



Date: October 3, 2016

WASHINGTON BULLETIN WA 300-16-05

SUBJECT: Program Obligation Timeline

Purpose: To provide the Fiscal Year 2017 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Obligation Timeline.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2017

Background: A new process has been developed for implementing EQIP for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 to assist in conservation planning activities. This process will address all of the funding pools for the general EQIP (Local Work Group (LWG) pools), statewide and national program initiatives.

Explanation: This bulletin and attachment A identifies the FY 2017 key dates for program implementation and obligation for the general EQIP (LWG pools), statewide and national program initiatives.

EQIP for FY 2017:

- 1) **A statewide communication plan** will be implemented to inform staff and public of the new changes for FY 2017 planning and contracting. This change will provide more emphasis on conservation planning before contracts are written, creating quality contracts to reduce cancellations, late implementation rates and modifications, and create a more manageable workload and workflow for planners in program delivery.
 - a) **Statewide staff teleconferences:**
 - i) First one occurred September 15, 2016.
 - ii) Second one was during the statewide programs monthly conference call on September 20, 2016.
 - iii) The third call will be October 18, 2016, during the statewide programs monthly conference call.
 - b) **Public announcement:** announcement of application cutoff dates (batching periods) for all EQIP funding pools will be released timely and updated on the state EQIP webpage.
 - c) **State Conservationist meetings**
 - i) The state conservationist will take the message to the Washington State Conservation Commission, Washington Association of Conservation Districts and other partners in the next several months.
- 2) **Application Process:**
 - a) Applications are received on a year-round basis. Upon receipt of an application, the designated conservationist or program assistant must review the application for completeness and accuracy and enter it into ProTracts. Applications must be complete as defined in CPM 515.51 subpart F and include a DUNS number and SAM.gov registration date when required. Each applicant must establish themselves as a USDA customer and provide information for SCIMS, Farm and Tract number to Farm Service Agency (FSA) prior to submitting an application.

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- b) All applications must meet the FSA eligibility required by the appropriate application cutoff date. If an application does not have the FSA eligibility complete at the time of application cutoff it will be identified in Protracts as "Signup Number" 10. Once FSA eligibility is complete protracts "Signup Number" will be adjusted to move the application to the proper "Signup Number". (Application stays pending status in protracts unless it is actually determined to be ineligible - not submitting an FSA form only does not make them ineligible)
 - c) Any applications determined not eligible by the cutoff date (batching date) because they are missing documentation as defined in CPM 512.22, 515.51, and 515.52 will be determined ineligible and the ineligible letter in Protracts will be sent to the applicant within a week or less under signature of the district conservationist. Citation of the appropriate regulation found in 7 CFR Part 1466 to support the basis of the ineligibility determination must be included in the letter.
- 3) The "EQIP Eligibility Documentation Checklist" from EQIP Manual CPM 515.152 is required to complete eligibility determinations for EQIP by the application cutoff date, and all applications must have a completed "EQIP Eligibility Documentation Checklist", including identified resources concerns, prior to ranking deadline dates. This means the "other eligibility" tab in ProTracts must be marked "yes."
- 4) Screening tools are being reviewed by a working committee and will be released by October 18, 2016. All eligible applications will be screened using the appropriate screening tool. The screening tool will be used as a workload prioritization tool for the field office staff. The following screening tools are being reviewed and updated:

Screening tool FY 16 SGII WA NRCS EQIP 12-4-15.docx
 FY 16 Tribal Screening Tool 12-3-2015.docx
 Screening tool FY 16 WA NRCS EQIP 12-3-15.docx
 Screening tool FY 16 HT WA NRCS EQIP 12-3-15.docx
 307.11 National on-farm Energy Initiative (PDF)
 FY 16 Air Quality Screening Tool

Screening can be performed any time prior to the ranking deadline. Areas have the option to determine screening deadlines.

5) Application Process Timeline:

a) November

(1) November 18, 2016:

(a) 1st signup cutoff date (first batching period) for all funding pools

a) February

(1) February 17, 2017:

a) Eligibility, screening, ranking, toolkit plans and 1155 completed and uploaded for the first batched applications for state funded pools managed by the state: Beginning Farmer, Socially Disadvantaged, Tribal, Air Quality, Energy, Organic, Organic Transition, Seasonal High Tunnels, Sage Grouse Initiative, and all CAPS (102, 104, 106, 108, 110, 114, 118, 128, 130, 142, 146).

a. The processes to this step are as follows:

- i. All applications will be set as eligible in Protracts based on program eligibility criteria.
- ii. Only high priority screened applications will be ranked.

- iii. Ranking will be completed using the AERT tool in ProTracts.
- iv. CPA- 52 will be filled out according to the resource concerns identified in planning.
- v. Toolkit plans will be developed based on the identified resource concerns and uploaded from Toolkit.
- vi. CPA - 1155 will be developed from toolkit and uploaded to the identified application in ProTracts.

b) 2nd signup cutoff date (second batching period) for all funding pools.

