

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program
Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP-ALE)
Wisconsin Application Checklist

Please submit applications to kristin.westad@usda.gov by the deadline. Submit clearly labelled, separate documents. Please do not submit combined pdfs of many documents. NRCS accepts partial submissions before the deadline. We will reject applications that are incomplete after the deadline. The submission deadlines are October 4 and December 20, 2024.

Find forms at forms.sc.egov.usda.gov.

NRCS uses the phrase “Cooperating Entity” to refer to land trusts, local units of government and other organizations in the business of holding conservation easements. In ACEP-ALE, “parcel” refers not to tax parcels but rather to the full extent of the farm that people are trying to protect.

- 1) Form NRCS-CPA-41a, “Parcel Sheet for Entity Application for an Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) Agreement”. Complete an NRCS- CPA-41a for each parcel submitted for funding.
- 2) Written authorization for an individual to sign documents on behalf of the Cooperating Entity to apply for funding and enter into agreements with NRCS.
- 3) Fully executed offer for the Cooperating Entity to purchase a conservation easement from the Landowner pending NRCS funding.
- 4) Map showing the general location of the offered land. Include major roads, cities, and other landmarks.
- 5) Map of the land offered for enrollment with the easement boundary delineated. Identify evidence of legal access from a labelled public road. Label homes and out-buildings on the property, and the proposed building envelope(s).
- 6) Boundary shapefiles help NRCS processing, but we don’t require them.
- 7) Evidence of ownership, such as a property deed, fully executed purchase agreement or preliminary title report.
- 8) Title commitment and its underlying documents for the offered land.
- 9) Subsidiary prints for all landowners listed on the property deed or title report. Tell Farm Services Agency staff that the landowner is applying for ACEP-ALE. Before NRCS obligates funds to an agreement, we need these criteria in the Subsidiary report:
 - Fiscal Year = 2025
 - AD-1026 = “Certified”
 - AGI – 2014 and 2018 Farm Bills = “Compliant – producer”, “Compliant – less

than 3 years”, “Exempt”, “Mismatch verified” or “Compliant – FSA Determined”. “Filed – CCC-941” is adequate at the time of application. Please note that IRS may take months to review FSA’s documentation and determine eligibility.

- Conservation Compliance – Farm/Tract = “In Compliance”
- Farm Operating Plan = “Determined”

NRCS does not require conservation easement appraisals at the time of application, but many entities choose to provide them.

10) If the offered land has less than 50% prime soils, provide one of these options. Please choose the appropriate land eligibility category on the CPA-41A.

- Statement on how the offered land would protect grazing uses and related conservation values.
- Documentation of historical or archeological resources. Only include cultural resources that are recognized by the State or National Register of Historic Places.
- Documentation on how protecting this parcel supports a state or local government policy consistent with the purposes of ACEP-ALE.

11) Documents for ranking.

Required

- Map delineating cropland, pasture, grassland, and farmstead in offered land.

Optional

- Farm succession plan.
- Map showing proximity and size of other protected lands within a three-mile radius. This may include conservation easements, publicly owned land, and military installations. Please identify agricultural easements separately from other types of conservations easements.
- Conservation Reserve Program contract for grass cover that is set to expire in one year or less.
- Proof that the parcel is within an area zoned for agricultural use.
- Proof of rare species or habitats cited for ranking points.
- Proof of historical or archaeological resources found on parcel.

Waiver

12) If the proposed conservation easement will allow more than 2% of the site to be impervious surface, submit a letter addressed to State Conservationist Nathan Fikkert requesting a waiver.

Cooperating Entity Information

Any entity that doesn't currently have an ACEP-ALE Easement Program Agreement with NRCS must provide these. Entities with current program agreements need not submit these.

- 13) Form NRCS-CPA-41, "Entity Application for an Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) Agreement". A Cooperating Entity need only submit one NRCS-CPA-41, even if applying for multiple parcels.
- 14) Description of the Cooperating Entity's farmland conservation program.
- 15) Evidence of the Cooperating Entity's ability to acquire, hold, manage, and enforce agricultural conservation easements. Include a citation to the statutory authority that allows the Cooperating Entity to acquire conservation easements.
- 16) List of easements acquired, held, managed and/or enforced by the Cooperating Entity.
- 17) Summary of entity's closing and monitoring efficiency. Entities that have received ACEP-ALE, FRPP, RCPP-ALE or RCPP18 easement funding in the past need not include this summary.
- 18) List volunteers and/or paid staff who monitor easements.
- 19) Report from Farm Services Agency showing that the Cooperating Entity is entered Subsidiary.

Entities whose applications are selected for funding must provide before NRCS enters a parcel contract.

- 20) Direct Deposit Sign-Up Form (Standard Form 1199a)