

Strategies for Requesting Funding from County Government

The Soil and Water Conservation Districts must convince County Commissioners and City Councils that investing in the Districts will pay dividends to them and the citizens. The list of benefits provided through the application of conservation practices and the education of children in natural resources conservation can be used in presentations to County Commissioners and City Councils. Select from this list the benefits you think your district provides and add others as you think of them.

BENEFITS OF _____ Conservation Districts to County and Citizens

1. Soil Conservation Practices protect the soil resources in our county and keeps our soil productive for future generations. This productive land maintains the tax base and tax revenues to the county and city.
2. Soil and Water Conservation Practices protects water quality making our streams cleaner for swimming, fishing and just enjoying their beauty.
3. Reduction of sediment in streams from reduced erosion on cropland and from gullies also reduces maintenance along ditches and bridge crossings which costs the county thousands of dollars annually in maintenances costs.
4. Cost share programs and technical assistance provided in earthmoving projects in county increases jobs and tax revenues by county and city governments.
5. Soil and Water Conservation Districts provides soil surveys to farmers, real estate agents, county personnel, city planners, and many other who use these surveys for planning and assessing real estate.
6. The Districts also provides publications and technical assistance as requested on pond building, terrace construction and maintenance, wildlife planning in city and on the farm, forestry, grazing information, and many other areas. The District provided _____ services to the citizens of our county and cities last year.
7. The Conservation Districts also represents our county at area and state level meetings to seek funds from state and federal sources. Last year our district had over _____ in cost share assistance from Kansas WRCS brought into the county
8. The Conservation District also had over _____ of USDA funds brought into the county \$____ EQIP, \$_____ FIP, \$_____ WHIP, etc. (A worksheet to estimate these numbers are in your packet)

9. The Conservation Districts has _____ full and part-time employees whose salaries added up to over \$ _____. This along with \$_____ of gas, equipment, supplies, etc. is brought into the county each year. (A worksheet is enclosed for this estimate)
10. The _____ Conservation District assisted _____ poultry (and/or hog, dairy, etc.) producers in installing animal.
11. A pond constructed by landowners with our assistance improves the beauty of the landscape of our county.
12. The Conservation Districts assisted in planting ____ acres of trees during this past year which will provide jobs and increase the county tax base.
13. Through our Conservation Education program we have contacted _____ children in grades __ through _____. These programs included poster contest, land judging contests, envirothons (envirosapes) etc.
14. We have emphasized the importance of natural resources stewardship through the Soil Stewardship Week activities involving over _ churches, etc. throughout the county.
15. We have spoken to ___ civic clubs, garden clubs, etc. informing our citizens on the importance of natural resources and their wise use.
16. We have assisted county agencies such as the health department with soil information, the county road department by controlling and diverting concentrated water from agricultural land away from road ditches, tax assessor through soil surveys and aerial photography, etc.
17. We have assisted the County/City School Board and schools with outdoor classrooms, erosion control plans, etc.
18. We have assisted the city of ___ with erosion and sediment plans on new subdivisions to reduce their sediment and pollution of streams.
19. We are providing the planning and follow-up assistance to over _____ CRP contracts in the county on ___ acres of land. The annual payments to these contracts is over \$ _____. The district provides assistance to these landowners in maintaining the cover on this land to provide environmental benefits.

IMPACT OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Federal and State Programs		Note
Technical Assistance Funds	\$ _____	1
Agricultural Resource Conservation Program (cost-share)	\$ _____	2
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (cost-share)	\$ _____	2
Forestry Incentives Programs (cost-share)	\$ _____	2
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (cost-share)	\$ _____	2
Other Cost Share Programs, i.e. 319, etc.	\$ _____	2
Multi-County Projects/Funding		
RC&D Measures in County	\$ _____	2
Other Application of conservation Practices	\$ _____	3
TOTAL MONETARY IMPACT OF DISTRICT	\$ _____	

Benefits

- **Conserves Soil**
- **Improves water Quality**
- **Increases water Supply for Livestock**
- **Improves Wildlife Habitat and Population**
- **Reduces Nutrients and Bacteria in Surface Water**
- **Reduces Nutrients and Bacteria in Groundwater**
- **Improves Pastures, Hayland and food for Livestock**
- **Improves Forest Quality and Production**
- **Reduces Odors from Livestock Operations in Community**
- **Maintains Productivity of farms and values**
- **Improves Profitability of Farms in County**

Notes:

1. Technical Assistances is Federal or State Funding that comes into the County in the form of personnel expenditures. This estimate is based on the number of full and part-time personnel (NRCS and District) working through the District. The income coming to these persons are usually spent in the local economy, i.e. housing, food, clothing, office rent, gas for vehicles, etc. The following worksheet will help estimate this expenditure in your District.

