

## Technical Service Provider (TSP) Step-by-Step Process for Program Participants

1. The conservation planner meets with the program participant and discusses technical service alternatives for completing the practices that will be required in the conservation contract. The planner must discuss the processes and topics below with the participant during the planning process.
2. The participant notifies the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that they want to use a TSP for the practice(s).
  - a. The producer is provided with a packet of the following information:
    1. The NRCS Notice to Participate Regarding TSP Assistance.
    2. How to use a Technical Service Provider Fact Sheet.
    3. Authorization for Release of Information to the Technical Service Provider is to be completed by the program participant and returned to the NRCS.
    4. Producer Roles and Responsibility Fact Sheet.
    5. Selecting a TSP Guide Sheet.
    6. Considerations in Selecting a Contractor Guide Sheet.
  - b. The participant interviews and selects a certified/approved TSP from the TechReg Web site at <http://techreg.usda.gov>:
    1. Participants will not be reimbursed if the TSP is not qualified for the specific category and the specific practice, nor reimbursed more than the Technical Service Payment Rates (TSPR).
  - c. The participant contacts the selected provider and makes arrangements for service.
  - d. The participant completes and submits the following to the field office:
    1. Authorization for Release of Information to Technical Service Provider.
  - e. There will be no reimbursement for work completed by a TSP prior to the signing of an Environmental Quality Incentives Program contract.
3. Subject to availability of funds
  - a. The participant signs the application or contract modification for TSP services, with final approval by the NRCS. The TSP funds are approved when the NRCS signs the contact or modification.
  - b. The NRCS will notify the participant when final approval is authorized. Work may not be started prior to the NRCS approval of the contract or contract modification.
4. The participant hires the TSP and develops a contract or agreement with the TSP for the services to be provided, payments, and schedule for completion. It is up to the participant to negotiate the rate that the TSP charges, as well as, establishing when and how the payment will be made to the TSP. The participant works with the TSP to assure that the work will be completed within one year of the contract or modification approval date.

5. The conservation planner, the participant, and the TSP must participate in a pre-design meeting. The participant is responsible for ensuring that all participants are aware of the meeting outcomes. The pre-design meeting will cover the topics in the pre-design meeting checklist.
6. The participant works with the TSP to complete the design. A preconstruction meeting must be held with the NRCS, participant, TSP, and contractor prior to construction. The preconstruction meeting will cover the topics in the preconstruction checklist.
7. The TSP provides copies of all required documentation as listed in the South Dakota Statement of Work and provides invoices for the services provided to the participant.
  - a. The amount paid will be the actual bills not to exceed the TSPR in the contract.
  - b. If the TSP charges more than the TSPR, it is the participant's responsibility to pay the difference.
8. The participant submits the required documentation and the invoice to the NRCS for payment.
9. The NRCS reviews the documentation and enters progress into the Performance Results System. If documentation is complete, the NRCS processes and makes a one-time payment to the participant.