



# News Release

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## USDA/NRCS LOUISIANA ANNOUNCES FISCAL YEAR 2024 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SIGNUP BATCHING DATE

**October 10, 2023** - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is making more than \$3 billion in funding available for agricultural producers and forest landowners nationwide to participate in voluntary conservation programs and adopt climate-smart practices in fiscal year 2024 as part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda.

Louisiana USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is announcing the Fiscal Year 2024 Financial Assistance Programs signup batching date of November 17, 2023. Applicable programs include:

- [Conservation Stewardship Program \(CSP\)](#)
- [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#)
- [EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts \(CIC\)](#)

[CSP](#): assists agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources concerns. Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance—the higher the performance, the higher the payment. NOTE: unfunded FY2024 CSP-Renewals will be automatically deferred to the FY2024 General CSP sign-up.

[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. Initiatives include Climate Smart Ag, High Tunnel, Longleaf Pine, Beginning Farmers, On Farm Energy, Organic, Socially Disadvantaged Farmers, Strikeforce, Urban and Working Lands for Wildlife – Gopher Tortoise.

[EQIP - CIC](#): provides financial assistance to address priority resource concerns, including sequestering carbon and improving soil health in high-priority areas. Through these contracts, NRCS works with producers to strengthen the quality and condition of natural resources on their operations using management practices that target resource concerns including degraded soil condition and soil erosion. The focus within Louisiana for CIC is to increase the adoption of Cover Crops, and Residue and Tillage Management on Cropland. Conservation Incentive Contracts last five years.

Inflation Reduction Act: This initial sign-up will include [Inflation Reduction Act \(IRA\)](#) funded opportunities for all CSP and EQIP programs. Inflation Reduction Act applications will be accepted state-wide and must include [Climate Smart Agricultural and Forestry \(CSAF\)](#) activities. Supporting

practices or activities may be requested to include in the IRA application but will only be included in a conservation plan if they facilitate a CSAF practice.

Applications are accepted on a continuous basis; however, NRCS selects applications for funding periodically throughout batching periods with specific cutoff dates. The first cutoff date is **November 17, 2023**. Applications received after this date will be held and considered for subsequent funding announcements as available funds permit (see ACT NOW exception below).

ACT NOW process for some EQIP funding pools. Through ACT NOW, NRCS can immediately approve and obligate a ranked application when an eligible application meets or exceeds a determined minimum ranking score.

For more information about Louisiana NRCS and Programmatic initiatives, priorities and assessment/ranking criteria, visit online at [Louisiana NRCS](#) Additionally, visit your local USDA Service Center to determine eligibility; applicants are not eligible for USDA programs until they have ensured all Farm Bill eligibility requirements have been met. You can locate your local Service Center at [USDA Service Center Locator](#).