

Becoming a NRCS TSP?

Step 1: Make a Plan

Before you apply to become a TSP, you must determine the services you want to offer NRCS program participants and whether you have the necessary skills, abilities, licenses, certifications, and other qualifications to provide services based on Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) standards and specifications as well as certification criteria. You will also need to investigate any state laws which may apply to the activities and practices for which you wish to become certified.

It is highly encouraged to contact your state TSP coordinator to gain an understanding of what types of assistance their program participants need to help address the resource concerns on their property. The state coordinators have a wealth of knowledge to help you along this journey of becoming a TSP. A list of state coordinators can be found here: (Add the pdf attached).

[NRCS Practice and Conservation Activity List and Certification Criteria-FY 2023 \(909.6 KB\)](#)

Once you have evaluated your own qualifications to become a TSP, you must follow the steps outlined here. The TSP certification process includes required training and verification of education, knowledge, skills and abilities. Visit the [Additional Resources page](#) for links to NRCS Registry User Guides and Videos.

Step 2: Create Your USDA Verified Login.gov Account

New Customers:

To get started becoming a TSP, individuals will need to sign up for a verified USDA Login.gov (formerly eAuthentication account or Level 2).

Please be prepared to provide information as follows:

1. Email address

- We recommend a personal email address that you'll always be able to access rather than a work email address.
- If you already have an account with Login.gov with that email address, we'll send you an email to let you know how you can reset your password and access the account.

2. Secure password

- Passwords must be at least 12 characters and should not include commonly used words or phrases.

3. One or more [authentication methods](#) such as:

- **More secure**
 - Face or touch unlock
 - Security key
 - Authentication application
 - Federal government employee or military identification (PIV/CAC)
- **Less secure**
 - Text/voice message
 - Backup codes

Creating your Login.gov Account

Follow these steps to create your Login.gov account.

1. Enter your email address at https://secure.login.gov/sign_up/enter_email to begin.

Choose an email address that you'll always be able to access. Once your account is created, you can add an additional email address, such as a work email or alternate personal address, to access your account.

2. Click the **"Submit"** button.
3. Check your email for a message from Login.gov.
4. Click the **"Confirm your email address"** button in the message. This will take you back to the Login.gov website.
5. Create your Login.gov password.
 - To help prevent identity theft, consider strengthening your password by using:
 - Unique phrases that only you recognize
 - Multiple words with spaces to get to 12 characters
 - Numbers and special characters
 - Your password must have 12 or more characters and avoid combinations such as:
 - Common phrases or repeated characters, like abc or 111
 - Parts of your email address or personal dates, like your birthday

- The same password, or parts of it, that you use for other accounts, such as your bank account or email
6. Set up a second layer of security.

As an added layer of protection, Login.gov requires you set up an authentication method to keep your account secure. This is referred to as multi-factor authentication (MFA).

We encourage you to have more than one authentication method on your account. You can choose from several authentication options.

More secure:

- Security key
- Face or touch unlock
- Authentication application
- PIV or CAC card for federal government employees or military

Less secure:

- Text message
- Phone call
- Backup codes

[Learn more about each authentication option](#) to choose the one that is right for you.

7. **Success!** Once you have authenticated, you have created your Login.gov account.

You will be taken to your Login.gov account page or the government agency you are trying to access. You can add additional authentication methods, email addresses or update your information on the Login.gov account page.

Step 3: Verify your Identity – Authentication Methods

Login.gov can verify your identity using personal information you submit such as your SSN, address, phone and approved U.S. based state issued photo ID. Alternative methods for identity verification are also available including USDA Local Regulation Authorities (LRAs).

Option #1: On-Line

Requirements for identity verification

1. Your State-Issued ID. You can upload a photo of your ID by phone or by computer. [Don't have a state issued ID?](#)
2. Social Security number
3. Your phone number
 - If we can't verify your phone number, you can verify by mail instead which takes approximately 3-7 business days.

If you are missing any of this information, please contact the government agency you are trying to access.

Steps for identity verification and securing your account

1. On the "We need to verify your identity" page, read the requirements and, if you agree, check the box next to the Login.gov consent statement.
 - Click "Continue"
2. Next, upload your State-Issued ID.
 - Note: If you began the identity verification process on your computer, you have the option to switch and use your phone to upload images.

