



Marion SWCD / Hendricks SWCD - Soil Health Initiative
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2019 Soil Health Cost-Share Program

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are in place to help people help the land. The Soil Health Initiative is a program to provide technical and financial assistance to improve soil health and water quality through soil conservation practices, with a focus on small farms and gardens in Marion and Hendricks Counties. The cost-share program is made possible through [Clean Water Indiana](#) competitive grant funds awarded to the SWCDs.

Soil health is the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans. Soil health is improved with conservation practices and 4 guiding principles:

1. Minimize Disturbance – *Disturb the soil as little as possible.*
2. Maximize Soil Cover – *Keep the soil covered as much as possible.*
3. Maximize Biodiversity – *Using crop rotation and cover crops.*
4. Provide Continuous Living Roots – *Keep plants growing throughout the year.*

Cost-Share Program Overview

Cost-share funds to help growers improve soil health are available through a competitive application process. Applications are reviewed monthly and evaluated on the applicant's ability to complete the project, availability of program funds and assistance, benefits to soil health and water quality, and educational opportunity. The application window may close on May 1 or before if program capacity is met. Land less than 20 acres and projects exceeding \$200 will be a priority.

The SWCDs will notify the applicant of grant status once a determination is made or contact the applicant if additional information is needed. The SWCD will work with the top applicants to conduct a site visit, develop a plan for conservation practices, a budget, material sourcing options, and a cost-share contract to affirm the appropriate amount of grant funding and project timeline. Final approval for financial assistance will then be determined by the Soil and Water Conservation District's board of supervisors. Contracts are effective upon signed agreement of terms by both parties.

This is a reimbursement program for eligible materials purchased by the recipient and implemented under an approved timeline and contract. Recipients will be responsible for material purchasing, proper installation and maintenance of conservation practices. Practices will be completed by the timeline approved by the SWCD at the time of contract. Materials eligible for reimbursements should not be made outside of the approved timeline. Reimbursements will be made based on submitted receipts.

Receipts should be submitted to one of the following offices:

Marion County SWCD, 1200 South Madison Ave. Suite 200, Indianapolis, IN 46225

Hendricks County SWCD, 195 Meadow Dr., Danville, IN 46122



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Conservation Practices and Funding

Conservation practice materials eligible for funding are listed in the following table. The SWCD match indicates the percentage of the cost to be reimbursed to the recipient after project implementation and submittal of receipts. The SWCD reimbursement maximum for cover crops is \$50 per acre. The reimbursement maximum for other practice categories will be determined in the contract and based on planning and budgeting completed with SWCD. There is no predetermined acreage or funding limit per applicant. Conservation practices will be implemented according to Natural Resources Conservation Service standards and local laws and ordinances.

Conservation Practice Materials		SWCD Match
Cover Crops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cover crop seed - Inoculant - Shipping costs 	75% up to \$50/acre
Mulching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vegetative mulch or other material approved by the SWCD. Examples include straw, hay, and paper. 	75%
Soil Testing for Nutrients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laboratory fees - Nutrient recommendation fees - Shipping costs 	75%
Native Plantings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plants and/or seed 	75%
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preapproved equipment purchase - Preapproved equipment rental - Shipping costs 	50%
Special practice considerations can be made if approved by the SWCD		

Requesting Cost-Share Funds

Landusers in Marion and Hendricks Counties can request cost-share by contacting their local soil and water conservation district. Funds and program capacity is limited, but the SWCD will strive to provide future opportunities to applicants that do not receive cost-share. Thank you for your interest in conservation!

No consideration of race, gender, religion, political affiliation, or working or volunteer positions will be made during the application process.