

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP):

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a partner-driven approach to conservation that funds solutions to natural resource challenges on agricultural land.

RCPP projects may include various on-the-ground conservation activities implemented by farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners. These activities include:

Land management/land improvement/restoration practices

Land rentals

Entity-held easements

United States-held easements

Public works/watersheds

A single RCPP project application can propose to employ any combination of these eligible activity types as part of an RCPP project.

For more information on RCPP easements, visit this link: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/node/7082>
RCPP easement page.

Eligibility:

RCPP projects must be carried out on agricultural or nonindustrial private forest land or associated land on which NRCS determines an eligible activity would help achieve conservation benefits (i.e., improved condition of natural resources resulting from implementation of conservation activities).

Eligible conservation activities may be implemented on public lands when those activities will benefit eligible lands as determined by NRCS and are included in the scope of an approved RCPP project.

Example projects:

Partnership to Advance Climate-Resilient Longleaf Restoration and Conservation on Private Lands in Alabama and Georgia

Lead Partner: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Project Type: Classic

Funding Pool: CCA

CCA (if Applicable): Longleaf Pine Range

Lead State: AL

Total Funding Request: \$25,000,000.00

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and partners will leverage RCPP funding to deliver technical and financial assistance to private landowners to actively manage planted longleaf stands, voluntarily conserve existing longleaf, and implement climate-smart forest practices to

support long-term, sustainable carbon and wildlife outcomes. The goals for this project are to engage 5,000 private landowners to restore, enhance, and conserve 150,000 acres of longleaf pine on private land in Alabama and Georgia over five years.

Service Center Locations

MIDDLETOWN SERVICE CENTER
225 DOLSON AVE
MIDDLETOWN, NY 10940-6539
(845) 343-1872
(855) 526-4795 fax
Site: 1357

RIVERHEAD SERVICE CENTER
423 GRIFFING AVE
RIVERHEAD, NY 11901-3011
(631) 727-5666
(855) 862-0829 fax
Site: 7667

BROOKLYN USDA SERVICE CENTER
111 LIVINGSTON STREET
NEW YORK-KINGS, NY 11201
(000) 000-0000
(680) 895-0228
(000) 000-0000 fax
Site: 17712

Service Center Partner Offices (mailing address)
USDA Farm Service Agency
BROOKLYN FARM SERVICE AGENCY
CALL NOW - PHYSICAL OFFICE OPENING SOON
111 LIVINGSTON STREET
BROOKLYN, NY 11201
(000) 000-0000
(680) 895-0228
(000) 000-0000 fax
Ana Villamil
County Executive Director
(680) 895-0228
ana.villamil@usda.gov

HEIDI MARIE WENZEL
Farm Loan Manager
Heidi.Wenzel@usda.gov

Site: 17712
Office: 118205

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
RIVERHEAD SERVICE CENTER
SOUTHEAST AREA
423 GRIFFING AVE STE 110
RIVERHEAD, NY 11901-3011
(631) 727-5666 ext 3
(855) 889-1416 fax
Liz Camps
District Conservationist
(631) 727-5666 x 3
(855) 889-1416 fax
Liz.Camps@ny.usda.gov

Site: 7667
Office: 102068
USDA Rural Development
USDA - RURAL DEVELOPMENT
225 DOLSON AVE, SUITE 104
MIDDLETOWN, NY 10940-6569
(845) 343-1872 ext 4
(855) 889-1632 fax

Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP):

The Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP) provides funding to help State and tribal governments encourage landowners to allow public access to their land for hunting, fishing, and other wildlife-dependent recreation.

VPA-HIP is a competitive grants program and only State and Tribal Governments may apply. Projects may be up to three years in duration. The maximum amount for a single award is \$3 million. Up to 25 percent of the funding for each award may be used to provide incentives to improve wildlife habitat on enrolled public access program lands.

Nothing in VPA-HIP preempts liability laws that may apply to activities on any property related to grants made through this program.

Who Is Eligible

Only state and tribal governments are eligible to apply for VPA-HIP grants. Private forest, farm, or ranch lands are eligible for assistance under these state grants.

Allowable grant amounts are reduced by 25 percent if the opening dates for migratory bird hunting are not consistent for residents and non-residents. This requirement does not apply to tribal governments.

How to Apply

The 2018 Farm Bill made available \$50 million for VPA-HIP. NRCS committed these funds through the competition that closed in November 2019. Landowners interested in applying for public access or wildlife habitat incentives should contact their appropriate State fish and wildlife agency for information.

More Information

Inquiries about VPA-HIP can be sent to vpa@usda.gov.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is NRCS' flagship conservation program that helps farmers, ranchers and forest landowners integrate conservation into working lands.

