

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary, conservation program administered by NRCS that can provide financial and technical assistance to install conservation practices that address natural resource concerns. The purpose of EQIP is to promote agricultural production, forest management, and environmental quality as compatible goals; to optimize environmental benefits; and to help farmers and ranchers meet Federal, State, Tribal, and local environmental regulations.

EQIP Application Sign-up and Cut-off Dates

NRCS accepts EQIP applications year-round, but establishes cutoff dates to make funding selections for eligible, screened, and ranked applications.

To be ready for EQIP funding consideration, interested applicants will need to: (1) Develop a conservation plan, (2) Submit an application, (3) Meet program eligibility requirements, and (4) Approve their 'EQIP schedule of operations'.

The time needed to complete a conservation plan and process eligibility can vary, from a few weeks to more than a month, depending on the complexity of the farming operation.

Develop a Conservation Plan

A conservation plan includes all practices, regardless of the program's financial assistance, that a producer or landowner has agreed to adopt for the agricultural operation and/or associated agricultural lands. Interested applicants are encouraged to request conservation planning and technical assistance from a local NRCS field office to help with the development of a conservation plan.

Submitting an Application

Interested applicants may apply for EQIP by completing and submitting the application, Form NRCS-CPA-1200, Conservation Program Application, to the NRCS field office in person, by phone, email, or fax in the county which you own land or where you have an agricultural operation or non-industrial private forest land.

Program Eligibility Requirements

In order to be considered eligible for EQIP the applicant must have a vested interest in production agricultural or non-industrial private forest land and meet other program eligibility requirements.

'EQIP schedule of operations'

The basis for an application is the 'EQIP schedule of operations' and is derived from the applicant's conservation plan. The EQIP 'schedule of operations' identifies the conservation practices to be implemented, timing of the implementation, practice location, and payment rates.

EQIP Screening, Ranking and Funding

EQIP funding decisions are based on an application evaluation process that includes screening tools and ranking criteria. Screening tools are worksheets used to prioritize an application based on factors such as: a completed conservation plan; readiness to implement practices; history of contract compliance; and resource priorities addressed in the 'EQIP schedule of operations'. Ranking criteria considers the anticipated benefit of a conservation system, or practice, in the 'EQIP schedule of operations' to a natural resource concern.

About the Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) EQIP Fund Pool

The Food Security Act of 1985 as amended and subsequent congressional actions authorize NRCS to provide financial assistance through EQIP to support development of Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs). For each of the offered CAPs, EQIP payments will only be made for development of plans prepared by certified technical service providers (TSP).

Applications for a CAP must address all the identified and applicable resource concerns and include all the eligible fields that—

- The CAP is designed to address (i.e., all farmstead, crop or pasture operations).
- Are within the operating unit.
- The producer has control.
- Are included in the NRCS-certified conservation plan.

CAPs that do not cover the entire area described do not meet program requirements and will not be considered for financial assistance as they are not effective in assisting the producer to meet the purpose of the program.

Eligible producers may submit applications for development of multiple CAPs; however, only one CAP contract may be developed on an eligible land unit (e.g., field) at the same time.

Contracting of multiple CAP contracts on the same land unit is prohibited except for Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) and Agricultural Energy Management Plan (AgEMP) CAPs, where multiple CAP plans may be approved and implemented on the same land unit. AgEMP will only be funded under the On-Farm Energy Initiative.

What Is A Conservation Activity Plan?

A Conservation Activity Plan or CAP can be developed for producers to identify conservation practices needed to address a specific natural resource need. Typically, these plans are specific to certain kinds of land use such as grazing land, forest land, or can also address a specific resource need such as a plan for management of nutrients or to address an air quality concern. With a CAP plan, producers can then apply for financial assistance to implement the needed conservation practices.

How Do I Find A Technical Service Provider?

Information about CAP services from Technical Service Providers, including how to find a certified TSP in your State, the requirements to become a certified Technical Service Provider, can be found on the NRCS national TSP website:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/technical/tsp/?cid=stelprdb1042981>

Approved NRCS Conservation Activity Plans

Only approved NRCS conservation activity plans are eligible for financial assistance through this EQIP fund Pool. A Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) can be developed for agricultural operations to identify conservation practices needed to address a specific natural resource need.