Continue by computer and upload images

- Upload an image of the FRONT of your state-issued ID by clicking on "Choose File."
 - Select the file from your computer
- Upload an image of the BACK of your state-issued ID by clicking on "Choose File."
 - Select the file from your computer
 - Click continue

Switch from computer to phone to upload images

- Enter your phone number.
 - Choose a phone number where you can receive SMS/Text messages and click "Continue."
- Click on the link sent to your phone.
- You will see options to either "take a photo" or "upload a photo."
 - Upload an image of the FRONT of your ID from your phone's photo gallery or take an image of the front of your ID
 - Upload an image of the BACK of your ID from your phone's photo gallery or take an image of the back of your ID
- Return to computer to complete the process

Continue by phone and upload images

- You will see a screen with 'front' and 'back' in large squares and an option to either "take a photo" or "upload a photo."
 - Upload an image of the FRONT of your ID from your phone's photo gallery or take an image of the front of your ID
 - Upload an image of the BACK of your ID from your phone's photo gallery or take an image of the back of your ID
 - Click "Continue"
3. Enter your social security number and click "Continue";
 4. Verify the information you have submitted so far is correct and click "Continue";
 5. Enter your primary phone number. This is the last step for identity verification.
 - If you do not have a U.S. phone number or cannot verify by phone, click on "Verify your address by mail instead". You will have to wait to receive a letter in the mail and then follow the instructions to enter the code.
 6. Once your identity is verified, you need to encrypt your account. Re-enter your Login.gov password. Click "Continue";
 7. Take note of your personal key and keep it safe. You'll need to enter your personal key immediately on the next page. Click "Continue".

Once the process is complete, click "Agree and Continue" to be redirected back to your Login.gov account page or the agency you are trying to access.

Option #2: Verify in Person – Visit a Local Registration Authority

Once you complete the steps on Login.gov, we'll email you a barcode and a **deadline** to go to the nearest Local Registration Authority (LRA) at a USDA Service Center. You will need to have this barcode and your Driver's License available at your verification appointment.

You can print the email or show the email from your mobile device. If you go to the Post Office after the deadline, your information will not be saved and you will need to restart the process.

Bring the same ID you used on Login.gov. Your ID must not be expired. At this time, only the following state-issued identification is accepted:

- Driver's license from all 50 states, the District of Columbia (DC), and other US territories (Guam, US Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Mariana Islands and Puerto Rico)
- A non-driver's license state-issued ID card
 - This is an identity document issued by the state, the District of Columbia (DC), or US territory that asserts identity but does not give driving privileges.

NOTE: If you are going to visit a Local Registration Authority (LRA) at a USDA Service Center office to validate your identity, please make an appointment. Most LRAs are located at a USDA Service Center. Click on [Find a Local Registration Authority](#) to locate one closest to you.

Current eAuth customer?

If you are already a USDA customer (a Technical Service Provider, for example), linking your eAuth account to the new Login.gov account is necessary. Instructions are below to help you through that process.

How does linking a Login.gov account to eAuth work?

To use your Login.gov account with USDA, it must go through a one-time process to link with eAuth. Once it is linked, you can use it to access USDA protected resources. *NOTE: Linking to an existing eAuth account will help to retain your relationship with applications you have accessed.*

1. Click the [Login.gov](#) login option.
2. You will be taken to the Login.gov website, where you will **log in with your existing Login.gov account** or **create a new Login.gov account**.
3. After logging in or creating the new account, you will be returned to eAuth to link your Login.gov account to eAuth.

The linking process will vary depending on:

- If the email address on the Login.gov account is the same email address as an eAuth account in the system.
 - If you choose to link to an existing eAuth account.
 - If you choose not to link to an existing eAuth account.
 - If the email address on the Login.gov account is the same email address as *multiple* eAuth accounts in the system.
1. If the email address on the **Login.gov account is using the same email address as an eAuth account**, you will link automatically. You are informed ***the Login.gov account must be used for ALL future logins with USDA***, and asked if you want to continue with the link to Login.gov by selecting **Yes**. You will be taken to the website or application.
 2. If you don't have an eAuth account in the system with the same email address as the Login.gov account, eAuth will ask if you want to use an **existing eAuth account to link with Login.gov or continue without linking to an existing eAuth account?**
 3. You will be informed ***the Login.gov account must be used for ALL future logins with USDA***, then asked if you want to continue with the link to Login.gov by selecting **Yes**.
 4. You will be taken to the website or application.

Note: If you have *multiple eAuth accounts in the system matching the Login.gov email address*, you will be notified multiple accounts were found. You will need to select the User ID from the list for the eAuth account you want to link with Login.gov. You will be prompted to log in with the selected User ID and password for the eAuth account to allow the link to continue.

For additional information or support linking your existing eAuth account to Login.gov, visit [eAuthentication \(usda.gov\)](https://www.eauth.usda.gov) Click on Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) here: <https://www.eauth.usda.gov/eauth/b/usda/faq>. You can also call the 24-hour Helpdesk at 844-875-6446.

How can we help?

Search



[Get started with Login.gov](#)

Create your account. Learn about authentication options and more account features.



[Trouble signing in?](#)

Forgot your password? Locked out of your account? We'll help you resolve access issues.



[Manage your account](#)

Change your account settings including your password, phone number, email, and more.



[Help with specific agencies](#)

Get help with Trusted Traveler Programs (TTP) and SAM.gov.



[Verify your identity](#)

Learn about options for verifying your identity.

