

Technical Service Provider (TSP) Step-by-Step Process (For Implementing Conservation Practices)

Planning

1. The conservation planner meets with the program participant and discusses conservation plan alternatives including the use of a technical service provider for completing the practices that will be included in the conservation plan. The planner must discuss the processes and topics below with the participant during the planning process.
2. The conservation planner requests assistance from the Ag Waste Management Team or the field support office (FSO) to complete a preliminary feasibility report. The field office staff completes Environmental Evaluation, NRCS-CPA-52. The preliminary feasibility report will document areas not suitable or potential items of concern when constructing the conservation practices.
3. The participant notifies the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that they want to use a TSP for the practice(s).
 - a. The producer is provided with a packet of the following information:
 - i. Form NRCS-CPA-1270, Consent to Release or Receive Information for NRCS Program Participation, is to be completed by the program participant and returned to the NRCS once a TSP is selected.
 - ii. Program Participant Roles and Responsibility Fact Sheet.
 - iii. Selecting a TSP Guide Sheet.
 - iv. Considerations in Selecting a Contractor Guide Sheet.
 - b. The participant interviews and selects a certified/approved TSP from the NRCS Registry of Technical Service Providers website at:
<https://nrcs-sites.secure.force.com/FindaTSP>
 - i. Participants will not be reimbursed if the TSP is not certified for the specific practice or for conservation practices not adopted in SD.
 - ii. Participants will not be reimbursed more than the Technical Service Payment Rates (TSPR).
 - iii. There will be no reimbursement for work completed by a TSP prior to the signing of a conservation program contract.
 - c. The program participant hires the TSP and develops a contract or agreement with the TSP for the services to be provided, payments, and schedule of completion.
 - i. It is up to the participant to negotiate the rate that the TSP charges.
 - ii. Establish when and how the payment will be made to the TSP.
 - iii. Work with the TSP to assure that the work will be completed within one year of the contract or modification approval date.

Design of Practices

4. The NRCS conservation planner, the participant, and the TSP must participate in a pre-design meeting. The participant is responsible for ensuring that all participants are aware of the meeting outcomes. The pre-design meeting will cover the topics in the Pre-Design Meeting Checklist.
5. The participant works with the TSP to complete the design. The TSP provides copies of all required design documentation as listed in the South Dakota Statement of Work (SOW) to the program participant and to NRCS.

6. The conservation planner develops a conservation plan and develops the conservation program contract.
 - a. Subject to availability of funds:
 - i. The participant signs the application or contract modification for TSP services, with final approval by the NRCS. The TSP funds are approved when the NRCS signs the contract or modification.
 - ii. The NRCS will notify the participant when final approval is authorized. Practice implementation or construction may not be started prior to the NRCS approval of the contract or contract modification.
 - iii. There will be no reimbursement for work completed by a TSP prior to the signing of a conservation program contract.

Installation of Practices

7. The participant notifies NRCS conservation planner that the contractor is ready to construct the project. A preconstruction meeting must be held with the NRCS, program participant, TSP, and contractor prior to construction. The preconstruction meeting will cover the topics in the Preconstruction Meeting Checklist.
8. The participant and TSP notifies the NRCS of construction modifications to the design prior to implementing those changes. The TSP keeps the participant and FO informed of changes or modifications that may have an impact on cost, environmental impacts, and/or feasibility of project.

Checkout of Practices

9. The TSP conducts the practice checkout.
10. The TSP provides copies of all required installation and checkout documentation as listed in the South Dakota Statement of Work (SOW) and provides invoices for the services provided to the participant.
 - a. The NRCS reimbursement rate will be the actual cost not to exceed the TSPR in the contract.
 - b. If the TSP charges more than the TSPR, it is the participant's responsibility to pay the difference.
 - c. The Technical Service Payment Rates can be found at:
<https://tspr.sc.egov.usda.gov/Default.aspx>
11. The participant submits the required conservation practice documentation and invoices for TSP services to the NRCS FO for payment.
 - a. NRCS reviews the SOW checklist and confirms that all documentation is provided. (Check-out notes, practice plans and drawings, certificate of compliance, quality assurance plan, inspection plan and notes, certification statements on plans, etc.)
 - b. If items are missing, the TSP needs to coordinate with the program participant and FO to provide needed items in a timely manner (within 30 days) so practice payment can be made by the NRCS.
12. The TSP completes and signs the Warranty of Technical Services Provided form and submits it to NRCS.
13. On the NRCS CPA-1245, NRCS completes Section 1; the program participant certifies in Section 2; and the DC approves the payment application in Section 3.
14. NRCS processes and makes the practice payment and the payment for technical services to the program participant.