

News Release

Natural Resources
Conservation Service

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USDA is Now Accepting Applications For The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

Jackson, Miss – September 25, 2023- The United States Department of Agricultural Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) is now accepting applications for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). The deadline to be considered for **Fiscal Year 2024 funding will be October 27, 2023.**

This program consists of two components: The Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) option and the Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) option. The ALE assists conservation organizations in preventing the conversion of productive working lands to non-agricultural uses and maximizes the protection of land devoted to food production. The WRE option restores, protects, and enhances enrolled wetlands and improves wildlife habitat. Eligible WRE lands include farmed or prior-converted wetlands that can be successfully and cost-effectively restored.

"It is imperative we educate and promote ACEP to the landowners of Mississippi as we are proud to provide this service throughout the state," said State Conservationist Kurt Readus. "We invite any interested applicant to visit with us to learn more about the easement programs that we at USDA-NRCS can offer."

Landowners interested in an ALE should contact local land trusts to develop partnerships for land easements. Applications will be accepted from eligible entities for potential ALE projects.

Landowners interested in WRE should apply at their local field office by submitting a Conservation Program Application (NRCS-CPA-1200). Applications will be included in all eligible fund pools for which they qualify including available Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership (WREP) funding.

Interested landowners are encouraged to sign up for a free Easement Landowner Workshop at <https://lowerdelta.org/discover/workshops/>. Provided in partnership with Mississippi's Lower Delta Partnership, the workshops are throughout the central portion of the state at the following locations:

10:00 am October 3rd in Cleveland, MS,
10:00 am October 4th in Onward, MS, and
11:00 pm October 5th in Jackson, MS.

Applications are accepted year-round and can be obtained anytime at your [local field office](#) or available online at www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted. The initial application deadline for consideration in FY23 is **October 27, 2023.**

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