NOTE: If changes to application ranking occur, the district conservationist will need to move application to next sign up number.

b) April

(1) April 21, 2017:

(a) Last day for applicants to sign the ProTracts contract for 1st cutoff applications.

(b) Screening, ranking, eligibility, toolkit plans and 1155 will be completed for the second batched applications the LWG pools.

a. The processes to this step are as follows:

- i. All applications will be set as eligible in ProTracts based on program eligibility criteria.
- ii. Only high priority screened applications will be ranked.
- iii. Ranking will be completed using the AERT tool in ProTracts.
- iv. CPA- 52 will be filled out according to the resource concerns identified in planning.
- v. Toolkit plans will be developed based on the identified resource concerns and uploaded from Toolkit.
- vi. CPA - 1155 will be developed from toolkit and uploaded to the identified application in ProTracts.

(c) 3rd signup cutoff date (third batching period) for all funding pools.

(d) If funding remains from the first cutoff date (1st batch period) this date is the 2nd cutoff date (batch period) for any applications that were not funded in the 1st batching period.

(d) May

(1) May 19, 2017:

(a) All of the pre-approved/approved applications from the first batch period will be obligated.

(i) All documents will be uploaded into DMS for review and obligation

- 1. Obligations can occur anytime they are ready to be approved by the contracting officer before this date.

(e) June

(1) June 16, 2017:

(a) Last day for applicants to sign the ProTracts contract for the 2nd batch date applications.

(b) Screening, ranking, eligibility, toolkit plans, and 1155 completed and uploaded for the third batched applications (all applications that missed the first and second batch periods).

a. The processes to this step are as follows:

- i. All applications will be set as eligible in ProTracts based on program eligibility criteria.
- ii. Only high priority screened applications will be ranked.
- iii. Ranking will be completed using the AERT tool in ProTracts.
- iv. CPA- 52 will be filled out according to the resource concerns identified in planning.
- v. Toolkit plans will be developed based on the identified resource concerns and uploaded from Toolkit.
- vi. CPA - 1155 will be developed from toolkit and uploaded to the identified application in ProTracts.

(f) July

(1) July 21, 2017:

(a) All of the pre-approved/approved applications will be obligated for the second batched applications.

(i) All documents will be uploaded into DMS for review and obligation.

1. Obligations can occur anytime they are ready to be approved by the contracting officer before this date.

(b) Last day for applicants to sign the ProTracts contract for the 3rd cutoff date (3rd batch period) applications.

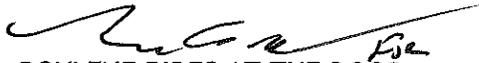
(g) August

(1) August 18, 2017:

(a) All three of the batch periods will be obligated.

- 6) All eligibility, ranking, cost estimates, and obligations deadlines are identified in this bulletin and will be identified again in the "WA300-16-05 attached Program Obligation Timelines matrix. These dates are not flexible and will be supported.
- 7) The "WA300-16- A Program Obligation Timelines" matrix (attached) will be updated by bulletin when information becomes available for other FY 2017 Farm Bill financial assistance programs such as CSP.

For additional information contact your program liaison or Jeff Harlow ASTC-Programs.


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State Conservationist

Attachment: Washington Program Obligation Timelines Matrix

Program Obligation Timelines

Farm Bill Programs

1 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM - EQIP

	2016	2017
	October	November
	November 18th	
EQIP Application Cutoff #1- All FSA eligibility completed		February 17th
Ranking Date- for State Pools: Beginning Farmer, Socially Disadvantaged, Tribal, Air Quality, Energy, Organic, Organic Transition, Seasonal High Tunnels, Sage Grouse Initiative, and all CAPS (102, 104, 106, 108, 110, 114, 118, 128, 130, 142, 146) (Resource Concerns are identified through the planning process and plans are uploaded to toolkit)		February 17th
EQIP Cutoff #2-All FSA Eligibility completed		April 21st
Ranking Date- for LWG (Resource Concerns are identified through the planning process and plans are uploaded to toolkit)		April 21st
Last day to sign Cutoff #1 contracts		April 21st
EQIP Cutoff #3-All FSA Eligibility completed (2nd cutoff date for applications not funded in 1st cutoff date)		April 21st
First Batch Obligation Date		May 19th
Ranking Date- All other National pools and catch-all for all funding pools (Resource Concerns are identified through the planning process and plans are uploaded to toolkit)		June 16th
Last day to sign Cutoff #2 contracts		June 16th
Second Batch Obligation Date		July 21st
Last day to sign cutoff #3 contracts		July 21st
All Obligations complete		August 18th