

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

Planning

NOTE: Experienced NRCS engineering and agronomic support is available via the Ag Nutrient Management Team (ANMT) or Field Support Office (FSO). Assistance from the ANMT and/or FSO, if needed, should be requested as early in the planning phase as possible.

1. The conservation planner meets with the interested Participant and discusses conservation plan alternatives including the use of a Technical Service Provider (TSP) to complete some or all of the practices that will be included in the conservation plan. The planner must discuss the processes and topics below with the Producer during the planning process.
2. The conservation planner requests assistance from the ANMT or the FSO to help with the planning process, as needed.

Local Field Office (FO) staff completes the Environmental Evaluation - NRCS-CPA-52.

3. The Participant notifies the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that they wish to pursue a program contract and intend to use a TSP to complete the practice(s).
 - a. A packet with the following information will be reviewed with the Participant:
 - i. Form SD-ADS-6, Information Release or Receipt Authorization, 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. Using a TSP for Barn Design Guide Sheet, if applicable
 - v. Considerations in Selecting a Contractor Guide Sheet
 - b. The Participant interviews and selects a certified/approved TSP from NRCS' Online TSP Registry website at <https://nrcsregistry.sc.egov.usda.gov/prweb/PRAuth/registrypublic>
 - i. Participant will not be reimbursed if the TSP is not certified for the planned/contracted practices
 - ii. Participant will not be reimbursed for conservation practices that are not adopted in SD
 - iii. Participant will not be reimbursed more than the Technical Service Payment Rates (TSPR)
 - iv. Participant will not be reimbursed for work completed by a TSP prior to the signing of the conservation program contract
 - c. The Participant hires the TSP and develops a contract or agreement with the TSP for the services to be provided, payments, and schedule of completion. The Participant is responsible for:
 - i. Negotiating the rates the TSP charges
 - ii. Establishing when and how payment will be made to the TSP
 - iii. Working with the TSP to ensure 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 lead by the TSP. The Participant is responsible for ensuring that all

participants agree on 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 uses the conservation plan and the TSP's design documentation to develop 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 the 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 must notify 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 by searching for the appropriate state Payment Schedule at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/payment-schedules>.
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.