



United States Department of Agriculture



Q&A – ALE Application Info for FY-2024 Funds



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**ALE Application Information - Question & Answer Session
for Potential Applicants for FY-2024 Funding
August 2, 2023**

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For support related to this conference, contact EasementSupport@usda.gov

Virginia NRCS EASEMENTS – OVERVIEW

- **ACEP – Agricultural Conservation Easement Program**
has 2 Components:
 - **ALE - Agricultural Land Easements** – Entity Held
(land trusts, counties)
Goal is to protect agricultural land.
 - **WRE - Wetland Reserve Easements** – U.S. Held
Goal is to restore & protect wetlands.
- **RCPP Easements are a separate program from ACEP.**
(Regional Conservation Partnership Program)
 - Flexible project terms. Entity Held or U.S. Held



Virginia NRCS EASEMENTS - NUMBERS

Total Funded

145 easements 17,112 acres

- Agricultural/ Farmland**

- 82 easements 14,104 acres (ALE, FRPP, GRP)

- Wetlands**

- 63 easements 3,008 acres (WRE, WRP)



Purpose of ALE



To protect

- agricultural use,
- future viability,
- related conservation values,
- by limiting non-agricultural uses



Learn more about ACEP-ALE



Website links to educational material for ALE Partners & Landowners

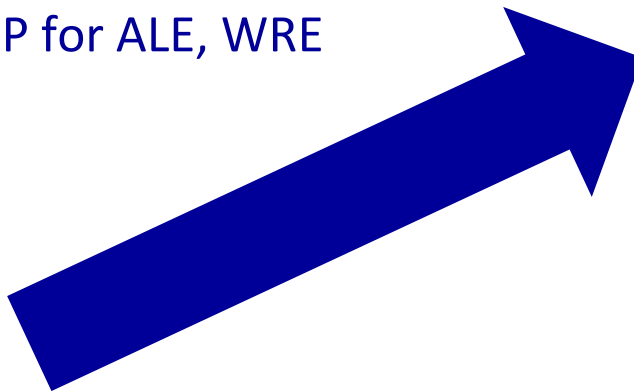
- These educational & training materials were developed through partnerships among NRCS, LTA and AFT.
- Good introduction or refresher
- [Land Trust Alliance](#) (LTA & NRCS)
- [American Farmland Trust](#) (AFT & NRCS)
- [View NRCS Webinars](#) (LTA & NRCS)
 - *ACEP-ALE Program Agreements and Parcel Contracts: Helps and Hints for Land Trusts (May 2020)*
 - *NRCS Program Agreements and ALE Updates (Feb. 2021)*



VA ALE Funding Last Year – FY23



- **FY23 – \$3,255,450 awarded**
 - Initial allocation plus additional allocations needed
 - Fully funded ALL eligible applications
- **8 ALE easements covering 2,197 acres**
 - Record number eligible applications received in one year
- **Increased Funding for ALE Coming from IRA**
 - Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds for FY 24, info coming soon
 - Will go into ACEP for ALE, WRE



Program Agreement & Parcel Contract

Need both - What's the difference?



Land Trust applies for ALE **Program Agreement** (form 41)

- “Umbrella” **Scope of Work** between land trust & NRCS
- It states responsibilities (no funding attached)
- Apply ONCE, good for 5 years (e.g. 2023 – 2028)
- VA has Agreements with 7 land trusts & counties

Land Trust applies for ALE **Parcel Contract** (form 41A) \$\$\$

- Under the Agreement SOW “umbrella” may apply for funds for MULTIPLE easements
- EACH easement needs a separate Parcel Contract (41A)
- **This obligates ALE funds. \$\$\$**





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Virginia NRCS Easements Website



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The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) helps landowners, land trusts, American Indian tribes and other entities keep working farms in agriculture and restore and protect degraded wetlands by removing them from production.



How to Apply

NRCS accepts ACEP applications on a continuous basis but establishes “cut-off” or submission deadline dates for evaluation, ranking and approval of eligible applications. ACEP is open to all eligible individuals or organizations and submitted applications may be considered or evaluated in multiple funding pool opportunities. All ACEP applicants (landowners, partners, ALE and WRE) must have farm records established with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA).

