



Kentucky

Getting Started with NRCS A Guide to NRCS Programs and Services

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Thank you for your interest in working with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to help you manage your natural resources in a sustainable manner!

This guide will help you understand how NRCS can provide voluntary technical and potentially financial assistance as you prepare to work with us for the first time. New to farming? Want to learn how to start a farm? NRCS can help!

We offer additional assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers (those who have operated a farm or ranch for less than ten years), and can help you get started or grow your operation through a variety of programs and services.

Your first step should be to contact your USDA Service Center and make an appointment. Be sure to ask what documents you'll need. Also consider -- what is your vision for your land and farm? What are your challenges?

Need information in a language other than English? We offer free translation services.



Thinking About Working with NRCS?

Here's what you need to know

So you're ready to make some improvements on your land but not sure where to start?

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service may be able to help. NRCS works with farmers, ranchers, tribes and other individuals interested in conserving the soil, water and other natural resources on their land.

We can help you identify natural resource concerns and develop a conservation plan to address those issues on your property.

Funding may be available to help you offset the costs to implement the actions identified in your conservation plan.

Still Interested? That's great! Below are a few things to think about before applying to NRCS for financial assistance programs.

Can you answer YES to the following questions?

If so, then you may be eligible to participate in NRCS financial assistance programs.

1. Do you have a social security number or employer identification number issued by the IRS? Yes No
2. Will you maintain control of your land for the entire span of the proposed NRCS contract? Land control/ownership can be documented as a deed, lease, or another form of evidence. Yes No
3. Is your adjusted gross income less than \$900,000? Yes No
4. If you're an entity, do you have signature authority to make management decisions on the land? Yes No
5. Is your land in agriculture, such as cropland, rangeland, grassland, pasture or non-industrial private forest land? Yes No
6. Is your land in compliance with Highly Erodible Land and wetland conservation provisions? Yes No
7. Do you have an interest in the agricultural or forestry operation on your land? Yes No



It's a contract

It's important to understand that to receive financial payments from NRCS, you are entering into a contract with the U.S. government. That means you agree to complete certain conservation activities on your land within a set time frame to earn financial incentives. NRCS understands that things can happen outside of your control that result in delays, such as a natural disaster; so we may be able to modify the contract if needed. But keep in mind that if contract conditions aren't met, you may be liable for paying back all or a portion of the funding, or your contract may be terminated.

You pay the costs up-front

NRCS contracts work kind of like a mail-in rebate. Typically, you pay the costs up-front for conservation practices, then NRCS issues you a payment after completion. Therefore, it's important to consider your out-of-pocket costs up-front and determine if the proposed project makes financial sense for your operation. Advance payments are an option that can minimize your up-front costs if you qualify as a historically underserved producer. Ask your local NRCS office about advance payments if that sounds like a better fit for you.



Work must take place during the specified contract timeline

This means you'll need to wait to begin working on a conservation practice until your contract is signed. You must have at least one conservation practice implemented during the first year of your contract. NRCS will help you in the planning process to figure out the best schedule for your operation, but keep in mind that the contract will require certain practices to be completed within a specified time frame.

Projects must meet NRCS design standards

Because we want to ensure the conservation projects on your land will perform as intended, NRCS has developed science-based conservation standards for each of the conservation practices. That means when you implement projects on your land, they need to meet NRCS technical specifications. Activities that fall short of these standards will not receive payment and may need to be removed or replaced.

NRCS must certify the completed work before issuing your payment

Before NRCS can issue your payment, NRCS staff will need to visit your land to certify that the conservation practices have been completed according to our conservation standards. Once NRCS certifies a practice, you will receive payment via direct deposit.

NRCS payments vary depending on the type of conservation practice

Interested in how much you may get paid for various conservation practices? NRCS has set payment schedules that determine the payment amount. Check with your local NRCS office to find out more about payment schedules.