**WORKSHEET TO ESTIMATE NON-COST-SHARE
FEDERAL & STATE IMPACTS**

District Conservationist= _____ Salary x 1.32 (benefits) = \$ _____

If DC is split between 2 counties then pro-rate accordingly. Average salary for DC's in state = \$42,500

Technician = \$ _____ Salary x 1.32 (benefits) = \$ _____

Average salary for Technician in state = \$25,800, pro-rate according to percent of time in county.

District Administrative Coordinator = \$ _____ = Benefits = \$ _____

State Portion, i.e. \$10,000 + other sources other than county

Rent for NRCS/District Office if not provided by County = \$ _____

Average Rent = \$8.50 per Sq. Ft.

Other Overhead Expenditures = Sum of the above items = \$ _____

Time 5 percent (.05) i.e. gasoline, repairs, utilities, janitorial, etc.

Total Technical/Administrative from state and federal sources = \$ _____

2. The District Staff usually knows the amount of Cost-shares provided to the district from the different programs, i.e. EQIP, etc., but by only showing the amount of cost-share you are underestimating the impact of these funds in the county. When estimating the expenditures by program account for the total expenditures resulting from the cost-share incentives. For example, if the cost-share is \$3,500 but the farmer built a \$10,000 dry stack, the incentive resulted in a total expenditure of \$10,000. A quick way to estimate this total impact is to take the divide the total cost-share in the program by the percent cost-share. For example if the county receives \$30,000 of WQIP funds the minimum total expenditures would be \$30,000 divided by .65=\$46,000. In some cases the cost-share rate underestimates the total impact, so you may want to use a smaller percent. The point is do not use the cost-share to estimate impact of these expenditures.

3. The other expenditures in the county as a result of the District Program are usually ignored. The technical assistance provided to many landowners/users results in expenditures in natural resources conservation. Be careful not to count those expenditures accounted for in item 2 above. These expenditures would be those ponds, grassed waterways, terraces, etc. that are built without cost-shares but required our assistance to accomplish. The DC and technician can usually estimate these numbers and an average cost of each type of practice fairly accurately. The total expenditures in this area will surprise most of you as to the District's impact in the local economy.

SAMPLE WORKSHEET FOR A DISTRICT

This District has a full-time DC and Technician. All State funds are used for District Coordinator's Salary. Cost-Share funds are EQIP=\$45,000, and a special 319 project = \$20,000 during the past year. The DC and Technician estimated that about \$85,000 is spent on conservation practices that were not cost-shared.

District Conservationist \$60,000 Salary x 1.32 (benefits) = \$_____

If DC is spilt between 2 counties then pro-rate accordingly. Average salary for DC's in state = \$42,500

Technician = \$30,000 Salary x 1.32 (benefits) = \$_____

Average salary for Technician in state = \$25,800, pro-rate according to percent of time in county.

District Administrative Coordinator = \$10,000 + Benefits = \$10,000

State Portion, i.e. \$10,000 + other sources other than county

Rent for NRCS/District Office if not provided by County = \$8,500

Average rent = \$8.50 per Sq. Ft. (1,000 sq. ft)

Other Overhead Expenditures= Sum of the above = \$5,400

Items times 5 percent (.05), i.e. gasoline, utilities, janitorial, etc.

Total Technical/Administrative = \$113,900

IMPACT OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Federal and State Programs

Technical Assistance Funds	\$113,900
Agricultural Resource Conservation Program (cost-share)	\$46,200
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (cost-share)	\$69,230
\$45,000 divided by .65 for this example	
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (cost-share)	\$ 0
If an item is "O" then leave it out of presentation	
Other Cost Share Programs, i.e. 319, etc.	\$92,300
\$60,000 divided by .65 for this example	
Other Application of Conservation Practices	\$85,000
Estimated that \$85,000 other expenditures on non-cost share items.	

FUNDING STRATEGIES FROM UNITS OF GOVERNMENT

Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Kansas traditionally obtain funding from their local County Commissions and in some cases City Councils. Each District uses different strategies in this process; however, the most successful districts have a year-round strategy, which includes four ingredients: Requesting, Informing, Involving and Recognizing. Failure to have planned specific actions in each of these steps will result in less than potential funding success.

Requesting- This is the formal presentation of the budget request, benefits of district program, etc. usually presented by one or all District Supervisors. The request should be well thought out and planned along with handouts, charts, video or other media, etc. to sell the district program and establish the importance of funding the district.

