

Soil & Water Conservation Districts

Performance-based Funding Structure

The Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts (AISWCD) has developed a new funding plan and opportunity for the Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) throughout Illinois that factors in accountability for the funding received from the State of Illinois while also allowing for money to be allocated based on workload and areas with major resource concerns.

The outlined plan is still in draft form and portions of the plan will need continued modification as issues arise. While the plan does encompass all SWCDs present in the State, the bulk of the funding will be distributed based on **two factors**:

Base-level funding for all 97 SWCDs.

Performance-based and workload funding - funding will be determined through previous workload records from State, Federal and private conservation workload as recorded by the Illinois Department of Agriculture, AISWCD, NRCS and others. The goal is to allow local District Board members to make local staffing decisions based on need.

1 DISTRICT FUNDING – STATE FUNDING

There are currently 97 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (District) within the State of Illinois. Each District is considered a “local unit of government” and is governed by a 5-member Board of Directors. The Districts typically have between a part-time employee or two-plus full-time employees. The employee counts ranges from north to south and east to west.

The **base-level funding** will be distributed among the 97 SWCDs throughout the State. The funding will allow Districts to operate at a level determined by the local Board of Directors. A required amount of staff hours will need to be considered to receive a base-level funding. The details on how this base amount are to be determined.

Next, the **performance-based funding** will be allocated based on workload from local SWCDs. Workload parameters will need to be set. An analysis will be done to accurately allocate funding based on the SWCDs ability to complete functions that extend above and beyond the base amount.

2 CONSERVATION IMPLEMENTATION – PROJECT FUNDING

Since Districts main focus is developing and implementing **conservation practices**, it is only natural to devote a large amount of time and energy on funding conservation projects throughout the State. AISWCD has in place, a Foundation, non-for-profit 501 (c)3. The Foundation will add an Affiliate Member group to help seek private funders for local projects. The process will use the Nutrient Research and Education Council's (NREC) structure as a template along with their RFP process to allow Districts to obtain project funds for conservation practices and projects.

The **Affiliate Members** will **include** the following:

- Ag Commodity Organizations
- Ag Policy Group
- Other Ag Organizations
- Environmental Policy Groups
- State Agencies
- Federal Agencies
- Others, if deemed appropriate

Funding application will take place through a Request for Proposal process. Funding will be granted upon receiving application, matching funds and a list of additional qualifications. The process would be similarly structured to various other grant processes.

Affiliate Members will have the following **roles and responsibilities**:

- Identify priority regions based on the NLRs document
- Set conservation goals for implementation of BMPs
 - o Identify goals, benchmarks, milestones based on priority regions for implementation of conservation practices for N, P, sedimentation and erosion
- Report to the AISWCD Board, IDOA, and NLRs Working Groups
- Provide funding for conservation projects - \$XX per year
- Develop an effective RFP process to award conservation project funding to local SWCDs for projects
- Serve in an advisory and financial role as directed by the AISWCD Board