

# **Contract Policies**

## **AEM Base Program: Year 6 (2010 – 2011)**

### **I. Base Program Timeline:**

1. Annual Action Plan (AAP) and budget due date 5-6-2010
2. Contract start date 5-7-2010
3. Complete 1<sup>st</sup> quarterly meeting by 8-29-10
4. Complete 2<sup>nd</sup> quarterly meeting & submit interim report by 11-30-10
5. Complete 3<sup>rd</sup> quarterly meeting by 2-26-11
6. Program ends 5-6-2011
7. Final report due 7-6-2011

### **II. Contract & Funding**

1. Districts will enter into a deliverables based contract with the SWCC that will pay the Districts an hourly rate for the time spent on completing deliverables identified in an Annual Action Plan (AAP) that advances the District's agricultural conservation goals (AEM Strategic Plan).
2. Districts may participate in one of two Base Program options.
  - A. Option A – Districts may earn up to \$40,000 by providing technical assistance (Tiers 1 – 5B) and conducting supporting activities (education, outreach, program evaluation, data management, partnership, and reporting) according to an Annual Action Plan in support of a County AEM Strategic Plan.
  - B. Option B – In this option Districts earn funds conducting the same activities as Option A, but may earn up to \$75,000 if they meet the following criteria:
    - Have a full time AEM (CNMP) or NRCS Certified Planner on staff.
    - Past performance with AEM Base Program requiring that at least 75% of the requested amount for AEM Base Program Year 4 was earned.
    - District is willing to participate in quality assurance spot checks that may involve on-farm review of work and must complete the AEM Report Card.
3. The AAP will become part of the contract and will consist of:
  - A. chart identifying watersheds, 12-digit HUCs, water quality concerns, and deliverables
  - B. budget and timeline
4. The rate charged for work on deliverables will be a standard rate of \$34/hour for District employees. Interns will be actual rate not to exceed \$34/hr. The \$34/hr. rate represents 75% of the actual cost of to accomplish deliverables. It excludes the farmer's time and full overhead cost of District Management.

5. Districts must develop a budget as part of their AAP based on the number of hours they estimate it will take to complete the identified deliverables.
6. Up to 25% of total budget amount may be advanced to the SWCD. A voucher for additional funds may be submitted at each quarter provided previously advanced funds have been earned.
7. Districts cannot seek payment for hours covered by other sources such as: Ag NPS Grants, NRCS Contribution Agreements (% not covered by agreement is eligible), Graze-NY, FL-LOWPA, etc. **There will be no payment for work completed by NRCS employees.**
8. Sub-contractors who contract with the District to do AEM related work as outlined below are eligible for payment of \$34/hr. or less. All planning, implementation, or evaluation work completed by sub-contractors must be consistent with the appropriate NRCS standards and AEM Participation Documents. A written contract must be in place between the District and the sub-contractor to do specified work in order for the sub-contractors time to be eligible for payment. Subcontractors will need to submit an hourly time log.
9. AAP will be reviewed by Regional AEA prior to addition to the contract. AEA may request adjustments to the AAP particularly when the funding requested looks to be out of proportion with stated deliverables. **As a guideline; funds not directly related to technical assistance (Tiers 1 – 5B), should generally not exceed 25% of contract amount unless the District provides sound reasoning.**

### III. Deliverables

1. Eligible Activities – All hours paid for must have been spent on agricultural water quality related activities and issues. Payments through the Base Program must be documented in hours/day in a log provided by the SWCC, or on a District form approved by Regional AEA. Eligible activities for Options A - B include:
  - A. Technical Assistance – all activities contributing to the completion of AEM Tiers 1 – 5B as outlined in the “Participation Documents” developed for each tier.
  - B. Educational Activities – organize and conduct workshops, demonstrations, tours, informational programs, and educational articles that support the County AEM Strategic Plan. **Note – activities eligible for payment include setting up, delivering, facilitating, etc. of training events not the actual training of District employees. Training of District employees can be covered under Part A Reimbursement to Districts.**
  - C. Outreach – conduct activities to promote participation and/or awareness in a County AEM effort. Such activities may include: writing articles, planning and conducting informational meetings; being interviewed for a newspaper, magazine, radio or television; and the AEM signage program.

- D. Program Evaluation/Data Management – annually complete the AEM Report Card; update the AEM Strategic Plan, and/or AAP. Also collect, collate, interpret, maintain, and display data resulting from the implementation of the AEM tiers or related activities. This includes develop, consolidate, and/or update case files. It does not include water quality monitoring activities.
- E. Partnership Activities –meet with program partners, groups and organizations acting in an advisory or participatory role to your AEM activities.
- F. Reporting –complete required reports including final and interim reports for the Base Program provided the report is written within the appropriate contract year (example – Year 6 will not pay to complete a Year 5 report). Quarterly meetings with your regional AEA/WQS are eligible.

#### IV. Reporting Requirements

- 1. District will meet quarterly with Regional AEA to review progress, accomplishments, and quality. If needed make adjustments to deliverables and budgets, and adjust timelines. **Districts with hours and accomplishments exceeding advanced amount may voucher for additional funds at each quarter with the approval of the AEA.**
- 2. The District will submit an interim report form to the SWCC by 11/30/10 reporting progress and accomplishments. Districts significantly behind should submit a revised budget and deliverables, and/or a revised timeline showing how the deliverables will be accomplished.
- 3. District will submit a final report by July 6, 2011. All farms participating must have an AEM ID number. **Note – Time spent on completing Final Reports may be paid through the program provided the report is completed within the contract time frame of 5/7/10 to 5/6/11.**

#### V. Documentation for Payment

- 1. District will track hours spent on AEM activities by completing a log supplied by the SWCC, or on a District form approved by a Regional AEA. At a minimum the log must contain employee name, date of work, hours spent, AEM activity, and AEM ID # when working on a farm.
- 2. District will complete a final report indicating deliverables accomplished in Tiers 1 – 5B, the watersheds where work was completed, cumulative farm data, hours worked, funds earned, and other information requested. Cumulative information on education and outreach, program evaluation, partnership, reporting, and grant application activities will also be reported.
- 3. AEA (Regional) Responsibilities
  - A. Compare deliverables accomplished with deliverables in AAP
  - B. Compare location of deliverables accomplished with priorities and tasks stated in AAP

- C. Judge if the deliverables accomplished warrant the funding requested.
  - a. Monitor activities through quarterly meetings to avoid surprises.
  - b. Accept sound explanations.
  - c. Use 25% non-technical guideline (II-9 page 2).
- D. Check at least 5% of each tier reported for existence and basic quality control.
- E. Check hourly log to verify completion of education, outreach, program evaluation, and partnership activities.
- F. Verify the math used to calculate total hours and funds earned.

## VI. Quality Control

- 1. Deliverables may be adjusted between the various tiers and watersheds/planning areas, but Districts should keep their regional AEA informed of major shifts and provide a sound explanation.
  - A. Walk-in clients to the office may be addressed.
- 2. Procedures and standards established for each tier must be followed or exceeded to be reportable and payable. Procedures and standards (Participation Documents) for completing each tier of the AEM framework are found in the AEM Base Program Manual as well as on the web site [www.nys-soilandwater.org](http://www.nys-soilandwater.org).
  - A. Only completed Tiers should be reported in the Final Report.
  - B. Hours spent working toward completion of a Tier should be reported on the Time Log and will be paid even if the Tier was not actually completed within the program year.
- 3. AEM Program staff will spot check the work of at least two Districts per region utilizing the Participation Documents established for each tier.