You are responsible for paying income tax on any NRCS payments

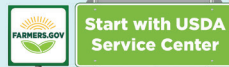
By law, you must report any payments you receive from NRCS as taxable income when filing your annual income tax return. You may need to consider how this will impact your tax returns.

Learn about the road to NRCS assistance . . .



The Road to NRCS Assistance for Producers and Landowners

NRCS offers Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) at No Cost to Kentucky producers and landowners! Our goal is to give our customers personalized advice and information, based on the latest science and research, to help them make informed decisions.



Contact a USDA Service Center to discuss your goals with an NRCS Specialist and start the conservation planning process.



Walk your land with an NRCS Specialist to **Evaluate** your operation and current resource conditions.



The NRCS Specialist will provide specific **Recommendations** for your operation.



Weigh your options and **Decide** if you want to move forward on your own **OR** apply for NRCS financial assistance.



Apply for conservation programs, NRCS will confirm your eligibility.



NRCS will **Rank** your application.



If your application is approved, **Implement** your plan.

NRCS offers voluntary conservation programs that provide financial assistance which help implement conservation practices to address natural resource concerns. Financial assistance programs include:

- The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (**EQIP**) provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, increased soil health and reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, improved or created wildlife habitat, and mitigation against increasing weather volatility.
- The Conservation Stewardship Program (**CSP**) helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources concerns.

Learn about conservation technical assistance next . . .



Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)

Here's What You Need to Know

Overview

The Conservation Technical Assistance Program (CTA) provides our nation's farmers, ranchers and forestland owners with the knowledge and tools they need to conserve, maintain and restore the natural resources on their lands and improve the health of their operations for the future.

NRCS offers this assistance at no cost to the producers we serve. Our goal is to give our customers personalized advice and information, based on the latest science and research, to help them make informed decisions.

Conservation Technical Assistance

If a producer chooses to take the next step towards improving their operations, we can work with them to develop a conservation plan, with suggested conservation practices that can help them reach their production and conservation goals.

They can also choose to apply for financial assistance to get help installing the conservation practices outlined in their conservation plan.

NRCS has local Service Centers across the country to help farmers, ranchers



and foresters get started.

Voluntary Involvement

Through the CTA program, NRCS provides conservation technical assistance to help them voluntarily conserve, maintain, and improve natural resources. NRCS staff and partners provide tools and technical assistance by science to help our customers make decisions on their lands.

Conservation Planning

Most technical assistance provided by NRCS leads to the development of a conservation plan - a resource assessment of the land that allows the client to determine the opportunities for using the resources under their care and how they may achieve their goals. A successful plan helps

our customers achieve their objectives while, at the same time, protecting our natural resources for the future.

NRCS helps decision makers with the conservation planning process ranging from site-specific plans for individuals to more complex community, watershed, or area-wide plans for groups of land managers.

Conservation on the Ground

Based on the conservation plans developed, NRCS and its partners provide the guidance and assistance needed to design, layout and install approved conservation practices. There are over 167 approved conservation practices designed to fit both the resource needs and the land users objectives. Practices may range from simple management activities like grazing management



Establishing Your Farm Record

Before Applying for USDA Programs



If you're a new customer applying for USDA farm and conservation programs for the first time, you need to establish your farm record with the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) first, before applying for financial assistance.

What is a Farm Record?

Your farm record registers you and your agricultural operation so that you may apply for USDA financial assistance programs, such as farm loans, disaster assistance, crop insurance as well as NRCS conservation programs. It creates a unique farm and tract number for your operation. Registering your farm means that when programs become available that could be useful to you, you will already be in the FSA system and ready to apply.

How to Get Your Farm Record

Make an appointment with your local FSA office.

Forms Required

Form AD 2047: Customer Data Worksheet
Request for Business Partner Record Change

Form AD 1026: Highly Erodible Land
Conservation and Wetland Conservation
Certification

Form CCC 941: Average Adjusted Gross Income
Certification and Consent to Disclosure of Tax
Information

Forms CCC 902I and/or 902E: Farm Operating
Plan for an Individual or Entity

Form CCC-901: Member's Information (for
members of an entity)

What to Bring

Your Social Security or Employer Identification number, property and mailing address, phone number

Proof of land control such as a deed or lease document

Copy of the articles of incorporation, by-laws, partnership paperwork, etc.

