Technical Service Providers

How to Become a Certified TSP in Wisconsin

What is a Technical Service Provider?

Technical Service Providers (TSPs) are conservation professionals from the private sector, non-profit organizations and public agencies that can provide direct technical assistance and deliver conservation services to landowners and others on behalf of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). TSPs in Wisconsin develop valuable conservation planning activities to assist producers and landowners in achieving their conservation goals.

Before you apply to become a TSP, you need to determine the services you want to offer Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) program participants and whether you have the necessary skills, abilities, licenses, certifications and other qualifications to provide services based on NRCS standards and specified criteria. You will also need to research any state laws which may apply to the activities and practices for which you want to become certified. It is highly encouraged to gain an understanding of what types of assistance program participants need to help address the resource concerns on their property.

State TSP coordinators have a wealth of knowledge to help you along this journey of becoming a TSP. The contact information for the Wisconsin State TSP Coordinator can be found on the NRCS TSP webpage linked in the *More Information* section on the following page.

Training

Training is essential to the successful implementation of the certification process. Individuals interested in becoming certified are responsible for obtaining the training they need to become certified, keeping their own training records current and providing documentation for certification purposes on the training they have received. Costs associated with becoming a TSP, as well as maintaining or renewing certification, are the responsibility of the individual seeking certification.

NRCS offers an expansive list of training opportunities for new TSP applicants and certified TSPs. NRCS offers courses through the Agriculture Learning Service (AgLearn) and the USDA Science and Technology Library. All TSP applicants seeking certification to provide technical services to eligible NRCS program participants must also complete the *TSP Orientation and Conservation Planning Course* and *Introduction to Field Office Technical Guide Course.*

Certification

A certification process is in place to evaluate and approve individuals, entities and public agencies as TSPs. Certification lasts for three years and may be renewed for subsequent time periods.

To qualify for certification, an individual must:

1. Have the technical training, education or experience to perform the level of technical assistance for which certification is sought.

2. Meet all applicable licensing or similar qualification standards established by state law.

3. Demonstrate, through documentation of training or experience, familiarity with NRCS specification as set forth in applicable NRCS manuals for the planning and application of specific conservation practices and management systems for which certification is sought.

4. Not be decertified in any state at the time of application for certification.

More Information

NRCS TSP Webpage
www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/technical-assistance/technical-service-providers

Electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG)
https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/state/WI/documents

Resources for TSPs
www.nrcs.usda.gov/resources-for-certified-technical-service-providers

NRCS Registry of TSPs
https://nrcs.my.salesforce-sites.com/FindaTSP

YouTube Training Videos
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0Oy58bSZgQHf29xdF2IGavLtXWNG-erR

In order for an individual to be considered for certification as a TSP, they must register online with the NRCS Registry:

Step 1: Create your USDA verified Login.gov account.

Step 2: Verify your identity.

Step 3: Log into the NRCS Registry.

Step 4: Submit your application for review.

NRCS has 60 days to review your application, verify your credentials and samples of work, and make a decision on your certification.

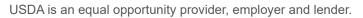**If all requirements for certification are met, NRCS will:**

- Enter into a certification agreement and certify the applicant as qualified to provide technical services for a specific category of conservation practices.

- Place the applicant on the list of approved TSPs when certified.

- Make available to the public the list of approved TSPs.

Reimbursement

TSPs hired by a producer will be reimbursed by the producer from funds obtained through NRCS conservation programs. Not-to-exceed levels of payment for each conservation practice will be determined by NRCS. Payment will only be provided to a producer for technical services obtained from a TSP that has been certified by NRCS to provide those services. NRCS reimburses the producer at a contracted rate established by the program the participation is participating in. The maximum rates for technical services are available in the most recent State Payment Schedule at **www.nrcs.usda. gov/getting-assistance/payment-schedules**

TSPs may also enter into an agreement or contract with NRCS directly. Through cooperative or contribution agreements, NRCS may "bundle" like practices and contract with a TSP to complete these practices for contracts across the state.

Quality Assurance

All services provided by TSPs must meet NRCS standards and specifications. NRCS will only provide payment for services that do. The standards and specifications are available at all NRCS field offices or on the eFOTG linked in the *More Information* section above.

NRCS will review, in consultation with the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), the quality of services provided by TSPs. TSPs will also assume all legal responsibility for the quality of work they provide. The producer is responsible, however, for complying with the program contract or agreement, which includes meeting USDA technical standards and specifications.

TO GET STARTED
SCAN ME

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