



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

South Dakota
Fact Sheet

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Becoming a Technical Service Provider

What are technical service providers?

Technical Service Providers (TSPs) are conservation professionals from the private sector, non-profit organizations, and public agencies that can provide direct technical assistance and deliver conservation services to landowners and others on behalf of USDA. TSPs can plan, design, install, and certify conservation practices.

Certification

A certification process is in place to evaluate and approve individuals, entities, and public agencies as TSPs.

To qualify for certification an individual must:

1. Have the technical training, education, or experience to perform the level of technical assistance for which certification is sought;
2. Meet all applicable licensing or similar qualification standards established by state law;
3. Demonstrate, through documentation of training or experience, familiarity with NRCS specifications as set forth in applicable NRCS manuals for the planning and application of specific conservation practices and management systems for which certification is sought; and
4. Not be decertified in any state at the time of application for certification.

In order to be considered for certification as a TSP, an individual must:

1. Submit an application for certification to NRCS; or
2. Request certification through a recommending organization; or
3. Request certification through an application submitted by a private-sector entity or public agency.

Applications and a list of recommending organizations may be found online at <http://techreg.usda.gov> or at the local NRCS field office. NRCS conservationists will also be able to assign you a user i.d. and password for logging onto the TechReg website.

If all requirements for certification are met, NRCS will:

1. Enter into a certification agreement and certify the applicant as qualified to provide technical services for a specific category of conservation practices;
2. Place the applicant on the list of approved TSPs when certified; and
3. Make available to the public the list of approved TSPs.

Training

Training is essential to the successful implementation of the certification process. Individuals interested in becoming certified are responsible for obtaining the training they need to become certified, for keeping their own training records current, and for providing documentation for certification purposes on the training they have received. Costs associated with becoming a TSP, as well as maintaining or renewing certification, are the responsibility of the individual seeking certification.

TSPs are certified for a three-year period and may have their certification renewed for subsequent time periods.

Quality Assurance

All services provided by TSPs must meet NRCS standards and specifications, and NRCS will only provide payment for those services that do. The standards and specifications are available at all NRCS field offices or at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/>.

NRCS will review, in consultation with the Farm Service Agency (FSA), the quality of services provided by TSPs.

TSPs will also assume all legal responsibility for the quality of work they provide. However, the producer is responsible for complying with the program contract or agreement, which includes meeting USDA technical standards and specifications.

Reimbursement

TSPs hired by a producer will be reimbursed by the producer from funds obtained through NRCS conservation programs. Not-to-exceed levels of payment for each conservation practice will be determined by NRCS. Payment will only be provided to a producer for technical services obtained from a TSP that has been certified by NRCS to provide those services.

TSPs may also enter into an agreement or contract with NRCS directly. Through cooperative or contribution agreements, NRCS may “bundle” like practices and contract with a TSP to complete these practices for contracts across the state.