How to Become a Technical Service Provider (TSP)

FORESTRY

What is a Technical Service Provider?

Technical Service Providers (TSPs) are conservation professionals from the private sector, non-profit organizations, tribes, and public agencies that provide technical services to eligible program participants. TSPs are compensated through NRCS program funds.

TSPs can perform many services which assist landowners and land managers in achieving their conservation goals.

- Develop conservation plans and assess the logistics of their goals.
- Plan, design, and support the implementation of conservation practices.
- Certify completed conservation practices.

Training

Training is a critical step in the TSP certification process. Although TSPs are experts in their field, it is essential they understand the NRCS conservation planning process, policies, programs, and agency guidelines.

NRCS requires technical training and orientation courses for all TSP applicants. Depending on the certification level a TSP is planning to reach, additional course(s) must also be completed. A summary of the training criteria, as required for varying levels of certification, can be found on the NRCS TSP website.

Steps to Certification

The TSP certification process evaluates and approves individuals, entities, tribes, and public agencies as TSPs. Certification lasts for three years and may be renewed.

To qualify for certification, applicants must:

1. Have the technical training, education, and 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 comprehension of NRCS conservation practice standards and specifications for the planning and application of the conservation practices and management systems for which certification is sought.

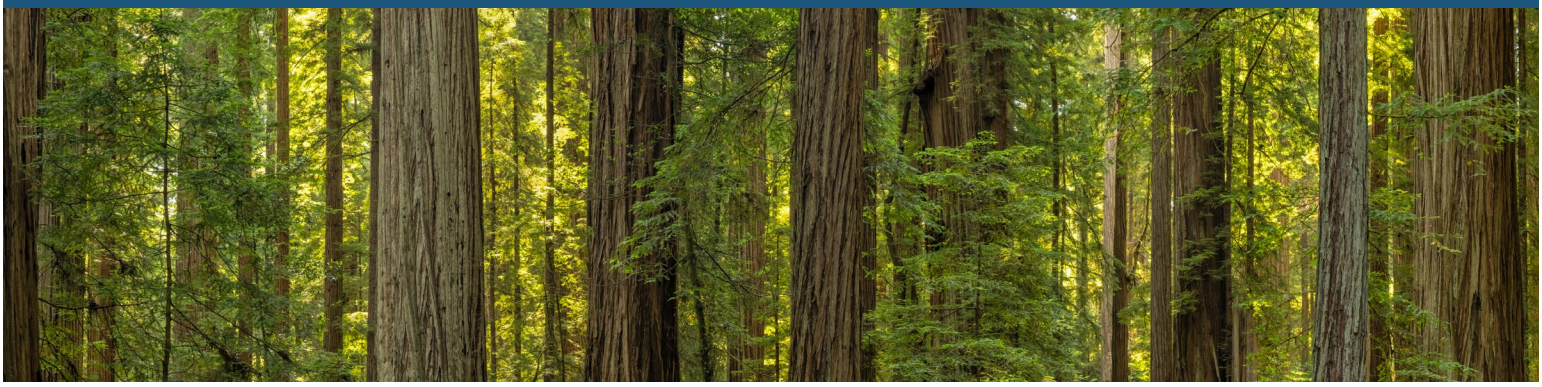
4. Not be decertified in any state at the time of application for certification.

Once certification requirements are met, NRCS will enter into an agreement with the TSP which certifies them to provide technical services for specific conservation practices and activities.

Technical service providers (TSPs) work on behalf of the customer to offer planning, design, and implementation services that meets NRCS criteria.

This assistance helps improve the producer's operation and addresses resource concerns on their land.

to get Started SCAN ME



Financial Assistance Programs

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers programs that provide technical and financial support to agricultural producers and non-industrial private forest landowners. These programs offer specific conservation practices, activities, or enhancements that will assist the NRCS client in reaching their conservation goals.

TSPs can be utilized by clients through all stages of the conservation planning process and through contract implementation The type of assistance needed by NRCS participants varies based on land use, resource concerns, and ultimately the goals of the individual client.

Here are some examples of common Forestry activities and conservation practices supported by NRCS Programs:

Forest Management Plan

A Forest Management Plan (FMP) is a gateway to understanding a forest's health and potential. The FMP is a site-specific plan developed based on the landowner's management objectives and the professional expertise of a skilled forester who is certified by NRCS as a Technical Service Provider (TSP). The FMP provides detailed information about species composition, resource concerns, and other ecosystem components of the property.

Brush Management

The management or removal of woody plants including those that are invasive and noxious. This practice can be accomplished by mechanical, biological, or chemical methods alone or in combination. Benefits include:

- Restore or release native plant communities.
- Control noxious and invasive woody plant species.
- Maintain, modify, or enhance wildlife habitat.

Tree/Shrub Establishment

Establishing woody plants by planting seedlings or cuttings, by direct seeding, and/or through natural regeneration. Benefits include:

- Wildlife habitat.
- Erosion control.
- Water quality improvement.
- Improving or restoring natural diversity.
- Enhancing aesthetics.

Forest Stand Improvement

The manipulation of tree and shrub species composition, structure, or density to achieve desired forest conditions. This practice uses site specific and appropriate silvicultural techniques to achieve the desired future conditions. Benefits include:

- Maintain or improve forest health, structure, composition and productivity.
- Maintain or improve wildlife, fish, and pollinator habitat.
- Maintain or improve forest carbon stocks.
- Manage fuel loads and reduce fire hazards.

Woody Residue Treatment

Address residual woody material that is created due to management activities or natural disturbances. Treatment methods can include piling, chipping/masticating, lop and scatter, off-site removal, or crushing/compacting. Benefits include:

- Reduce the risk of harmful insects and disease.
- Manage fuel loads and reduce fire hazards.
- Maintain or increase soil health and organic content.

Early Successional Habitat Development/Managment

This practice is used to manage the succession of plants to benefit wildlife or the natural plant communities. Various techniques can be used to alter forest conditions to achieve the desired plant community structure and plant species diversity. Benefits include:

- Maintain or improve desirable plant diversity, productivity, and health.
- Provide habitat for species requiring early successional habitats for all or part of their life cycle.