

NOTES
STATE SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION NOTES
February 20, 2024
SureTech Laboratories
7501 Miles Dr, Indianapolis, IN 46231

Members Presents:

Gene Schmidt- Chairperson

Jane Hardisty – Vice Chair

Kenny Cain

Ray Chattin

Larry Clemens

Brad Dawson

Absent – Amy Burris

CWI Competitive Grants:

In 2023, 44% of CWI Competitive Grant funding went towards staffing and over \$ 1 million. For 2024, we need to work toward and encourage implementation.

- We discussed the budget cycle, grants guidance document, networking sessions, CWI code, and talking points for everyone.
 - We spent time on the priorities we could send to the grants committee to consider.
 - These were:
 - Implementation/Cost-share funding.
 - Projects that went through the NRCS process, but did not rank high enough to be funded, but have been designed.
 - Training for staff
 - Staffing
- Money for projects cannot come from something other than another source.
- Leveraging sheets or AFRs may be helpful.
- Data from the past three years regarding what has been funded for staffing, cost-share, and other areas of concern may be helpful.

CWI Communication:

- There was a lot of good discussion on how the SSCB and ISDA can better serve districts.
- There was continued discussion on what the districts need.
- How can we best work with our partners to showcase the work in our State.
- We talked about the timeline of the CWI process.
- We discussed the CWI survey, which allows districts and partners to provide feedback.
- The Board wanted to send a letter as part of the CWI applications.

District Match:

The Board discussed how to motivate the districts and what we could do to help districts that cannot meet the extra \$10,000 in matching funds. This topic led to the conversation about training and the Board Certification Program (BCP).

Reporting Metrics:

This topic was covered throughout the entire meeting. We spent time talking about the current data that ISDA and the ICP have so that we could showcase the positive projects that the CWI fund has been able to do. We discussed having a district, ISDA DSS, or RS present before the SSCB about a fantastic project that used CWI funds and worked with partners. We could then record these presentations and share them online.

Discussion of Board Certification Program

The Board and staff spoke about the program. We could use this to help those districts that can't meet that additional \$10,000 match. Laura gave an update on the program and where things stand. The DSS team has been able to complete several modules. The mandatory ones, such as preventing sexual harassment, internal controls, and new staff/supervisor training, have been finalized. They are scheduled to complete more of these. There was talk about setting a deadline for this program to be achieved.

SSCB Round Table Recap:

Only a little was discussed here.

SSCB Business Plan

- The Board and staff discussed this item, and we need to update our plan sooner rather than later. We discussed seeking an outside facilitator to complete the plan.