



Natural Resource Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) is a voluntary cost-sharing program that helps producers make conservation work for them

CONSERVATION PRACTICES & ACTIVITIES

Together, NRCS and producers invest in solutions that conserve natural resources for the future while also improving agricultural operations. NRCS provides agricultural producers and non-industrial forest managers with financial resources and one-on-one help to plan and implement improvements, or what NRCS calls conservation practices. Using these [practices](#) and [activities](#) can lead to cleaner water and air, healthier soil, and better wildlife habitat, all while improving agricultural operations. You can use the [Conservation Concerns Tool](#) to learn about conservation issues that might impact the natural resources on your land.



HOW IT WORKS

EQIP participants install or implement structural, vegetative, and management practices and NRCS provides reimbursement payments and technical assistance through a contractual agreement. Practices can include: improving irrigation efficiency, restoring pasture, installing High Tunnels, or improving nutrient management.

IS EQIP A GOOD FIT FOR MY FARM?



Ask yourself the following questions and write down your answers

- Am I currently farming or do I have at least one growing season completed on the land?
- Do I own my land? If not, do I have a formal written lease stating I am able to farm the land for at least the next 3 years?
- If I am looking to EQIP for help relating to livestock, do I currently have livestock on the land?
- Do I currently have a particular issue related to natural resources on my land that I want to solve?
- Can this project wait until my contract with NRCS is finalized? (Note that you should not start work on any project or practice you may be interested in applying for through EQIP, as doing so before a contractual agreement is signed makes the practice ineligible.)

Environmental Quality Incentives Program How to Apply

1. APPLICATION FORMS

Start by completing and submitting all required USDA paperwork to NRCS and FSA. See our website for contact information and page 3 for more details.

2. THE PLANNING PROCESS

Once you've submitted all your application paperwork, NRCS and WICD planners will work with you to complete the conservation planning process. We'll arrange a site visit and use several planning tools to help determine specific resource concerns your management practices will address.



3. SELECTION FOR FUNDING AND CONTRACT PROCESS

If selected, you'll receive a contract with Conservation Practice Specifications (the where, what, and how) relating to each contract item. Do not start on a project without the Practice Specifications to ensure what you are doing meets NRCS standards. Each contracted practice line item will detail amounts, cost share rates, and deadlines. Contracts also include:

- Appendix to the contract
- Map of conservation practices included in contract
- Cultural Resources Clearance - Once selected for funding the NRCS Cultural Resource Specialist is required to do a site visit. After the site visit the specialist writes a report to consult with the Washington State Historic Preservation officer and Tribal Nations that historically utilized the area. Once this process is cleared work can begin. This process can take anywhere from 30-90 days to clear after the site visit is conducted. There are instances where it could take longer.

4. CONSTRUCTION/COMPLETION OF PROJECT

Prior to beginning a project, contact your local planner, especially if there are any changes from the original agreement. Modifications to contracts are discouraged but we understand that sometimes things change. Modifications are only allowed if the changes are still within scope. Once the conservation practice is completed, a site visit is conducted by the local planner to certify completion of project to NRCS standard. A payment form will be sent to you for signature and the funds are deposited into your account anywhere from 3-14 days of the site visit certification.

HOW DOES AN EQIP CONTRACT PAYMENT WORK?

EQIP is a cost-share program, not a grant. Producers sign a contractual agreement with NRCS to receive set reimbursements for project costs after the project is completed to contract specifications. That reimbursement is considered income and a 1099 IRS form will be provided to you for tax filing.

A producer who [qualifies](#) as a socially disadvantaged, limited-resource, beginning, or veteran farmer or rancher can request advance payment to help cover some of the costs associated with your project. You would still cover the remainder out of your own pocket in advance of final reimbursement. Once the project is completed fully to contract specifications, you may receive a higher percentage of reimbursement.

Ready to GET STARTED?

Contact your local NRCS Field Office using the [Service Center Locator map](#)

We look forward to working with you!

Environmental Quality Incentives Program Application Forms



Applications are accepted year round, but ranked occasionally for contract the following year. We recommend planning 1 year ahead.

[DOWNLOAD FULL APPLICATION PACKET HERE](#)

[NRCS Conservation Program Application \(CPA-1200\)](#)

The NRCS program application outlines your project and your eligibility as a producer. If you wish to apply for more than the EQIP program, be sure to check the appropriate NRCS program box

- Typically due **EARLY OCTOBER**
- Supplemental instructions:
 - [Instructions on how to complete CPA-1200](#)
 - [Continuation page template for program application names](#)
- **Email these forms once signed in ink and scanned to Moani DiRusso** joyal.dirusso@usda.gov
- Questions? Contact Moani (360)488-4824, or the main Mt. Vernon office 360-428-7684 x3

Farm Service Agency Forms

In order to access services through NRCS, you will have to establish your eligibility and farm tract with the Farm Service Agency (FSA)

- Typically due **EARLY NOVEMBER** - Please allow **3 weeks** for processing
- **Download, complete digitally, and then print and sign in ink:**
 - [AD-2047 Customer Data Worksheet](#)
 - [CCC-941 AGI Certification](#) (one for each individual represented in the entity, one for the entity, or one for the individual if only applying as an individual)
 - [CCC-902I](#) SHORT FORM Operating Plan for an Individual OR [CCC-902E](#) Operating Plan for an Entity
 - [AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land/Wetland Conservation Compliance Certification](#) (one for each individual represented in the entity, one for the entity, or one for the individual if only applying as an individual)
 - Optional [Properties Worksheet](#) (for properties in addition to those already on your NRCS CPA-1200 or AD-2047)
- **Submit** to FSA Executive Director Sue Chamberlain using one of the following methods:
 - Email these forms once signed in ink and scanned to susan.chamberlain@usda.gov
 - Fax forms to 877-716-5751
 - Mail to: FSA, 2005 E College Way Ste 203, Mount Vernon, WA 98273, OR
 - Turn in in person to the [FSA office](#) in Mt. Vernon by appointment
 - call (360) 428-7684 x 2 to arrange
- **Questions?** Speak with Sue or Dan at (360) 428-7684 x 2
- If you already registered with the FSA, call to see which of these forms you will need
- New applicants may apply as either individuals or entities.
 - If you apply as an entity, ALL members of your entity will need to complete AD-1026, AD-2047, and the CCC-941 AGI forms