FY2024 Funding Due Dates

- **September 1, 2023** – Preliminary applications
- **November 1, 2023** – Full application packages

August 2, 2023, NRCS plans to hold an ALE application Q&A for potential applicants. Details to be announced.



Agricultural Land Easements (ALE)

Application Forms


Documents require [Acrobat Reader](#) or **Microsoft Word**


Preliminary ALE applications consist of: Form CPA-41A, proof of USDA FSA records, li
Agreement application form CPA-41 (if organization does not have one already establi


Full ALE application packages should be submitted to the Virginia State Office and inc

 [ALE Application CHECKLIST FY-24 \(rev. 7-2023\)](#) (194.96 KB)


 [ALE Parcel Contract APP \(CPA-41A, 2020\).pdf](#) (475.57 KB)


 [ALE Program Agreement Partner Entity APP \(CPA-41, 2020\).pdf](#) (313.14 KB)

 [Virginia ALE FY23 Ranking](#) (191.56 KB)


 [SF-1199 Direct Deposit \(Aug.2012\)](#) (1.02 MB)


Reference Documents

 [ALE Minimum Deed Terms](#) (139.65 KB)

 [Closing Agent Req. Form \(2020\)](#) (209.66 KB)

 [Confirm Match Funds \(CPA-230E\)](#) (258.5 KB)






 [Parcel Contract ALE](#) (283.15 KB)

 [Parcel Contract Appendix ALE](#) (921.9 KB)



Application Forms



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Reference Documents



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 [Closing Agent Req. Form \(2020\) \(202 KB\)](#)

 [Confirm Match Funds \(CPA-230E\) \(10 KB\)](#)

 [Parcel Contract ALE \(283.15 KB\)](#)

 [Parcel Contract Appendix ALE \(92 KB\)](#)



Start with ALE Application Checklist for Details

ALE Application Checklist FY-2024

Documents to submit to Virginia NRCS State Office (rev. 7-11-2023)

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) – Agricultural Land Easement (ALE)





Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

NRCS-CPA-41
02/2020

ENTITY APPLICATION for an AGRICULTURAL LAND EASEMENT (ALE) AGREEMENT

Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

NRCS-CPA-41A
02/2020

PARCEL SHEET for ENTITY APPLICATION for an AGRICULTURAL LAND EASEMENT (ALE) AGREEMENT

Parcel Sheet Guide (CPA-41A) -- How to Complete

(rev. 7-31-2023)

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Tips



- **Contact NRCS easement staff to fill out application together on the phone, or for questions (Diane, Jenny, Leticia)**
- **See footnotes at end of 41A Parcel App form**
- **Prelim App docs (due Sept. 1):**
 - USDA records for all landowners – do this first, takes longest
 - Ownership Deed(s)
 - Parcel application form CPA 41A (see Guide Sheet) with attachments
 - Program Agreement application form CPA-41 if not already in place
- **Speed up process – after Agreement & Contract in place**
 - ALE Certification
 - ALE Template



NEW: **“ALE Facilitator”**

Successful Pilot Project in FY23

Conservation Partners served as “ALE Facilitator” Partnered with Land Trust of Virginia

- Assisted land trust staff with preparing ALE application package
- Continuing support with the NRCS process & Acquisition
- **Significant expansion of land trust resources & capacity**
- **Looking forward**
 - Conservation Partners is working with additional land trusts on current ALE applications
 - Applications into the pipeline to demonstrate funding need in VA



ALE Funds & Match - Example

\$200K FMV of the Land, fee simple

\$100K FMV of the Easement (rough estimate)

\$ 50K ALE maximum funding (50% of FMEV)

\$ 50K Match value, which can come from one or combination of:

- Landowner donation value,
 - Land trust entity funds from another funder, e.g. VLCF,
 - Acquisition-related expenses, e.g. title, appraisal, survey, stewardship
- See *Confirmation of Matching Funds* form 230C





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