Informing- Informing Commissioners or Councilmen of the district programs is a year-round action. Planned events or actions aimed at informing these government officials should be planned during the year. Examples of regular information provided to these governing officials are newsletters, workshops, demonstrations, meeting announcements, etc. Keep them informed of all major activities.

Involving- Ask your Commissioners or Councilmen to be on programs, committees, advisors, etc. for the District. Many of these elected officials have experiences on their own farms or businesses that will allow them to take part in workshops, demonstrations, or other district programs. They will feel more a part of the district program if they are involved.

Recognizing- Most elected officials appreciate public recognition of their official decisions and funding efforts. Take every opportunity to recognize these Commissioners and Councilmen at public meetings, demonstrations, workshops, in newsletters, articles, etc. Recognition too, is a year-round effort and should be planned along with the other action items.

The following actions were sent in by Soil and Water Conservation Districts throughout Kansas. We want to thank you for your cooperation in this effort to improve our district's funding efforts through sharing of ideas. We have sorted the actions by the four ingredients identified above. A successful funding strategy will include at least two (2) actions in each of the ingredients.

Requesting:

1. Prepare a formal budget displaying the major expenditures of the District and the total amount requested (a sample format is attached). Explain that districts must obtain their funding. Some funds are provided from the state but the remainder must come from county, city or private sources. Also emphasize that a shortage of funding reduces the district's effectiveness to deliver services and obtain funding such as cost-share and project funding from federal and state grants. In many districts additional funding may be requested for a district technician or district administrator.
2. A County Highway Map with dots indicating the location of cooperators in the district or those served by district during the past 12 months. In some districts overlays were created to show the total accomplishments with each layer represented a program, such as EQIP, etc.
3. Charts or Graphs showing practices applied, persons assisted, conservation plans prepared, etc. displaying the services provided by the district.
4. Personal contacts with each commissioner or councilman by District Supervisors to inform them of the district programs prior to or immediately following the formal meeting with the governing officials.
5. Slide presentation or video to visually show conservation practices applied and benefits to the county citizens.
6. A resolution adopted by the District Supervisors at an official meeting and signed by the Chairman requesting the funding from the County Commission.
7. Include in presentation information on newly approved priority area, or other grant requests by the District and the need for administrative and technical support to continue to request state, federal and private grants to come into the district (county). This type proposal shows how the district is bringing new funding into the county. Express the new funding as a ration to the county appropriation, i.e. a \$100,000 grant compared to a \$10,000 county appropriation equals a \$10 return for a \$1 investment in the district program.
8. A Spreadsheet showing ALL funding provided to the county through the local Soil and Water Conservation District, i.e. EQIP, CRP, WRP, WHIP, 319 Clean water Grants, etc. Include cost of personnel and overhead provided through NRCS. (Example of this spreadsheet requesting attached). Do not underestimate your value to the County—Rule

of thumb is to request at least 10 percent of the amount of money districts bring into the county, i.e. if all programs add to \$100,000, and then ask for \$10,000. The ratio of funding to county appropriation described in 7 can also be used here. A sample is included in packet.

9. Estimate the total benefits of the district programs on the local economy. A worksheet for this estimate is included.
10. Letters of support from clients or other influential persons in the District.
11. If the County Commissioners have a County Administrator or Budget Manager who makes recommendations to the Commission, these people need to be included in the information efforts described below.

Informing:

1. If District publishes a newsletter, be sure to keep all County Commissioners and City Councilmen on the mailing list.
2. If district does not have a newsletter, a personal letter to each of the County Commissioners, City Councilmen, and other funding supporters, i.e. County Administrators, Budget Managers, etc. can be prepared quarterly or semi-annually on district stationary and copied for mailing.
3. Ask County Commissioners and City councilmen to District Sponsored Demonstrations, Workshops, and other meetings to help them be aware of the District programs. They may not come, but they know the District is actively sponsoring these events. Refer to the County Commissions/City Council support in the letter.
4. District can host a breakfast/luncheon aimed at informing the County Commissioners and/or City Councilmen (note: separate meeting might be best) of the District programs and Benefits. This type of meeting is for information—you probably do not want to discuss or request funds at this time.
5. Send a special copy of the District Annual report to the County Commissioners.
6. Develop a special brochure displaying the accomplishments and benefits provided by the District to be handed to the county commissioners and public. This kind of brochure can

probably be developed with the computers and printers now available in district offices. If not the State Committee Office can help with this kind of effort.

