

Natural Disaster Recovery Assistance



After Disaster Strikes

From floods to drought, fire or hurricanes, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides disaster recovery assistance to farmers, ranchers, landowners and communities through a variety of conservation programs.

NRCS offers technical and financial assistance to help producers recover from natural disasters like floods, hurricanes, wildfires and drought, and also assists communities with post disaster restoration projects, through conservation programs, primarily including the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#) and the [Emergency Watershed Protection Program \(EWP\)](#).

Disaster Resources are Available

EQIP provides agricultural producers with financial resources and one on-one help to plan and implement improvements on the land, including financial assistance to repair and prevent the excessive soil erosion caused by natural disasters. These practices include stream bank restoration, grassed waterways and buffers. NRCS conservation practices can help prevent erosion, support disaster recovery and repair, and can help mitigate loss from future natural disasters. Assistance may also be available for emergency animal mortality disposal from natural disasters and other causes.

EWP Assistance

EWP helps communities with restoration after disaster strikes. EWP provides financial and technical assistance for projects where the damage caused in the aftermath of a disaster, poses an imminent threat to life, property or both.

Declaring Natural Disasters

EWP does not require a disaster declaration by federal or state government officials for program assistance to begin. The NRCS State Conservationist can declare a local watershed emergency and initiate EWP assistance in cooperation with an eligible sponsor.

Types of Natural Disasters

NRCS disaster assistance and emergency assistance programs help agricultural producers and communities recover from losses or damages to natural resources, crop land, infrastructure and livestock, and to build long-term resilience to disasters and emergencies.

Below are weather-related and geological disasters with the resource concerns related to the disaster type.

- Weather disasters – includes extreme drought, flood, blizzard, hurricane and typhoon, tornado, lightening and ice. Resource concerns related to weather disasters include:
 - Mud slides
 - Fire
 - Erosion
 - Floods
 - Poor water quality
- Geological disasters include volcano, earthquake, and tsunami. Resource concerns related to geologic disasters, include:
 - Loss of land
 - Change in hydrology

- Degraded air quality
- Acid rain
- Saltwater intrusion

How to Address Resource Concerns

Through EQIP, any conservation practice that is needed to address a priority resource may be eligible. This could include adding new practices to your operation or repairing a failed practice, like flood damaged fencing, from a previous EQIP contract. In some cases, a new contract is not required. Producers may be able to add a practice to your existing EQIP contract through a modification. However, conservation practices included in the EQIP disaster funding are tailored to the type of disaster.

In addition, there is no prescribed list of construction practices for EWP. Each case is investigated to determine the project's requirements. All projects must reduce threats to life and property, be economically, environmentally, and socially sound, and designed to NRCS engineering standards.





How to Build Resiliency and Mitigate Damages

NRCS offers free technical assistance and some financial assistance to plan and implement conservation practices on farms, ranches and working forests impacted by natural disasters.

Through Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA), agricultural producers can work with NRCS to develop a conservation plan that incorporates suggested conservation practices that can help producers and communities address significant challenges created by natural disasters.

Producers can also apply for **financial assistance** to receive help with installing the conservation practices outlined in their conservation plan.

In addition, NRCS offers financial assistance programs that are not specific to disaster and emergency assistance, that can still help restore working landscapes impacted by natural disasters. These financial assistance programs include:

- The Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA), where available, helps agricultural producers manage financial risk through diversification, marketing or natural resource conservation practices, such as animal waste management facilities, irrigation system efficiency improvements, fencing, water supply development, riparian protection and wildlife habitat enhancement.

- AMA is limited to the following states: Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia and Wyoming.
- The Conservation Stewardship Program offers technical and financial assistance to help agricultural producers and forest landowners take their conservation efforts to the next level by adopting additional conservation activities and maintaining their baseline level of conservation.
- The Resource Conservation Partnership Program co-invests with partners to implement projects that demonstrate innovative solutions to conservation challenges and provide measurable improvements and outcomes tied to the resource concerns they seek to address.

For More Information

Producers can contact their local NRCS office or go to www.nrcs.usda.gov.

