

A Guide to the 2018 Farm Bill Conservation Programs in Delaware

How Can NRCS Assist?

If you own or manage farm or forest land in Delaware, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can be a great resource to help you achieve your operational goals.

NRCS is a non-regulatory federal agency that offers technical and financial assistance to address natural resource concerns on privately-owned lands. We work closely with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, state agencies, nongovernmental entities, and other partners to meet local needs on a grassroots level.

Through our partnerships, we can coordinate public and private resources to implement scientifically based, locally-led voluntary conservation efforts.

Get Started with NRCS

You can get NRCS assistance in five easy steps: planning, application, eligibility, ranking, and implementing. A conservation plan is the foundation for building a more productive and resilient operation. Our conservationists are eager to talk with you to develop a customized conservation strategy for your farm or forest land.

Next, we'll walk you through the application process for financial assistance and explain program eligibility criteria. We accept applications continuously and rank them based on the environmental benefits of the planned practices. The highest ranked applications are selected for funding.

Once you sign a contract, we will work with you to get planned practices installed on your land. You will receive payment for completed work that meets NRCS specifications.

Increased Support for Historically Underserved Farmers

The 2018 Farm Bill strengthens and builds upon support for historically underserved producers with dedicated funding pools, advance payments options, and an increased payment rate of up to 90 percent of practice implementation costs.

These incentives apply to new (in operation fewer than 10 consecutive years), veteran (beginning farmer honorably discharged within past 10 years), limited resource and socially disadvantaged producers (belonging to racial or ethnic groups that have historically been subjected to prejudice).

Urban Farmers

The 2018 Farm Bill reinvigorated support for this unique category of producers through the newly created Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production, which offers grant funding for projects that specifically meet their growing needs. NRCS leads this new initiative focusing on food insecurity, community gardens and urban growers, while continuing to provide the technical and financial assistance needed to make critical on-farm improvements.

A full listing of programs in Delaware is available on the reverse. For more information, contact your local USDA NRCS field office.

Delaware NRCS Field Offices

Dover Field Office	Georgetown Field Office	Newark Field Office
Serving Kent County	Serving Sussex County	Serving New Castle County
519 South Red Haven Ln	21315 Berlin Rd., Unit 3	2430 Old County Rd.
Suite 200	Georgetown, DE 19947	Newark, DE 19702
Dover, DE 19901	302-856-3990 ext. 3	302-832-3100 ext. 3
302-741-2600 ext. 3		

Natural Resources Conservation Service
www.de.nrcs.usda.gov



Program	Description	Who is eligible? What land is eligible?	Length and type of agreement	Financial incentives provided by USDA	Participant obligations
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) - Agricultural Land Easement	ACEP-ALE works in partnership with eligible entities to protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land.	State and local governments, non governmental organizations, and American Indian tribes that have farmland or grassland protection programs.	Permanent easement	NRCS contributes up to 50 percent of the easement purchase based on appraised fair market value; up to 75 percent is available for grasslands of environmental significance.	Maintain agricultural land use perpetually.
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) - Wetlands Reserve Easement	ACEP-WRE provides technical and financial assistance directly to private landowners to restore, protect and enhance wetlands through easements.	Private landowners of eligible crop, pasture and forest lands. Applicants must have owned the land for at least 24 months. Land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program is eligible with a waiver.	Permanent and 30-year easement options	NRCS pays 50 to 100 percent of the easement value. NRCS pays all costs associated with recording the easement.	Restore, protect and enhance wetlands and wildlife habitat, as agreed. If restoration is needed, assist with cost.
Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)	AMA reduces the risk associated with marketing ag products by helping producers diversify their crops and livestock and implement conservation practices.	Producers who own or operate an ag operation. Lands include privately-owned cropland, pasture land or public land under private control during the contract.	Up to a 10-year contract	Participants cannot receive more than \$50,000 in NRCS, RMA and AMA program payments per fiscal year. Historically underserved groups may receive up to 90 percent cost share.	Install and maintain conservation practices to NRCS standards.
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)	CRP and CREP are aimed at removing environmentally sensitive lands from agriculture production and planting grass or tree species that will improve water quality, reduce soil erosion and increase wildlife habitat.	Owners/operators of eligible cropland and marginal pasture land owned for 12 months. Land must meet cropping history requirements and be physically and legally capable of being planted to an agricultural commodity.	10–15 years	An annual rental payment and a percentage of the cost to establish the practice. <i>*Note: The Farm Service Agency manages CRP/CREP; NRCS provides technical assistance.</i>	Establish, maintain and manage the practice per the conservation plan.
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	CSP rewards farmers who are improving their existing conservation systems and offers compensation for adopting additional enhancements to address priority resource concerns. *CSP offers a Grasslands Conservation Initiative (CSP - GCI), which provides incentives for producers who have returned cropland to grassland between Jan. 1, 2009–Dec. 31, 2017.	Individuals, groups or entities who own or manage crop, pasture and forest land with existing conservation practices.	5-year contract with possible renewal	Annual payments for maintaining existing conservation practices and compensation for implementing additional enhancement activities. Separate funding pools for beginning, limited-resource and socially disadvantaged farmers.	Maintain and increase level of current land stewardship.
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	EQIP helps promote farm and forest production by addressing natural resource concerns including soil, water, air, plants, energy, animals and humans.	Individuals, groups or entities who own or manage farmland, pasture land or forest land.	1–10 year contract	Compensation for the cost of implementing conservation practices. Beginning, limited-resource, socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers may be eligible for higher payment rates. Advance payments available.	Install and maintain conservation practices to NRCS standards.
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)	RCPP promotes collaboration with partners to co-invest in projects that demonstrate innovative solutions to conservation challenges and provide measurable improvements tied to resource concerns they address. Projects can incorporate a range of eligible on-the-ground conservation activities in this standalone program.	Groups or entities may develop applications for the RCPP competition. Producers interested in carrying out compatible conservation activities on agricultural or forest land in the RCPP project area can apply directly to NRCS.	5 years (partner agreements) 1 year to permanent (landowner contracts and easements)	Project funds are allocated between the following: financial assistance to landowners, and partner and NRCS technical assistance (i.e., development of innovative conservation approaches, outreach to producers and landowners, project management, etc.)	Partners contribute financially to the project, conduct outreach to eligible producers and assess project impacts and results. Landowners install and maintain conservation practices to NRCS standards.

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