Copy of entity documents, if applicable.

Additional forms and/or documents may be required. Please contact your FSA office for more information. Find your service center through the QR Code below.



Do you Qualify as a Historically Underserved Producer?



Overview

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill) includes provisions that address the unique circumstances and concerns of socially disadvantaged, beginning, limited resource, and veteran farmers and ranchers (“historically underserved producers”). The 2018 Farm Bill provides for voluntary participation, offers incentives, and focuses on equity in accessing U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs and services.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service, as an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, is committed to ensuring that its programs and services are accessible to all our customers, fairly and equitably, with emphasis on reaching the underserved and socially disadvantaged farmers, ranchers, and tribes of our state.

Historically Underserved Groups:

- Beginning Farmer or Rancher
- Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher
- Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher
- Veteran Farmer or Rancher

Self-Evaluation Determination Questions

Use these questions as your guide to the NRCS-CPA-1200 Conservation Program Application block 9. To qualify as historically underserved, you must answer yes to all of the questions within a category.

Beginning Farmer or Rancher

Have you, as the individual or entity applying, operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years?

Will you, the individual or entity applying, be materially and substantially participating in the operation of the farm or ranch such that if you did not, the operation would be seriously impaired?

If you are a legal entity or joint operation, do all members of the entity or operation individually qualify?

Veteran Farmer or Rancher

Did you serve in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, including the reserve components thereof, and were you discharged or released therefrom, under conditions other than dishonorable?

Do you qualify as a beginning farmer or rancher?

If you are a legal entity or joint operation, do all members of the entity or operation individually qualify as both veteran and beginning farmer and rancher?

Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher*

In each of the last two years, was your direct or indirect gross farm sales less than or equal to the pre-determined amount found online at the NRCS Limited Resource Farmer Tool? (\$221,200 for FY23)

In each of the last two tax years, was your total household income less than the “County/Area Value,” as found online on the NRCS Limited Resource Farmer Tool?

If you are a legal entity or joint operation, do all members of the entity or operation individually qualify?

*You must reference data found online to answer these questions. Search for “NRCS Limited Resource Farmer and Rancher tools” and look for the current fiscal year.

Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher

Are you, as the individual or entity applying, a member of a socially disadvantaged group? (Including: American Indians or Alaska Natives, Asians, Black or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics.)

*Gender alone is not a socially disadvantaged group for the purposes of NRCS conservation programs.

Yes No



Environmental Quality Incentives Program



USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service - Kentucky offers voluntary Farm Bill programs that benefit both agricultural producers and the environment.

Overview

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides technical and financial assistance to producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, increased soil health and reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, improved or created wildlife habitat, and mitigation against drought and increasing weather volatility.

Benefits

Through EQIP, NRCS provides agricultural producers with one-on-one help and financial assistance to plan and implement improvements, or what NRCS calls conservation practices. Together, NRCS and producers invest in solutions that conserve natural resources for the future while improving agricultural operations.

Program at a Glance

NRCS may visit your property to inventory your natural resources and identify opportunities for conservation improvements. Then you will decide how best to address your natural resource concerns. These decisions will be part of your EQIP application

and will be recorded in a Conservation Plan. NRCS offers over 100 unique practices designed for working farms and forests.

Who is Eligible?

Farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who own or rent agricultural land, meet the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) payment limitations and are in compliance with the highly erodible land conservation (HELC) and wetland conservation (WC) provisions.

EQIP assistance can be used on all types of agricultural operations, including:

- Conventional and organic
- Specialty crops and commodity crops
- Forestry and wildlife
- Historically underserved farmers*
- Livestock operations

*Increased and advance payments available for historically underserved producers (beginning, limited resource, socially disadvantaged, and military veterans).

