

# Applying for Financial Assistance

## NRCS Conservation Programs



## Are You Eligible for NRCS Assistance?

### Introduction

If you would like to receive financial assistance through NRCS programs, please review the checklist below to determine your eligibility. However, if you are not interested in receiving funding, but would like to talk to someone about addressing natural resource concerns on your operation, please contact your local USDA Service Center. Our staff is available to assist anyone with conservation planning anytime the office is open.

### Step 1: Meeting the minimum eligibility requirements

Check your requirements here. Applicant must: be currently engaged in agricultural or forest production on eligible land;

- ✓ be an individual, entity, or joint operation;
- ✓ have documented control of the land for the term of the contract; and
- ✓ have an average adjusted gross income of \$900,000 or less annually.

Eligible land must:

- ✓ be ag land, nonindustrial private forest land, or other land on which ag products, livestock, or forest products are produced.
- ✓ not receive other USDA program payments for the same conservation practice;
- ✓ have an identified natural resource concern which NRCS can address;
- ✓ be in compliance with highly-erodible land (HEL) and wetland compliance provisions; and
- ✓ be privately owned. Publicly owned lands are eligible only if the land is leased or rented to an eligible agricultural producer.

### Step 2: Applying for assistance

- The recommended next step is obtaining a conservation plan for your land.
  - A NRCS representative will schedule an appointment to complete an on-site assessment of your farm and develop a conservation plan. Conservation planning completed prior to application ranking allows the ranking process to move more quickly, because the applicant will already have identified the conservation needs.
- Complete and sign a NRCS-CPA-1200 program application. You will need to read the NRCS-CPA-1202-CPC appendix which explains the rules of the programs.
- Complete any additional necessary forms, as requested by the NRCS representative.

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## Help for Historically Underserved Farmers

The 2018 Farm Bill strengthens support for historically underserved producers. Building upon previous farm bills, historically underserved farmers have dedicated funding and can receive an increased payment rate of up to 90 percent of practice implementation costs. Further, the 2018 Farm Bill requires that the approved applicants are proactively offered the advance payment option.

Historically Underserved farmers include farmers who are beginning (farming fewer than 10 consecutive years), veteran farmers (beginning farmers who have been honorably discharged within past 10 years), have limited resources and those who are socially disadvantaged farmers (those belonging to racial or ethnic groups that have historically been subjected to prejudice).

- Note: Not all NRCS programs offer the same incentives for all groups. Please be sure to talk with your local field office to see what is available to you.

## Step 3: Required Documentation

- If you do not have a Farm and Tract number, you will need to contact the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to establish one. FSA offices are co-located with NRCS offices in each county. Bring with you proof of your control of the land (deed/lease) and signature authority to represent a business, if applicable (for entities, or joint operations).
- Then the Farm Service Agency will assist you in completing:
  - Form AD-1025 to determine HEL and Wetland Compliance;
  - Form CCC-941 to establish Adjusted Gross Income; and
  - Form CCC-901 Members' information (and Form CCC-902 for entities and joint operations only)

## Step 4: Application Ranking & Selection

- Your application, completed in step 2, is given a ranking score based on the Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART). After the funding cut-off date, the highest ranked applications will be funded until the money is exhausted. If your application is not funded, you may reapply each year or you can request to defer your application to the following program year.

## Contact NRCS:

### USDA Service Centers in Delaware

Kent: 302-741-2600, ext 3

New Castle: 302-832-3100, ext 3

Sussex: 302-856-3990, ext 3

