



Navigating the World of NRCS

Justin Atkins, Hannah Seburn, Adam
Gagne

Natural Resources Conservation Service

- **Who Are We?**
 - Federal Agency under the USDA
 - Formed because of the Dust Bowl
 - Formerly the Soil Conservation Service
- **What Is Our Goal?**
 - Help landowners/operators conserve, manage, and improve natural resources...
“Helping People Help the Land”
- **Who Are Our Clients?**
 - Farmers (dairy, beef, vegetable, organic, fruit, commodity crops, grazing, etc)
 - Private landowners- forestry and wildlife interests

5

Steps to Assistance

How to Get Assistance from NRCS
for Farms, Ranches and Forests

1

PLANNING

Visit your local NRCS field office to discuss your goals and work with staff on a conservation plan.

2

APPLICATION

With the help of NRCS, complete an application for financial assistance programs.

3

ELIGIBILITY

Find out if you're eligible for NRCS' variety of financial assistance programs.

4

RANKING

NRCS ranks applications according to local resource concerns.

5

IMPLEMENTING

Put conservation to work by signing a contract and implementing conservation practices.

1

PLANNING

Visit your local NRCS field office to discuss your goals and work with staff on a conservation plan.

- What are your goals?
- NRCS Technical Resources
- Conservation Plan- start the development of identifying resource concerns and determining conservation practices that can help address them on your land. An on-site visit will be completed.

Pasture Resource Concern

Forage Productivity (over grazing), Nutrient Loading, Streambank Erosion, **Soil Health**

Best Management Practices for Pastureland

Rotational Grazing, Streambank fencing, Pasture plantings, Troughs, Stabilized crossing, Riparian Forest Buffers



Farmstead/Animal Resource Concerns

Barnyard runoff, Inadequate manure storage size, Silage leachate, Stormwater



Best Management Practices for the Farmstead

Filter areas, Nutrient management plans, Stormwater collection, Manure Storages, Herbaceous buffers



Cropland Resource Concerns

Sheet Erosion, Soil Health, Gully Erosion, Compaction, Organic Matter, Over Applying Nutrients, Insufficient water for plant growth



Best Management Practices for Cropland

Residue Management (aka No-till), Strip Cropping, Crop Rotation, Waterways, Cover Cropping, Micro-irrigation



2

APPLICATION

With the help of
NRCS, complete an
application for
financial assistance
programs.

- What Program is Right for You?
 - EQIP, AMA, CSP, ACEP

- Basic Eligibility
 - Are you applying as an individual or an entity?
 - What forms need to be completed? Completing the AD1026 to ensure a conservation system is being followed and that no wetlands are disturbed.

- Deadlines
 - What is the deadline to submit applications?
 - Am I required to follow through with a contract now?

3

ELIGIBILITY

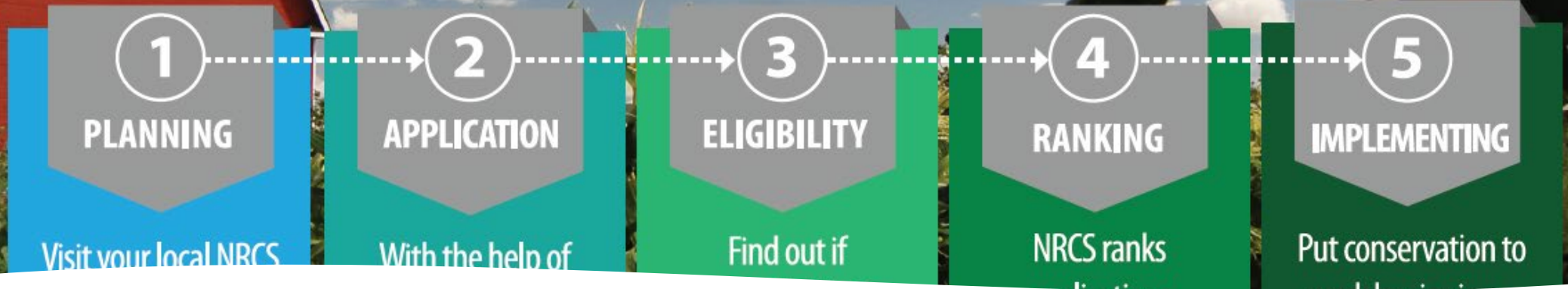
Find out if
you're eligible for
NRCS' variety
of financial
assistance programs.

- Get Your Pen Ready!
- FSA Office:
 - Farm Records (ex. Tax ID #, Farm/Tract #, Owner/Operator, etc)
 - HEL/WC: (Highly Erodible Land/Wetland Compliance)
 - Signature Authority
 - AGI (Adjusted Gross Income) Form- *completed annually after Oct. 1 of each new year*
 - Beginning Farmer/Veteran Certification
- NRCS Office:
 - Complete Application Form
 - Direct Deposit Form
 - Control of Land Verification

5

Steps to Assistance

How to Get Assistance from NRCS
for Farms, Ranches and Forests



What's Next?