How to Apply

Applications for EQIP financial assistance are accepted throughout the year. Planning and ranking usually takes place in the Fall or Winter, and contracts are awarded in the Spring.

Examples of Kentucky EQIP Practices

- Cover Crop
- Brush Management
- Forest Stand Improvement
- Woody Residue Treatment
- Livestock Watering Facilities
- Livestock Pipeline
- Conservation Cover
- Pasture and Hayland Planting
- Fence



Advance Payment Options for EQIP

What You Need to Know



Overview

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) advance payment option may help offset out-of-pocket conservation costs for historically underserved producers. EQIP provides at least 50 percent of the contracted payment for each conservation practice up front, before the practice is implemented, to purchase materials or contract services.

Advance payments are only available under EQIP. EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to address natural resource concerns resulting in environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, and improved or created wildlife habitat.

Under the general EQIP payment process, a producer is reimbursed after a conservation practice is implemented according to NRCS standards. This process often means that producers must pay up front costs, which can be cost prohibitive for many historically underserved producers. The advance payment must be expended within 90 days of receipt, and the practice completed as agreed to on the EQIP schedule of operations.

Who is Eligible for an Advanced Payment?

Beginning Farmer or Rancher: someone who has never operated a farm or ranch, previously, or has operated a farm or ranch for less than 10 consecutive years.

Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher: a member of a group whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of that group without regard to their individual qualities.

Veteran Farmer or Rancher: someone who has served in the armed forces and has not operated a farm or ranch, has operated a farm or ranch for less than 10-consecutive years, or first obtained veteran status during the last 10 years.

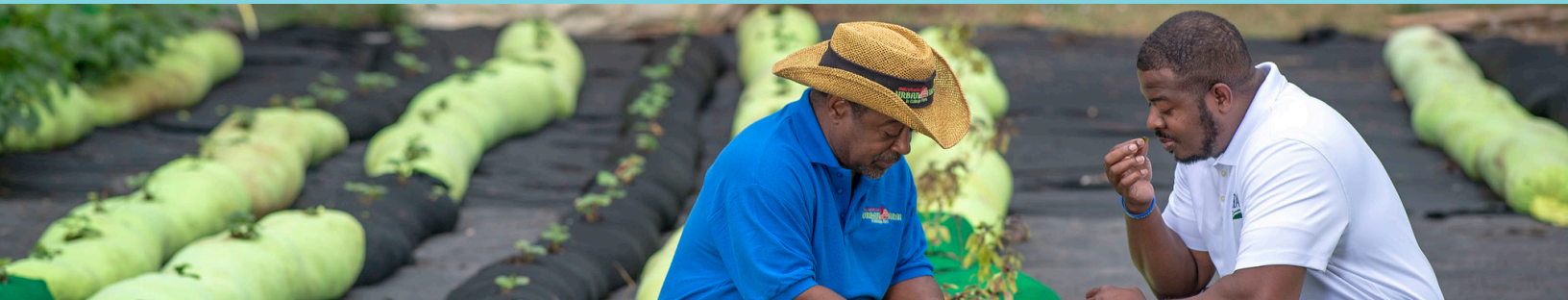
Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher: someone with a household income at or below the national poverty level. Eligibility can be determined by using the Limited Resources Farmer or Rancher Tool online at: <https://lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov>

What is an Advance Payment?

An advance payment provides the opportunity to receive not less than 50% of the payment up front to purchase immediately-needed materials and services.

NRCS field staff are required to document the producer's decision to select (or not select) the advance payment on a contract item basis.





How it Works

All EQIP practices are eligible for advance payments, including vegetative, structural, and management practices. Producers can use the option for as many or as few practices as they choose and can change their decision before they receive payment.

Historically underserved farmers producers are also eligible for higher payment rates.

Advance Payment Requirements

An advance payment provides the opportunity to receive up to 50% of the payment up front to purchase immediately-needed materials and services. However, there are some requirements you should be aware of before making the request:

- Any funds not expended within 90 days of receipt must be returned to NRCS. Therefore, participants should make sure that the advance payment is for an immediate need and any additional funding needed to purchase materials is ready and available before

requesting the funds.

