United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS

Natural Resources Conservation Service
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MAINE INSTRUCTION 300-381 – INSTRUCTIONS FOR FIELD OFFICES (FO) CONTRACTING FOR CONSERVATION PRACTICE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA) WITH TECHREG TECHNICAL SERVICE PROVIDERS (TSPs).

PURPOSE

To provide and distribute Instructions for FO Contracting of Conservation Practice TA to be completed by TechReg TSPs associated with implementation of contracted conservation practices.

ATTACHMENT

Instructions for FO Contracting of TA by TechReg TSPs associated with contracted Conservation Practice Implementation.

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR FIELD OFFICES (FO) CONTRACTING FOR CONSERVATION PRACTICE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA) WITH TECHREG TECHNICAL SERVICE PROVIDERS (TSPs)

1. **(NRCS FO Employees)** – A Client is interested in funding an active Financial Assistance (FA) contract using a TechReg Certified Technical Service Provider (TSP) for Technical Assistance (TA) to implement contracted conservation practices. NRCS FO employees complete all program eligibility determinations. If Client is eligible for program participation, proceed with the steps outlined below:

    1) Determine Technical Service Provider Rates (TSPRs) payment rates from the "TechReg Website" at http://tspr.sc.egov.usda.gov and determine if rates are "fair and reasonable". If the payment rates are not "fair and reasonable", NRCS FO employees should contact John Long, NRCS Economist located at the State Office.
    2) Review with Client the TSPR payment rates (or approved "fair and reasonable" rates) and the TSP hiring process that Client must follow in order to request TA. The TSP hired must be a "TechReg" Certified TSP whom is certified to work in Maine.

    a. If **Client** wishes to proceed, the **FO employees** will proceed with the steps outlined below:

        1) Modify the existing contract in Protracts to include TA costs. The TA costs can include (design, installation and checkout) of the conservation practices scheduled for the current Fiscal Year.
        2) Complete the Statement of Work (SOW) documents for each conservation practice for which the TSP will provide TA. Provide Client a hard copy of the SOWs, Conservation Practice Standards, Specification Guide Sheets and a blank Job Sheet (if available). The digital copies of SOW documents and all required conservation practice deliverables are located in the NRCS Electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG) under Section IV – Conservation Practices. The SOWs may need to be customized to include any unique requirements of the conservation practices.
        3) Notify Client they need to hire a "TechReg" Certified TSP certified to work in Maine for the specific contracted conservation practices located at http://techreg.usda.gov/CustLocateTSP.aspx.
        4) **Client** may provide property information to TSP directly, or may grant permission for NRCS to release requested information to TSPs. If Client agrees to release requested information, assist Client in completing and signing the "Authorization and Release of Information" document located at ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/ME/GMAmendments/GM120_P408_SP-C_ME-11_AttA.pdf . This "Authorization and Release of Information" document should include the TSP's Name and TechReg ID Number (Example: TSP's Name -#X-XX-XXX). File originally signed hard copy in the appropriate folder. **Client** will receive two and **TSP** one hard copy.
        5) Offer to conduct a conference prior to commencement of field work with the Client and the "TechReg" Certified TSP to review the location and required practice components indicated in the SOWs, Conservation Practice Standards and Specification Guide Sheets.

2. **(Client, TSP and FO Employees) – Client** contacts **TSP** and will consider whether or not to use the NRCS "Assignment of Payment" process.

    a. **Client** and **TSP** agree on terms. **Client** should create a Contract between TSP and Client that refers to the conservation practice documents which detail all the deliverables including timeline.

3. **(TSP)** – TSP On-Site Visit.

    a. Schedule an on-site visit. Request a signed and dated hard copy of both the "Authorization and Release of Information" document and Contract between Client and TSP.
    b. Provide TA for conservation practices and prepare required documentations of TA and conservation practice implementations.

4. **(TSP/Client) – TSP** reports to **Client** when conservation practices are completed and provide a **TSP/Client** Progress Report (report located at http://www.me.nrcs.usda.gov/TSPInfo.html), and documentations on conservation practice implementations outlined in the SOWs. The **TSP** prints off a hard copy of the signed and dated TSP Progress Report and provide a hard copy to **Client** along with all required SOW documentations. **TSP** provides an invoice to **Client** for TA on the completed conservation practices.

5. **(Client)** – Deliver all required documents to appropriate Field Office.

    a. Provide a copy of TSP Progress Report, documentations outlined in SOWs and invoice from TSP.

6. **(Client and FO Employees)** – Payment Requests.

    a. **Client** completes their portion of "Request for Payment - NRCS CPA-1245" form.
    b. **NRCS FO employees** review deliverables outlined in the SOWs and verify **Client** completed required items. The TSP Progress Report needs to be signed and dated, and verify if TSP is a "TechReg" Certified TSP in Maine for the type of TA reported. If deliverables and TSP Progress Report contains all required documents and report is completed, **NRCS FO employees** signs and dates the "Request for Payment - NRCS CPA-1245" form and processes payment. If TSPs work does not have all required documents, **do not process payment.** Contact Chris Jones, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Special Projects at the State Office as soon as possible. The "Request for Payment - NRCS CPA-1245" form should be scanned as a digital copy, and downloaded onto the "Contract Payment Folder". This folder is located under the appropriate "FO Shared Drive folder" (example – "Scarborough FO" – "Contract Payment" folder).

c. **NRCS FO employees** or **FO Program Assistants** email a message to Caren Roy, NRCS Financial Technician and copy to Susan Arrants, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs both at the State Office stating that payment is ready for Second Level Review. (i.e., email message should contain the following information):

- Client's Name
- Client's Contract Number
- Client's Primary TSP
- Client's if applicable, Secondary TSP

7. **(Field Office Employees)** – TA is provided by TSP for Conservation Practice Processing.

a. A hard copy of the signed TSP Progress Report, deliverables outlined in SOWs and invoice are placed in NRCS/SWCD official files.
b. The Toolkit Customer Folder is checked out from the National Conservation Planning (NCP) Database and the digital documents are placed into C:\Documents and Settings\<your name>\My Customer Files Toolkit\<Customer Folder> and create a folder named "Conservation Practices".

8. **(State Office)** – Tracks TSP completed actions and performs a Quality Assurance Review.