1. You have started the planning process with NRCS, they've probably come out and have provided you some preliminary information and recommendations
2. You turned in your application after NRCS helped determine what program is best
3. You submitted your eligibility paperwork by the deadline

4

RANKING

NRCS ranks
applications
according to local
resource concerns.

- What Does Ranking Mean?
 - Each application is assigned a score and this is the order in which we select applications for funding
- What Is Being Considered?
 - Type of resource concerns identified
 - Amount of conservation benefit that the practices will provide
 - Location within or proximity to a priority watershed, high quality stream, or special habitat area
 - Erodibility of soils and/or impairment of nearby streams
 - Adoption of high priority practices for your region (wildlife, soil health, nutrients, etc)
 - And other factors....
- Final Ranking
 - When all these factors are entered into the system a score is developed.
 - Funding starts from the highest score to the lowest until the Area, State, or Local Office runs out of money for that program/project area

5

IMPLEMENTING

Put conservation to work by signing a contract and implementing conservation practices.

- Hurry Up and Wait....
- Being Offered a Contract
 - If you are offered a contract you will need to make final decisions in a timely manner (2-4 weeks in some areas) as to whether to move forward or not
 - The final cost share rates and estimated practice quantities will be determined and agreed upon at this time.
- Contract Schedule/Schedule of Operations
 - You will work with your NRCS Planner to determine which practices will be completed in what years (1-5 years).
 - A practice must be completed within the first 12 months
 - The final practices, estimated practice quantities, and cost share rates will be officially documented
- Contract Appendix
 - See your Application packets. The Appendix has all the requirements spelled out as to what is expected of you and what is expected of USDA.

5

IMPLEMENTING

Put conservation to work by signing a contract and implementing conservation practices.

- Implementation
 - You will be provided specific information on how to install the practice, whether it is agronomic or structural (manure storage, irrigation system, watering system, etc)
 - If structural then a design will be provided by an engineer, which may require several visits (including completion of a survey)
- Payments
 - Payment are made AFTER the practice is installed and certified
 - An advanced payment of up to 50% is available for beginning farmers but the practice must be completed within in 90 days.
- Modifications to a Contract
 - In some cases modifications to a contract may be if a practice was not estimated correctly or something requested has changed within the scope of the original project
- Operation and Maintenance
 - The long term operation and maintenance of all the installed practices is the responsibility of the participant.

Success Story



Assistance for Beginning Farmers and Veterans



TheUSDANRCS ✓
11.9K subscribers

Subscribe

👍 572



➦ Share

📌 Save





You Now Know:

- About NRCS
 - How To Locate Your Local NRCS Service Center
 - The 5 Steps to Assistance
 - Have Helpful Resources
-

What Program is Right For You?

 **EQIP**

Environmental
Quality Incentives
Program

 **AMA**

Agricultural
Management
Assistance Program

 **HFRP**

Healthy Forests
Reserve Program

 **CSP**

Conservation
Stewardship
Program

 **ACEP**

Agricultural
Conservation
Easement Program

**(ACAP) Ag
Conservation
Assistance Program**
**(REAP) Resource
Enhancement &
Protection**

EQIP-Environmental Quality Incentive Program/ AMA- Agricultural Management Assistance

- AMA typically used for new irrigation projects and high tunnel projects
- EQIP: Bread and butter program.

Cover a wide array of Best Management Practices to address

Resource concerns on farms and forestland. Program with broad capabilities

- Typically 1-4 years in length, must commence a practice in the first 12 months
- Flexible schedule
- Get paid as you go. Cost incentive payment
- Different funding pools for different projects, how does this help?
- How does ACAP/CEG fit into EQIP projects?

CSP-Conservation Stewardship Program

- Program designed to enhance producer's operation. Typically used after EQIP or AMA
- 5 year contracts
- Get rewarded for existing conservation BMPs you are doing already (existing payment)
- Select new enhancement(s) to try. These enhancement are designed to enhance your operation
- Minimum \$4,000 payment. Works excellent for smaller farmers
- Requires more record keeping concerning your operations
- Payments come at the end of the year, rather than along the way as you get things done
- Excellent choice for invasive species management for forest landowners

What topics are most important to you?

Most common BMP's?

What if you don't own the land? Can we still help?

Do you like pollinators? We can help provide funding for them.

Do we help fund high tunnels?

There are higher cost share rate for beginning farmers, find out if you are one!

What can we do for sheep farms?

What kind of operation do you have?

Do we assist organic producers?

Do you own forested land? How can we help?

Justin Atkins, Hannah Seburn, Adam Gagne

Cumberland County NRCS

717-601-3718

justin.atkins@usda.gov

USDA is an equal opportunity employer, provider, and lender.



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Natural Resources Conservation Service