- Participants should also ensure their contract matches their design exactly. If not, your contract may need to be modified to reflect the appropriate practice component and quantities to exactly match your completed conservation practice design.

Example

A beginning farmer applies for and is approved for an EQIP contract to plant cover crops on 40 acres of land.

The payment rate for implementation of a cover crop practice is \$56.81 per acre. Multiplying that rate by 40 acres, the total payment that beginning farmer would receive for planting cover crops through EQIP would be \$2,272.40.

- $\$56.81 \times 40 \text{ acres} = \$2,272.40$
- $\$2,272.40 / 2 = \$1,136.20$ (50% of the full payment rate)

Under the advance payment rate of 50%, that beginning farmer would

be eligible to receive \$1,136.20 in advance of implementing the practice, thus making it possible to offset some of the up-front costs such as purchasing the seed. The beginning farmer would then receive the remaining payment upon completing the cover crop practice.

**Rate shown is for illustrative purposes only and may not reflect the actual payment rate for cover crops.*

Schedule of Operations

Conservation practices must be completed as scheduled in your contract. The conservation practices associated with advance payment must be completed as scheduled in the EQIP schedule of operations. Failure to complete the conservation practices as scheduled will result in the EQIP contract being in violation with the terms and conditions of the contract.



Conservation Compliance

What You Need to Know



One of the cornerstones of participating in USDA conservation programs is compliance with Highly Erodible Land Compliance (HEL), and Wetland Conservation (WC) requirements.

What is Highly Erodible Land (HEL)?

Highly erodible land is defined as land that is croppable or made croppable that has an erodibility index of 8 or more. Erodiability index takes into consideration rainfall factor, soil erosivity factor and length and steepness of slopes. A highly erodible field is a field where HEL soils predominate. A field that is classified as an HEL field has:

- 33.33 percent or more of the total acreage identified as soil map units that are highly erodible; or
- Fifty or more acres identified as soil map units that are highly erodible.



HEL Compliance Provisions

The 1985 Food Security Act, as amended, provides that persons who produce an agricultural commodity, or make the production of an agricultural commodity possible, on an HEL field and that are not following an approved conservation system on that land shall be ineligible for benefits under programs administered by USDA. Additionally, there are stricter erosion protection requirements for fields that do not have a cropping history prior to 1985. The HEL land that grows commodity crops must follow an approved conservation plan or system.

Wetland Compliance Provisions

The 1985 Act, as amended, provides that, unless exempt, persons are ineligible for benefits under certain programs administered by USDA if the operator, other tenant, or the landowner:

- Plant an agricultural commodity on wetland that was converted after December 23, 1985; or
- Convert a wetland after November 28, 1990, by draining, dredging, filling, leveling, removing woody vegetation, or any other means having the effect of making the production of an agricultural commodity possible.

What is a Wetland?

According to the Farm Bill, a wetland is land that meets the following characteristics:

- Predominance of hydric soils;
- Has wetland hydrology (area is typically ponded, saturated or inundated for at least two weeks during the growing season once frost is out of the ground); and
- Is inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of hydrophytic vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.
- Under normal circumstances, supports a prevalence of hydrophytic vegetation, typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.





USDA Self Certification Provision

To remain eligible for USDA programs, applicants must self-certify their compliance with Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Compliance provisions on form AD-1026 when applying for benefits.

To document compliance for USDA programs, complete the AD-1026, Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification. Below are the terms you are agreeing to by self-certifying compliance:

1. Not to plant or produce an agricultural actively applying an approved conservation plan or maintaining a fully applied conservation system.
2. Not to plant or produce an agricultural commodity on wetlands converted after December 23, 1985.
3. Not to convert wetlands by draining, dredging, filling, leveling, removing woody vegetation or any other means that would allow the planting of any crop, pasture, agricultural commodity, or other such crops.