Eligible applicants may apply for the development of multiple CAPs; however, only one CAP contract may be developed on an eligible land unit (e.g., field) at the same time (exception CAP 102 and an AgEMP).

Table 1. Eligible Conservation Activity Plans

Practice Code	Conservation Activity Plan Name	Units	Lifespan
102	Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan - Written	no	1
104	Nutrient Management Plan - Written	no	1
106	Forest Management Plan - Written	no	1
108	Feed Management Plan - Written	no	1
110	Grazing Management Plan - Written	no	1
112	Prescribed Burning Plan - Written	no	1
114	Integrated Pest Management Plan - Written	no	1
118	Irrigation Water Management Plan - Written	no	1
130	Drainage Water Management Plan - Written	no	1
142	Fish and Wildlife Habitat Plan - Written	no	1
146	Pollinator Habitat Plan - Written	no	1
154	IPM Herbicide Resistant Weed Conservation Plan – Written	no	1

NRCS Field Office Contact Information

For more information about EQIP, how to apply and program eligibility, interested applicants should contact a NRCS field office in the county which you own land or where you have an agricultural operation or non-industrial private forest land.

Table 2. NRCS Field Office Contact Information

NRCS Office	Phone Number	NRCS Office	Phone Number
Alturas Service Center	(530) 233-4137	Modesto Service Center	(209) 491-9320
Auburn Service Center	(530) 885-6505	Napa Field Office	(707) 252-4189
Bakersfield Service Center	(530) 336-0967	Oroville Service Center	(530) 534-0112
Bishop Field Office	(760) 872-6111	Oxnard Field Office	(805) 984-2358
Blythe Field Office	(760) 922-3446	Petaluma Service Center	(707) 794-1242
Capitola LPO	(831) 475-1967	Placerville Field Office	(530) 295-5630
Colusa Service Center	(530) 458-2931	Quincy LPO	(530) 283-7511
Concord Service Center	(925) 672-4577	Red Bluff Service Center	(530) 527-3013
Del Norte LPO	(707) 487-7630	Redding Service Center	(530) 226-2560
El Centro Service Center	(760) 352-7886	Redlands Field Office	(909) 799-7407
Elk Grove Service Center	(916) 714-1104	Salinas Service Center	(831) 424-1036
Escondido Field Office	(760) 745-2061	San Jacinto LPO	(951) 654-7139
Eureka Service Center	(707) 442-6058	Santa Maria Service Center	(805) 928-9269
Fresno Service Center	(559) 276-7494	Sonora LPO	(209) 984-0500
Grass Valley Field Office	(530) 272-3417	So. Lake Tahoe Field Office	(530) 543-1501
Half Moon Bay LPO	(650) 726-4660	Stockton Service Center	(209) 472-7127
Hanford Service Center	(559) 584-9209	Susanville Service Center	(530) 257-7272
Hollister Service Center	(831) 637-4360	Templeton Service Center	(805) 434-0396
Hoopla LPO	(707) 486-7439	Tulelake Basin Project Office	(530) 667-4247
Indio Service Center	(760) 347-3675	Ukiah Service Center	(707) 468-9223
Jackson LPO	(209) 223-6535	Victorville Service Center	(760) 843-6882
Lakeport LPO	(707) 263-4180	Vacaville Service Center	(707) 448-0106
Lancaster Service Center	(661) 945-2604	Visalia Service Center	(559) 734-8732
Livermore LPO	(925) 371-0154	Weaverville Service Center	(530) 623-3991
Madera Service Center	(559) 674-4628	Willows Service Center	(530) 934-4601
Mariposa LPO	(209) 966-3431	Woodland Service Center	(530) 662-2037
McArthur LPO	(530) 336-5604	Yreka Service Center	(530) 842-6123
Merced Service Center	(209) 722-4119	Yuba City Service Center	(530) 674-1461