USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

Fact Sheet

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service offers voluntary Farm Bill programs that benefit both agricultural producers and the environment.

What Is CSP?

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps agricultural producers build on their existing conservation efforts while strengthening their operation. CSP pays participants for conservation performance – the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) delivers the largest long-term investment in NRCS conservation programs in decades, delivering over $34 billion through fiscal year (FY) 2031, including more than $7.7 billion for CSP. This increase in funding ensures conservation remains rooted in agriculture, with benefits to producers, communities and natural resources.

CSP addresses various resource concerns including soil quality, soil erosion, water quality, water quantity, air quality, plant resources, and animal resources as well as energy by helping producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns.

For producers who are already taking steps to improve the condition of their land, CSP can help them find new ways to meet their goals. Whether they are looking to improve grazing conditions, increase crop resiliency, or develop wildlife habitat, NRCS can custom design a CSP plan to help meet those goals. NRCS can help identify natural resource problems in an operation and provide technical and financial assistance to solve those problems or attain higher stewardship levels in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner.

This also includes practices used in the Regenerative Pilot Program, an outcomes-based approach to conservation, addressing whole farm resource concerns through regenerative agriculture conservation plans.

CSP provides two possible types of payments through five-year contracts: annual payments for installing new conservation activities and maintaining existing practices; and supplemental payments for adopting a resource-conserving crop rotation.

Who Is Eligible?

Applicants may include individuals, legal entities, joint operations, or Indian tribes that meet the stewardship threshold for at least two priority resource concerns when they apply. They must also agree to meet or exceed the stewardship threshold for at least one additional priority resource concern by the end of the contract. Producers must have effective control of the land for the term of the proposed contract.

Eligible lands include private and tribal agricultural lands, cropland, grassland, pastureland, rangeland, and nonindustrial private forest land. CSP is available to all producers, regardless of operation size or type of crops produced, in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Caribbean and Pacific Island areas.

How to Apply

Apply at your local USDA Service Center. Applications are accepted at any time.

Payments are made after October 1 of each fiscal year for contract activities installed and maintained in the previous year.

More Information

For more information or to find your local USDA Service Center, visit nrcs.usda.gov or scan the QR code.

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