4. Not to use proceeds from any FSA farm loan, insured or guaranteed, or any USDA cost-share program, in such a way that might result in negative impacts to wetlands, except for those projects evaluated and approved by NRCS.

The signature on the form AD-1026 also gives representatives of USDA authorization to enter upon and inspect all farms in which you have an interest for the purpose of confirming the above statements.

What Does This Mean to You?

- If you review your maps and Producer Farm Data Report, and it states you have Highly Erodible Land (HEL), you need to ensure you are following a Conservation Plan or system.
- If you are uncertain if you have a Conservation Plan in place, please inquire with FSA or NRCS.
- If you are doing any type of work on the property such as cleaning out fence lines, clearing trees, adding tile, replacing tile, adding fill or working up pasture, ensure you have filled out an AD-1026 ahead of time so you do not jeopardize USDA program eligibility.

This may require NRCS to complete a certified HEL and/or wetland determination.

Once Activity is Proposed on AD-1026, What Now?

After you complete form AD-1026, NRCS will make a technical determination whether HEL or NHEL (non-highly erodible land). NRCS will also determine location of wetlands, and assign labels to them if exemptions apply. This process can vary from a few weeks to over several months, depending on complexity.

NRCS will look at past aerial photos and a soil map of the site. Quite often, USDA may make the determination right in the office. NRCS must often make site visits to verify findings. Site visits will add time to the process as field determinations may only be made when conditions are favorable.

Once NRCS makes the determination, a letter and map will be issued explaining the decision making process USDA followed. If the decision is adverse, and you disagree, you will have an opportunity to appeal and provide information that may not have been considered.



Conservation Information on Farmer.gov

Login to manage conservation activities and request assistance

A farmers.gov account gives producers one place to do business with USDA's Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, including the ability to manage their conservation activities and request assistance. These features join several others already available through the farmers.gov authenticated site, including the ability to view farm loan information, farm records, maps and common land units. As more content and capabilities are added, farmers.gov is quickly becoming the online hub for USDA customers to find resources, submit applications and assistance requests, and make connections.

The Conservation tab on the farmers.gov portal enables individual producers to:

- View, upload, download and e-sign documents;
- Request conservation assistance;
- Request financial assistance, including submitting a program application
- View and request application details
- Reference technical terms and submit questions;
- Access information on current and past conservation practices;
- Report practice completion and request practice certification
- View detailed information on all previous and ongoing contracts, including the amount of cost- share assistance received and anticipated; and
- Switch profiles to access and do business for your power of attorneys, business entities, and signature authorities
- View recent financial activity (last 180 days) on Finance Home Page
- View NRCS disbursement summary, including pending and paid disbursements
- Import Shape and Geojson files for conservation assistance and financial assistance request maps



Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox and Microsoft Edge are the recommended browsers to access the feature.

How to Access

To access conservation information, visit farmers.gov and sign in to the site's authenticated portal, available on the menu at the top right of the site. To access, you will need a Level 2 USDA eAuthentication account.

If you do not have a Level 2 USDA eAuthentication account, sign up for one today. This account gets you access to your loan information and other self-service features available through the farmers.gov portal. To enroll, you will need to:

1. Contact your local service center to ensure you have a USDA customer record in Business Partner with a correct email address.
2. Go to the eAuth Account Registration page.
3. Select "Customer" on the registration page.
4. Enter your standard email address. You will receive an email from eAuth asking you to confirm your email address. Click the "Continue Registration" link in this email to continue the registration process.
5. Complete identity verification by using the online self-service identity verification method or by visiting a local registration authority at a USDA service center office. A local registration authority is a USDA employee who verifies the identity of a customer in-person using their official government-issued photo ID.
6. You're ready to login!



Get the News First!

Here's What You Need to Know

Sign up for email updates on Gov Delivery to stay informed about NRCS Kentucky programs, funding opportunities and news.