EQIP provides technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers and forest landowners to address natural resource concerns, such as:

- Improved water and air quality;
- Conserved ground and surface water;
- Increased soil health ;
- Reduced soil erosion and sedimentation;
- Improved or created wildlife habitat; and
- Mitigation against drought and increasing weather volatility.

How It Works

NRCS works one-on-one with producers to develop a conservation plan that outlines conservation practices and activities to help solve on-farm resource issues. Producers implement practices and activities in their conservation plan that can lead to cleaner water and air, healthier soil and better wildlife habitat, all while improving their agricultural operations. EQIP helps producers make conservation work for them. Financial assistance for practices may be available through EQIP. Some producers may also qualify for advance payment.

Benefits

Some of these benefits include:

- Reduced contamination from agricultural sources, such as animal feeding operations.
- Efficient use of nutrients, reducing input costs and reduction in nonpoint source pollution.
- Improved soil health, which mitigates against increasing weather volatility, improves drought resiliency and can positively affect climate change.

Implementation of climate-smart practices that improve carbon sequestration and reduce greenhouse gas emissions while building resilient landscapes.

Conservation at Work Videos

Watch how farmers and ranchers across the country are implementing EQIP practices and other conservation activities in our Conservation at Work video series. For example, see how producers are using the nutrient management conservation practice to improve water quality by more effectively using nutrients.

EQIP Initiatives

Targeted EQIP financial assistance is available through several conservation initiatives. See which initiative is available in your state.

High Tunnel Initiative

Organic Initiative

Air Quality Initiative

Landscape Conservation Initiative

On-Farm Energy Initiative

Colorado River Basin Salinity Project

EQIP offers grant opportunities through Conservation Innovation Grants, which awards competitive grants that stimulate the development and adoption of innovative approaches and technologies for conservation on agricultural lands.

Technical Assistance

NRCS offers technical assistance at no cost. Producers can use our personalized advice and information, based on the latest science and research, to make informed decisions about their land.

Technical Service Providers (TSP) can help producers plan, design and implement conservation practices or develop conservation activity plans to improve their agricultural operations. For more information on the Technical Service Provider program, visit the TSP page.

Technical assistance is also offered through our Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) program.

Need a local Technical Service Provider? Visit the locate a TSP page.

How To Get Started

The first step is to contact your local NRCS office. An NRCS conservation planner will schedule a visit to your property. They will walk the land with you to discuss your goals and review any resource concerns. Following the site visit, the conservation planner will develop a conservation plan that includes a variety of conservation practices or activities to address the resource concerns and management goals discussed.

Applications for NRCS conservation programs are accepted on a continuous basis; however, customers should apply by state-specific ranking dates to be considered for the current funding cycle.

Find application ranking dates for your state.

See payment schedules for your state.

See application.

To learn more about EQIP, contact your local NRCS office.

How to Get Assistance

Do you farm or ranch and want to make improvements to the land that you own or lease?

Natural Resources Conservation Service offers technical and financial assistance to help farmers, ranchers and forest landowners.

Step 1: Make a Plan

To get started with NRCS, we recommend you stop by your local NRCS field office. We'll discuss your vision for your land.

NRCS provides landowners with free technical assistance, or advice, for their land. Common technical assistance includes: resource assessment, practice design and resource monitoring. Your conservation planner will help you determine if financial assistance is right for you.

Step 2: Start an Application

We'll walk you through the application process. To get started on applying for financial assistance, we'll work with you:

To fill out an AD 1026, which ensures a conservation plan is in place before lands with highly erodible soils are farmed. It also ensures that identified wetland areas are protected.

To meet other eligibility certifications.

Once complete, we'll work with you on the application, or CPA 1200.

Applications for most programs are accepted on a continuous basis, but they're considered for funding in different ranking periods. Be sure to ask your local NRCS district conservationist about the deadline for the ranking period to ensure you turn in your application in time.

Step 3: Check your eligibility

As part of the application process, we'll check to see if you are eligible. To do this, you'll need to bring:

An official tax ID (Social Security number or an employer ID)

A property deed or lease agreement to show you have control of the property; and

A farm tract number.

If you don't have a farm tract number, you can get one from USDA's Farm Service Agency. Typically, the local FSA office is located in the same building as the local NRCS office. You only need a farm tract number if you're interested in financial assistance.

Step 4: Rank your application

NRCS will take a look at the applications and rank them according to local resource concerns, the amount of conservation benefits the work will provide and the needs of applicants.

Step 5: Implement your plan

If you're selected, you can choose whether to sign the contract for the work to be done.

Once you sign the contract, you'll be provided standards and specifications for completing the practice or practices, and then you will have a specified amount of time to implement. Once the work is implemented and inspected, you'll be paid the rate of compensation for the work if it meets NRCS standards and specifications.

Related Resources:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/eqip-environmental-quality-incentives#resources>