

440-CPM, PART 512 – SUBPART G – Conservation Program Payments

512.67 Partial and Advance Payments

C. Advance Payments

The functionality to provide advance payment through ProTracts is under development. States are not authorized to offer advance payment until the release of this feature through ProTracts and Fund Manager.

(1) EQIP participants who self-certify as belonging to a historically underserved group are eligible to receive a payment advance to assist them in completing conservation practices included in an approved CPC. Advance payment may only be provided for anticipated “out-of-pocket” costs associated with purchasing materials, supplies, equipment, and services required for practice installation and that are readily available. Advance payment requests cannot exceed 30 percent of the estimated payment a participant is scheduled to receive for a contract item. Such requests will only cover immediate needs of the CPC participant. In order to determine the extent of the payment advance item, the schedule practice for which the advance is needed must have an approved design prior to approval of the advance payment.

(2) FNM will provide accounting system reports on request, but not less than quarterly, showing the status of advance payments. Reports will be provided to staff for follow-up with the participant. Participants that fail to complete their conservation practice within a reasonable time, as determined by the STC, may be required to refund the advance payment.

(a) Maine Financial Management staff will provide a monthly report to the ASTC/Programs showing the status of contracts for which an advance payment has been made. The ASTC/Programs, or delegated staff, will notify District Conservationists of practices for which advance payments have been made, but not yet completed within a reasonable time, as determined by the STC.

(i) The Maine State Conservationist has determined that a reasonable time to complete practices for which advance payments have been made is within 30 days of the disbursement of the advance payment.

(ii) The NRCS Field Office staff will type the following statement in the “Advance Justification” narrative text box in the ProTracts Advance Payment screen:

“The *reasonable amount of time* for completing the practice implementation is set at 30 calendar days from the disbursement of the advance payment. Contact NRCS Service Center office if there will be a delay in meeting this deadline.”

440-CPM, PART 512 – SUBPART G – Conservation Program Payments

- (b) The District Conservationist is authorized to approve one 30 calendar day extension to the initial practice implementation deadline if it is determined that the delay is due to a meritorious reason. A contract review will be performed to document the nature of the delay in meeting the initial 30 day deadline.
 - (i) Meritorious reasons include, but are not limited to, delays due to severe weather conditions, health or financial hardship, availability of contractor, etc. Such reasons must be documented and verified by the District Conservationist in the contract review.
 - (ii) Contract reviews are completed electronically in the ProTracts system. A copy of the review may be printed and provided to the participant as a record of the practice completion deadline extension, or the denial of an extension.
 - (iii) If an extension is granted by the District Conservationist, the Field Office staff will notify both the NRCS ASTC/Programs and the NRCS Financial Manager of the electronic program review and the practice implementation deadline extension.
 - (iv) If an extension is denied, the District Conservationists will document the situation in an electronic contract review in the ProTracts system and report the delay to the ASTC/Programs.
 - (v) The ASTC/Programs will recommend action to the State Conservationist regarding the refund of the advance payment.
- (c) Participants that fail to complete their conservation practice by the *extended* deadline, as documented on the CPA-13 contract review, may be required to refund the advance payment. Requests for subsequent extensions to the practice implementation deadline must be submitted to the ASTC/Programs for review.