The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Kentucky offers a free instant electronic subscription service through Gov Delivery. Agricultural producers, conservation partners, and others interested in keeping up-to-date on important NRCS program deadlines and information are encouraged to sign up.

You can choose to receive notifications by email or text message when new information becomes available about any state or national NRCS topic you choose. If you sign up for these automatic updates, you will only receive notifications you request and you may unsubscribe at any time.

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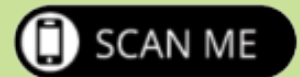
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1. **Go to the link below or scan the QR code with your phone.**

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDAFARMERS/subscriber/new?qsp=USDAFARMERS_33

You may also sign up via the NRCS Kentucky website at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-by-state/kentucky> and click the Gov Delivery icon (red envelope).

2. **Enter the email address and/or phone number** where you want the notifications to be sent and select which state and/or national topics you would like to receive, then click "Submit."
3. **Click the "subscriber preferences" link** to change your email address, modify



NRCS Financial Assistance Programs Crosswalk

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers financial and technical assistance programs for agricultural producers and private land owners across Kentucky. NRCS programs are designed to improve and conserve natural resources such as soil, water, air, plants, animals and energy. This chart provides a brief crosswalk of NRCS conservation programs available in Kentucky. To learn more and to apply for assistance, contact your local NRCS Field Office.



	EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program)	EQIP-CIC (Environmental Quality Incentives Program-Conservation Incentives Contract)	CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program)	ACEP-ALE (Agricultural Conservation Easement Program-Agricultural Land Easements)	ACEP-WRE (Agricultural Conservation Easement Program-Wetlands Reserve Easements)	RCPP (Regional Conservation Partnership Program)
Duration	1-10 years	5 years	5 years	Perpetual	Perpetual, 30-year easement, 30-year contract	5 years (with possible extension to 6 years)
Payments For:	Management, structural and vegetative practices	Limited list of management practices (and any supporting practices)	Management, structural and vegetative practices and enhancements	Up to 50% purchase of the easement.	Purchase of the easement and possible restoration costs.	Both NRCS and project partners provide funding and expertise to increase conservation implementation through public/private partnerships.
Payment Timing:	Upon completion of practice	Management practices annually after October 1 and supporting practices as installed.	One payment per year after October 1.	Upon closing on deed	Upon closing on deed and completion of restoration activities.	Varies
Payment Limit:	\$450,000, \$900,000 (General Partnership and Joint Venture), No payment limitation for Tribes.	\$200,000, \$400,000 (General Partnership and Joint Venture), No payment limitation for Tribes.	\$200,000, \$400,000 (General Partnership and Joint Venture), No payment limitation for Tribes.	Dependent on appraisal	30-year contract is 75% deed value and restoration activities.	Payment limits may vary from year to year; minimum and maximum payments are established in the RCPP funding opportunity announcement.
Extent of Coverage:	Client choice	Client choice	Entire operation (Separate contracts for Ag and Forestry operations)	Client Choice	Client Choice	RCPP projects may vary in size and scope and address the lead partner's resource concerns and natural resource priorities.
Ideal Participants:	New or existing clients with resource concerns they would like to address. May be implementing a single practice to address a single resource concern or multiple practices to address multiple resource concerns.	People who have worked with NRCS before (not required) and have done a good job with management practices in the past. Past EQIP clients that exceeded their payment limit. Clients who are willing to address priority resource concerns in high priority areas. They may have installed structural and management practices in the past and are willing to take adopted management to the higher level of conservation or those who wish to adopt new management (and supporting structural practices).	Generally someone who has worked with NRCS with few resource concerns and/or have installed the majority of practices they are willing to adopt. This program is for clients who are willing to take their existing stewardship to higher levels of conservation.	Clients who are passionate about their land staying in agriculture or an undeveloped condition or as working lands. Clients must work through a third party land trust to secure the easement.	Clients who would like to restore their agricultural land back to wetland conditions and preserve habitat values for those lands.	Partners that offer value-added contributions to expand our collective ability to address on-farm, watershed, and regional natural resource concerns.