Involving:

1. Ask a County Commissioner to be an Advisor to the District, i.e. Legislative Advisor, and ask him/her to meet with the board quarterly or semi-annually. This person could also be the representative on the Conservation Advisory Committee to the District (Locally Led Conservation).
2. Ask a County Commissioner or City Councilman who has applied conservation practices on their farm to be a participant in a workshop or demonstration, or have the demonstration/workshop on their farm.
3. Ask a County Commissioner to present awards at the District Annual Meeting, or present the Cooperator of the Year Award with a picture in the local newspaper. Also included in Recognition.
4. Ask a County Commissioners and/or City Councilmen to participate in Land Judging Contest, Poster Contest, etc. as judges or monitors.
5. County Commissioners would be participants in videos or slides presentations about the district programs and sources of their funding.

Recognizing:

1. Seek opportunities to include elected officials in newsletters. Newspaper articles, radio programs, etc. to recognize their support of the district. Being elected officials who have to seek re-election, they appreciate the publicity.
2. An awards banquet or just a pot-luck supper annually to thank the County Commissioners, City Councilmen, or other legislators for their support is always a great opportunity to prepare the way for next year's funding. A few pictures for a local news articles is almost an essential outcome of this type of meeting.
3. Recognize County Commissioners, City Councilmen, etc. at demonstrations, workshops or other district meetings as major supporters of the district programs. Inclusion of their attendance in news articles related to the meeting would also be good.

SUMMARY:

This list is not all inclusive. These actions are just guides and intended to be stimulating ideas for other actions that you might try. Even if your County Commission says they do not have money, the Districts have a responsibility to keep them informed and involved in reaching the community to conserve our natural resources.

EXAMPLE CALENDAR OF CONTACTS TO A UNIT OF GOVERNMENT

January-

Send the County Commissioners, City Council, and State Legislators, etc. copies of District Annual Report along with a personal letter from the Chairman thanking them for their support and looking forward to the New Year working with them. (INFORMING)

February-

Ask County Commissioners, City Council, and Legislators to attend a District Supervisors' Meeting. This could be a banquet or a pot-luck supper at the District Office. (INFORMING, INVOLVING, RECOGNIZING). Have one or more County Commissioner or City Council to judge and present awards for Conservation Poster Contest in District. Picture and article published in local newspaper recognizes Commission/Council support of District. (INVOLVING, RECOGNIZING).

March-

Send a copy of newsletter or develop a personal letter from the District Chairman to each County Commissioners, City Council, Legislators, etc. illustrating the help the District is providing to the citizens of the county. Also include a feature story of a successful conservation practice or event of the District. (INFORMING).

April-

Hold County FFA Land Judging Contest. Invite one or more County Commissioners to attend and present the winning team with a plaque or certificate. Take picture and publish in local newspaper for recognition of Commissioner's support. (INVOLVING, RECOGNIZING). At the beginning of Soil Stewardship Week have commissioners, Council, etc. sign proclamation of Week's Observance. Photograph and article published in local newspaper. (INVOLVING, RECOGNIZING).

May-

At a No-Till, Forestry, etc. Demonstration planned by the District, invite the County Commissioners to attend for lunch or to present the "Outstanding No-Till Farmer" Award. Again a picture to recognize the farmer and acknowledge support of the Commission, Council, etc. (INVOLVING, RECOGNIZING). Send district newsletter or a personal letter from Chairman to the Commission, Council, and Legislators as to progress of the District during the past quarter. (INFORMING).

June-

Submit request to the County commission and City Councils for funding of the District Program for the next year. This date will vary from County to County and City to City, so check with your budget manager as to dates. (REQUESTING).

July-

Each Supervisor makes a point of contacting their County commissioner or City Councilman personally to encourage their support of funding for the District programs. (REQUESTING, INFORMING).

August-

Ask County Commissioners and/or City Councilmen to attend Animal Waste demonstration/Workshop to present 'Clean water Award" to local producer applying waste in accordance to their waste management plan. Picture of outstanding producer and Commissioner/Councilman with article in local newspaper. (INVOLVING, RECOGNIZING).

September-

Send copy of District Newsletter or a personal letter from Chairman to County Commissioners, City Council, and Legislators as to progress of District during the last quarter and other current issues of Conservation. (INFORMING).

October-

Ask County Commissioners/City Council to attend DC's presentation at the local school Outdoor Classroom. Recognize County Commissioners and/or City councilmen for supporting District Program and Conservation education in the District. Picture of Commissioner/Councilman, Teacher and some children and article published in local newspaper emphasizing Conservation education. (INVOLVING, RECOGNIZING).

November-

Invite County Commissioners, City Council and Legislators to Annual Recognition Banquet or Holiday get-together and thank them for their support of District Program. No hard sell or request at this time just a friendly get-together. (RECOGNIZING).

December-

Give them a rest.

This document developed based on a publication Prepared by Bill Hughes, NRCS and Steve Couter, Alabama Soil & Water Conservation Commission. 1997