this section.

8.1 Hawaii Compliance Express – Please applying for all certificates from the various state agencies through Hawaii Compliance Express (HCE), which allows businesses to register online through a simple wizard interface at <http://vendor.ehawaii.gov> to acquire a “Certificate of Vendor Compliance.” The HCE provides current compliance status as of the issuance date. The “Certificate of Vendor Compliance” indicating that vendor’s status is compliant with the requirements of §103D-310(c), HRS, shall be acceptable for both contracting purposes and final payment. Vendors that elect to use the new HCE services will be required to pay an annual fee of \$15.00 to the Hawaii Information Consortium, LLC (HIC). Vendors choosing not to participate in the HCE program will be required to provide the paper certificates as instructed in the sections previous to this one.