



**National Bulletin:** 180-22-1

**Date:** February 10, 2022

**Subject:** CPA - Electronic CRP Document Sharing with FSA

**Purpose.** This Iowa Bulletin provides a process to develop and share Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) documents electronically between NRCS and the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

**Expiration Date.** September 30, 2023

**Background.** During CRP Signups 53 and 54, several service centers found advantages to electronically developing and sharing CRP documents and successfully created electronic processes. In CRP Signups 55 and 56, an electronic process was piloted in 21 counties. This electronic process was developed from the framework created in field offices and adjusted with input from the pilot to increase consistency and efficiency.

Additionally, since NRCS and FSA employees have an increased ability to telework they are relying more on electronic processes and forms. The electronic process allows employees to securely access and develop CRP offers wherever they are working (office, home, or a different service center). This process also allows staff to electronically access offer and contract information for communication with clients thereby increasing customer service.

**Explanation.** Using the electronic document sharing process is optional for service centers. If the electronic document sharing process is implemented, NRCS and FSA will work collaboratively within the service center and include other service centers they commonly share documents with. The electronic process is highly recommended to be used in these circumstances: service centers without a co-located FSA, CRP offers administered in a county different than the location county, and teleworking employees who work on CRP offers.

Step by step instructions will be located on the Iowa NRCS Ecological Sciences SharePoint Site: Documents > CRP Document Library > [Electronic CRP Process](#), file name: Electronic CRP Process Instructions.

These instructions provide a consistent process for CRP document development and exchange. The instructions also provide options for service centers to customize the process to further enhance it at the local level. The base process must be followed for consistency, efficiency, and especially to reduce confusion when multiple counties participate. Any changes to the process must be agreed to by both agencies.

Documents will be saved on the service center's PUB folder on the Shared Drive, which is a secure, accessible location for all USDA employees. Documents can be saved as they are created to minimize scanning.

Developing or using existing shared spreadsheets to track CRP offer development is highly recommended. This also allows both agencies to monitor workload. An example tracking spreadsheet will be available on the Iowa NRCS Ecological Sciences SharePoint Site: Documents > CRP Document Library > [Electronic CRP Process](#), file name: Example CRP Tracking Spreadsheet.

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CRP offers involve businesses, entities, and powers of attorney (POAs). Signature requirements need to be communicated to NRCS, so the appropriate signatures are obtained. Options to communicate signature requirements include, but are not limited to, scanned CRP-1, email, or a contact information sheet.


Electronic signatures are acceptable for NRCS documents, including eAuthenticated digital signatures, uploaded "wet" signatures (e.g., Farmers.gov), OneSpan signatures, faxed signatures, and scanned or photo of original signatures. FSA does not require original signatures on NRCS documents.

Communication between agencies is critical. This process allows the efficient and consistent exchange of CRP documents. This process does not reduce or eliminate the need to communicate. Discussions at the local service center are critical to have a clear understanding of the process.

NRCS and FSA should meet to discuss the electronic process and determine if it will be used. If the process will be used, NRCS and FSA will need to review the system and work through options, questions, common situations, and concerns. Service centers that use the electronic process need to regularly communicate, offer development, and discuss concerns as early as possible.

Communication with the client is also critical. Discussions with the client should be documented and shared between agencies. NRCS should use the NRCS-CPA-6 Assistance Notes to document or reference communication with the client. FSA does not have a specific form for documentation, so communication may be through email or a notes document.

**Contact.** If you have questions about the contents of this bulletin, please contact Nichole Williams, Resource Conservationist, at 515-323-2246.



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