Step 4: Logging into NRCS Registry

NRCS uses an online system called NRCS Registry to accept, approve and manage TSP applications and certifications. This system will track a TSPs Licenses, trainings, work experience, and all other items required for certification.

Follow these steps:

- Click the link "NRCS Registry" found below under Additional Information and use your new or linked Login.gov User Name and password.
- Complete the NRCS Registry Profile Tabs
 - Contact Information, Licenses/Certifications, Education, Training, Work Experience, Samples of Work, Knowledge*, Planning Tools Proficiency*, References, Familiarity*, and Languages/Specialty Areas.

NOTE: *This information is not required to meet the certification criteria, but may be of interest to a potential client.

- Complete/Start the NRCS Registry TSP Application for the following:
 - Identify the practices (technical services) and locations you wish to be certified in.
 - Select a Certification Option
 - Certification, Education and Experience,
 - Provide qualifications that demonstrate you are meeting the criteria within the option you selected. Qualifications may include Education, Work Experience, Training, Licenses/Certifications, and Sample Plans or Designs.

NOTE: ONLY select the Qualifications to Satisfy the Criterion for the certification option you have chosen. There may be more listed, but only select the ones listed in the **Select** section. Refer to the User Guide listed in Additional Documents for more detailed instructions.

- Review your application and profile information before you begin the steps to sign your certification agreement.
- Signing your certification agreement has multiple steps. To review the TSP Certification Agreement terms and condition, click on the TSP Certification Agreement
- Once you sign the certification agreement you must submit your application for NRCS review.

Note: To become a certified TSP eligible to provide technical services, an applicant must meet all certification criteria for the option chosen. The three links above under Step 1 "Make a Plan", provide access to look up certification options and criteria for practices, conservation activities and areas of technical service. The applicant also must abide by all state, local and tribal laws and must possess the required licenses or certifications outlined in criteria.

For additional information on how to complete your NRCS Registry, visit the User Guides for TSP Certification or review the training videos found under Additional Documents.

Step 5: TSP Training Requirements – Requesting an AgLearn Account

Training is a critical component of the TSP certification process. NRCS offers an expansive list of training opportunities for new TSP applicants and certified TSPs. NRCS offers courses through the Agricultural Learning Service (AgLearn) and the USDA Science and Technology Library.

To register for an AgLearn account:

1. Obtain a Verified Login.gov account;
2. [Log into NRCS Registry](#) and start an application;
3. Contact your state TSP point of contact [\(Add pdf link here\)](#) to request an AgLearn account;
4. Complete the required “Safeguarding PII Fact Sheet” provided by your state contact;

[Safeguarding PII Fact Sheet \(155.59 KB\)](#)

5. Once you have been notified your AgLearn account has been created, you may log into AgLearn and enroll in courses required for certification. *This process may take up to 14 business days to complete.*

[Visit the AgLearn website.](#)

All TSP applicants seeking TSP certification to provide technical services to eligible NRCS program participants must also complete the TSP Orientation and Conservation Planning Course (Course ID#NRCS-NEDC-000191) and the Introduction to Field Office Technical Guide (Course ID# NRCS-NEDC-000149).

STEP 6: Obtaining TSP Certification

Upon submission of your application NRCS has 60 days to review the information provided, verify your credentials and samples of work and make a decision on your application. Upon approval you will be certified for a period of three years and your information will be added to the NRCS Registry Find a TSP look up.

If your application is deferred, you will receive a notice detailing the issues that caused the deferment and the steps needed to address the issues. You will have the option to resubmit the application for review after you address the issues.

Business Registrations for Technical Service Providers

Businesses are defined as private businesses, American Indian tribes, non-profit organizations, and public agencies. A business profile and application must be created and maintained by an Official Business Representative (OBR) or the individual authorized by the business to make decisions on its behalf. The OBR must apply for and maintain a USDA Verified **Login.gov** account, but the OBR does not need to be a certified TSP. In order for the business to apply and become certified, the business must have at least one certified TSP always associated with the business. The OBR must be able to legally sign the Certification Agreement on behalf of the business. Certified businesses must maintain a current certification agreement and are posted on the NRCS Registry Find a TSP look up.

Note: A business entity cannot register for a USDA eAuth account. Only individuals known as the Official Business Representative can register for a Verified eAuth account.

For Official Business Representatives Who Do Not Plan to Work as a TSP:

- [Log into NRCS Registry](#)
- Click the New Business Profile Tab to create a business profile
- Follow the business application instructions in the Business/Agency Profile. You can submit the application from the Business/Agency Profile screen by clicking the Sign Agreement button only once.

For Official Business Representatives Who Plan to Work as TSPs:

- [Log into NRCS Registry](#)
- Follow the process above to become a TSP first
- Complete the business registration
- Navigate to the TSP Associations sub tab and click Add TSP following the rest of the directions

Note: For detailed directions, visit the User Guide for Business Certification found under "Additional Resources"