

Roles and Responsibilities for Engineering Technical Assistance to USDA Program Participants Using a Technical Service Provider (TSP)

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) program participant hires a certified Technical Service Provider (TSP) and pays the TSP using Technical Assistance (TA) funds (Technical Service Payment Rate (TSPR)) in their USDA program contract. This document is intended for the implementation of conservation practices and not planning activities such as CPA, DIA, or CEMA.

NRCS – Roles and Responsibilities

Field Office

1. Monitor the process of the project with the ***TSP Step-by-Step Process for Program Participants***.
2. Participate in the pre-design and preconstruction meeting with the TSP engineer, program participant, and the construction contractor. Complete the ***South Dakota NRCS Pre-Design Meeting Checklist*** and the ***South Dakota NRCS Preconstruction Meeting Checklist***.
3. Provide planning assistance including environmental compliance unless the TSP has been hired for planning assistance. If the TSP is providing planning assistance under a Conservation Planning Activity (CPA), Design Implementation Activity (DIA), or Conservation Evaluation and Monitoring Activity (CEMA), follow the Technical Criteria for these activities.
4. Provide and review the ***Program Participant Roles and Responsibilities*** with the program participant and provide the program participant a copy of the ***TSP Roles and Responsibilities*** for the TSP.
5. Maintain Conservation Assistance Notes (NRCS-CPA-6) through planning, design, construction, and checkout.
6. Maintain a case file copy of the technical assistance documentation provide by the TSP. Include the TSP file with the cooperators file following practice implementation.
7. Provide to the USDA program participant copies of any existing case file records relevant to the technical assistance being provided by the TSP.
8. NRCS will not participate in the surveys, investigations, design, construction drawing development, layout, construction inspection, checkout, or certification. The NRCS will bring any concerns about the project to the attention of the TSP and the program participant.
9. **Recognize that the NRCS only has a contractual relationship with the USDA program participant. Therefore, the NRCS will not direct the work of the TSP.**
10. Provide to the USDA program participant interpretative information related to the conservation plan, CNMP, WRP PO, or other document upon which the USDA conservation program contract was based only in the situations where the NRCS developed the plan.
11. After the TSP provided the completed and signed ***Warranty of Technical Services Provided*** form, NRCS completes the form NRCS-CPA-1245, "Practice Approval and Payment Application" including Section 1, "Conservation Practices Performed" and obtains the necessary signatures from the producer in Section 2, "Participant Certification and Signature". NRCS signs Section 3, "NRCS Approving Official Certification".
12. Report the progress of the completed practices and indicate that TSP assistance was utilized.

Field Office Or Field Support Office

1. Provide the USDA program participant and/or TSP access to copies of the NRCS conservation practice standards, construction/material specifications, standard drawings, software, and other design aids used by the NRCS. Costs for reproduction of these materials are the responsibility of person making the request.
2. Conduct quality reviews, as appropriate, of the technical services provided by the TSP **after** the services are reported and all documentation is received from the USDA program participant.