



Technical Service Provider Assistance

Additional Information for Producers and TSP's

Washington State Fact Sheet

WA 610.98/610.99 - Technical Service Provider - Producer and Provider Fact Sheet

Washington - USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

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Purpose

Following the guidance in this fact sheet will make the TSP program work smoothly for the “*Producer*” and “*Provider*”.

Background

This Fact Sheet provides additional information to the National NRCS Technical Service Provider Fact sheets developed for “*Producers*” and “*Providers*”. Producers and Technical Service Providers (TSP) must have a full understanding of program timelines and constraints. Producers must be aware of their responsibilities when they sign up for assistance to be provided by a TSP; and TSP's must be aware of their responsibilities while providing assistance to their customer, the Producer.

Funds for TSP assistance are based on an annual funding cycle and must be requested by the producer from NRCS each year, the process for requesting funds is outlined in this Fact Sheet.

Producer Responsibilities

It is the Producer's responsibility to select a TSP using the list readily available on the TechReg website. The Producer must ensure that the TSP is registered to provide assistance for the specific NRCS practice(s) or Conservation Activity Plan in the county where the assistance is to be provided. If a TSP is not available on the TechReg website to provide assistance in the County for the planned NRCS practice(s), the Producer will not have the option of selecting a TSP for assistance; payments cannot be made in this situation. TSP payment rates are calculated using the rates shown on the TechReg website for Washington State.

Producer Steps:

- P1. Each fall the Producer must notify the NRCS which projects they would like to utilize TSP services for the following calendar year.

- P2. NRCS will modify the Producer's contract to include funds for the TSP services and route the contract modification through the approval process.
- P3. Once the contract modification is approved, the Producer will be notified and the Producer in turn, must notify the TSP that the contract modification has been approved and work can begin.
- P4. TSP's should not start work prior to the Producer's approval. The Producer is responsible for a 100% of the cost until the NRCS contract modification is completed.
- P5. It is the Producer's responsibility to insure that the project units installed do not exceed the units contracted.
- P6. The Producer must notify NRCS if it appears that the units to be installed may exceed the units contracted before the project is actually installed.
- P7. The Producer is responsible for ensuring that the work the TSP is providing is consistent with the Producer/NRCS planned objectives and the work completed must be consistent with what has been contracted in the NRCS/Producer contract. Any differences from what was contracted to what was actually completed may not be eligible for financial assistance.
- P8. Ultimately, the Producer is responsible for working side by side with the TSP ensuring that the practice and the quality of work are acceptable. If the Producer is not sure they should immediately contact their local NRCS Office.

TSP funds expire at the end of the calendar year for which they are allocated and it is imperative that the project be completed and payment made by NRCS prior to the end of the calendar year, otherwise the TSP funds will no longer be available and payments cannot be made.

Cost it out! Prior to signing a contract modification for TSP technical assistance, have your chosen TSP provide

you with what they are going to charge for their services to avoid sticker shock later.

TSP Responsibilities

Technical Service Providers (TSP) should work closely with their customer the Producer to provide the necessary technical assistance.

- T1. TSP’s must wait to begin work until they have received notification from the Producer to begin work.
- T2. The TSP must complete each of the following tasks for each NRCS practice that TSP services have been requested.
- T3. **Project Design:** Once notified, the TSP may begin developing the project specifications.
 - 1. The specifications must be written using the appropriate NRCS Job/Specification Sheet available from Section IV of the electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG). The eFOTG is easily accessible on the web by going to www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov and clicking on the eFOTG link on the quick access menu on the left side of the web page.
 - 2. The TSP should provide the Producer with a copy of the Job Sheet and all other technical information developed for the practice design for approval prior to practice implementation.
- T4. **Project Layout:** Once the written practice plans and specifications have been completed.
 - 1. The TSP should provide the Producer with a final copy and begin laying out the project in the field.
 - 2. The TSP should keep a field diary of all activities with their Producer.
- T5. **Final Certification of the NRCS Practice:** Once each NRCS practice has been completed by the Producer or their chosen vendor/contractor, the TSP must certify that the project meets NRCS Standards and Specifications. The TSP is required to send the local NRCS Field Office an email or written correspondence with the following information:
 - 1. A statement certifying that the project meets NRCS standards and specifications,
 - 2. The quantity of each practice installed,
 - 3. A copy of the completed job sheet specification that is signed by the TSP and the customer,
 - 4. An invoice showing an itemized listing of the TSP charges by project and by the following three categories:
 - a. Design
 - b. Layout
 - c. Final Certification
 - 5. Copies of installation records such as digital photos and maps showing the locations of the installations shall also be included,

- 6. Payments will not be processed without the above information being provided.

Project and TSP Payments

Payments will be processed once the information provided is complete for both the TSP services and the Practice incentive payment. Funds will be deposited via electronic funds transfer to the Producer’s designated bank account. It is the responsibility of the Producer to pay the TSP for services rendered. TSP payments are a fixed amount and the payment amount may or may not cover the total cost of TSP services. It is the responsibility of the Producer to pay the difference if there is one.

TSP Quality Assurance

After all of the work has been completed for the design, layout and certification, NRCS will conduct a 100% spot check of the TSP assisted practices where it is their first time implementing the practice for the TSP program. Thereafter, NRCS will check a minimum of 5% of the TSP’s work. The TSP and the Producer should have all of the documentation mentioned in the “Final Certification of the Project” portion of this fact sheet available during the spot check.

If it is determined through the NRCS spot checking process that the project/practice was not installed or does not meet minimum NRCS standards and specifications, the TSP will be asked by NRCS to make corrections. If the TSP defaults or does not respond to the deficiency notice NRCS will initiate de-certifying the TSP from providing further services. Ultimately it is the Producer’s responsibility to facilitate corrections and if deemed necessary reimburse NRCS for all payments they have received from NRCS plus interest.

Permits

The Producer is responsible for applying and receiving all necessary permits for each NRCS practice to be installed. Not getting a permit is not an option for federally funded projects.

Know your rights

A copy of the USDA NRCS Dispute Resolution brochure will be provided to you. Keep a copy of this with your records should you have concerns with how your situation and circumstances have been handled by USDA.

Questions?

Please contact your local NRCS field office. The following Webpage provides contact information or you can call (509) 323-2900 and request the local NRCS field office telephone number.

<http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/fieldoffices.html>