

Part 500 – Introduction

§IA500.3 NRCS Engineering Services

A. NRCS performs engineering services to plan, design, and install conservation practices in accordance with conservation plans, District priorities, project measure plans, and/or other plans that are developed to further the mission of the agency and treat resource concerns. Technical assistance may be provided to individual landowners, groups of landowners, or to units of government.

(1) Technical Assistance to Individual Landowners

Technical assistance to individual landowners must be provided on those practices where NRCS standards are available. Technical assistance is normally limited to Job Approval Classes I through V. Technical assistance on more complex jobs may be provided by the NRCS to the extent that personnel services are available from all required NRCS organizational levels.

(2) Technical Assistance to Groups of Landowners

Technical assistance to groups of landowners will be provided as described in (1) for individual landowners.

(3) Technical Assistance to Individual Landowners in Urban Areas

Technical assistance to individual landowners in urban areas must be limited to Conservation District priorities.

(4) Technical Assistance to State and Local Units of Government

Policy for providing assistance to state and local units of government is presented in Title 440, General Manual, Part 401.

B. NRCS engineering assistance can best be used where:

- (1) Engineering costs are high in relation to total project costs.
- (2) The landowner needs added incentive to apply the practice.
- (3) Private engineers are not available or not interested.
- (4) The project meets goals and objectives set in the Conservation District's Plan of Operations.
- (5) The landowner has surveys, maps, geologic investigations, or designs furnished by private engineers or will furnish personnel and equipment to assist with the work.
- (6) NRCS has adequate resources available to do the work.

C. Part 505 provides policy on the use of non-NRCS engineering services.

§IA500.4 Area Engineer Responsibilities

- A. The Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations, ASTC (FO), with the concurrence of the State Conservation Engineer, will name one engineer in the area to provide engineering leadership to all programs.
- B. This engineer must be responsible for the quality of all engineering work in the area. Work will be done in accordance with assignments made by the ASTC (FO) or designated representative.
- C. This engineer's duties will include:
 - (1) Provide engineering and engineering management guidance to the ASTC (FO).
 - (2) Take leadership in preparing area engineering policy and procedures.
 - (3) Coordinate the quality assurance reviews of engineering work.
 - (4) Evaluate engineering training needs.
 - (5) Develop and implement an engineering training program in the area.
 - (6) Assign all engineering job approval authority classifications in the area for employees in grades up to and including GS-10.
 - (7) Ensure that proper care and maintenance of engineering equipment occurs. Care and maintenance of equipment must be in accordance with the Engineering Field Handbook, Chapter 1.
 - (8) Provide engineering equipment inventory updates to the ASTC (FO). Work in this area must be in accordance with Title 120, General Manual, Part 407 – Real Property.

§IA500.5 Request for Assistance from Area Engineering Staff

- A. Assistance should be requested for any project which exceeds the technical capability or workload of the field office. The District Conservationist will submit a request for engineering on Form IA-CPA-17 to the Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations, ASTC (FO), or designated representative for each job. The Area Engineer will determine the minimum amount of information to be included with the request.
- B. The ASTC (FO) or designated representative will review requests for completeness and establish priorities for assistance. After approval, the ASTC (FO) or designated representative will delegate the project to an appropriate staff member. The staff member will then schedule the needed assistance.

- C. After making a field investigation, the engineering staff member will provide any recommendations and, if applicable, a preliminary cost estimate to the field office. When a substantial amount of engineering time will be required to carry out the job, the engineering staff member will consult with the ASTC (FO) or designated representative before returning the request and committing the time.
- D. The engineering staff will provide assistance, as needed, with surveys, designs, preparation of drawings and specifications, and construction inspection on jobs that are beyond the capabilities of field office personnel.

§500.6 Request for Assistance from State Office Engineering Staff

For complex practices requiring NRCS engineering assistance from outside the area, the Assistant State Conservationist (Field Operations) must submit a request for assistance to the State Conservationist with a copy to the State Conservation Engineer and must receive approval prior to committing the NRCS to proceed beyond the Inventory and Evaluation level. This section does not apply to job class V or lower projects which are being submitted to the state office for review and approval purposes only.

The request will include but not be limited to the following items:

- A. Location of the proposed site.
- B. General description of the practice and a brief discussion of complexities involved including documentation of job approval classification and hazard classification.
- C. Purpose of the practice.
- D. Identification of the landuser(s) or entity requesting assistance.
- E. Projected type and amount of assistance needed from outside the area. For example: feasibility, geologic, flood routings, structural design, etc.