



News Release

Biden-Harris Administration Announces Availability of Inflation Reduction Act Funding for Climate-Smart Agriculture Nationwide

Funding for FY24 is Available for Climate-Smart Practices

JACKSON, Miss., September 29, 2023 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is making funding available for agricultural producers and forest landowners nationwide to participate in voluntary conservation programs and adopt climate-smart practices. The [Inflation Reduction Act \(IRA\)](#) provided an additional \$19.5 billion over five years for climate-smart agriculture through several conservation programs that USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) implements.

“The Inflation Reduction Act provided a once-in-a-generation investment in conservation on working lands, and we want to work with agricultural and forest landowners to invest in climate-smart practices that create value and economic opportunities for producers,” said Vilsack, who spoke today at the National Association of Conservation Districts annual meeting. “We know that agriculture plays a critical role in the nation’s effort to address climate change, and we’re using this funding to bolster our existing programs, maximize climate benefits, and foster other environmental benefits across the landscape.”

The IRA funding includes an additional \$8.45 billion for EQIP. The increased funding levels begin in fiscal year 2023 and rapidly build over four years. These additional investments are estimated to help hundreds of thousands of farmers and ranchers apply conservation to millions of acres of land. Agricultural producers in Mississippi will have the opportunity to implement climate-smart practices under the following initiatives: Cover Crop, On-Farm Energy (Implementation), and Climate-Smart using IRA funds.

“Agricultural producers have shown that they know their land best and are great stewards who play a critical role in regenerating the soil and the ecosystem and not just maintaining it,” said Kurt Readus, NRCS State Conservationist in Mississippi.

NRCS accepts applications for its conservation programs year-round, but producers interested in IRA-EQIP should submit applications to their local [USDA Service Center](#) by **October 27, 2023**, to be considered for the FY 2024 funding cycle.

Funding is provided through a competitive process and will include an opportunity to address the unmet demand from producers who have previously sought funding for climate-smart conservation activities.

Mississippi NRCS will be utilizing ACT NOW to process conservation applications in eight funding pools in order to deliver financial assistance to EQIP applicants faster. New and existing applications received prior to October 27, 2023, which meet program eligibility requirements and the minimum ranking score threshold in one of the ACT NOW funding pools identified below, will be selected for immediate funding until designated funds are depleted. Through ACT NOW, applications will be batched and processed in the order they are received.

Funding Pools Ranking Threshold Score

On-Farm Energy

- Area 2 and Area 3 – Minimum ranking threshold score of 88

Cover Crop General

- Area 1 and Area 4 – Minimum ranking threshold score of 160
- Area 2 and Area 3 – Minimum ranking threshold score of 90

Cover Crop Beginning Farmer or Rancher (BFR)

- Area 1 and Area 4 – Minimum ranking threshold score of 140
- Area 2 and Area 3 – Minimum ranking threshold score of 85

Cover Crop Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher (SDFR)

- Area 1 and Area 4 – Minimum ranking threshold score of 131
- Area 2 and Area 3 – Minimum ranking threshold score of 63

Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) (BFR, SDFR, & General)

- Rice – Minimum ranking threshold score of 75
- Cropland – Minimum ranking threshold score of 191
- Forestland – Minimum ranking threshold score of 26
- Pastureland – Minimum ranking threshold score of 80

For additional information about IRA EQIP or to submit an application, landowners should contact to their local [USDA Service Center](#) for their county. For more information, visit [our website](#).

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