

Policies and Guidelines

(As of February 18, 2025)

The following policies and guidelines were approved by the NC ADFP Trust Fund Advisory Committee. The list is not all-inclusive and will be periodically updated.

Agricultural Conservation Easements

Preference: Preference will be given to projects protecting whole farm units rather than projects protecting partial acreage. (Approved 09-03-08)

Term (Non-Permanent) Easement Value: Term agreements will be paid on a percentage of the easement value and will be eligible for funds as follows: (Approved 8-23-23)

50 year easement	60% easement value
40 year easement	40% easement value
30 year easement	30% easement value

Term easement landowners seeking permanent easement status are encouraged to apply for a perpetual easement. If selected for funding, the funding received previously will be deducted from the perpetual easement purchase price.

Term Easements & EVAD Relationship: Agricultural Conservation Easements may be used to add additional years to an existing EVAD agreement but can not grant funds for the remaining time of existing EVAD agreements. (Approved 12-09-08)

Appraisals: When submitting a conservation easement application, the estimated easement purchase value must be calculated through one of five methods:

- Certified Development Rights Appraisal by a Qualified Appraiser with an effective date determined by the application rules.
- Comparable Certified Development Rights Appraisal from previous projects with an effective date determined by the application rules. The Comparable Certified Development Rights Appraisal must be within the same county or within 50 miles of the applicant's property.
- For property enrolled in Present-Use Value (PUV), the difference between the fair market value and the PUV as determined by the tax card.
- For property not enrolled in PUV, data from ADFPTF closed easements will be used to determine the estimated easement purchase value.
- Letter of Opinion or Restricted Use Report by a Qualified Appraiser with an effective date determined by the application rules.

For appraisals submitted during the open grant contract period, a certified development rights appraisal will only be accepted and approved by the NCDA&CS during the open contract period if the appraisal meets the requirements detailed in the "Appraisal Requirements and Checklist for Conservation Easement Programs" included in the grant contract award. Due to periodic updates of appraisal requirements, Grantees may use the latest version of the "Appraisal Requirements and Checklist for Conservation Easement Programs."

ADFP Trust Fund monies may not be used to pay for appraisals. However, an appraisal expense can be used as a matching grant resource.

An appraisal will not be required when the grant applicant is only awarded funds for transactional costs.

The ADFP Trust Fund will accept appraisals dated within one year of a scheduled closing date.

An appraisal update may be submitted within 60 to 32 days before a potential closing date, pending the approval of all funding partners. No appraisals will be accepted 30 days before a potential closing date or end of a contract. (Approved 2-18-25)

Surveys: A new survey is required during the due diligence period. The survey must include clear delineation of the conservation easement boundary, identify any farmstead areas, exclusions, and other requirements as described by the Conservation Easement Survey Checklist as well as provide reliable metes and bounds description.

The surveyor must submit GIS shapefiles of the survey, including a polygon of the conservation easement boundary.

If the survey identifies out-parcels within the easement, legal access directly to these parcels must also be excluded. If the identified access also serves as general access into the easement site, it may remain in the easement, or an access agreement be identified.

Building envelopes or partial farm easements must be surveyed or GPS-located before the easement is signed and the final grant payment is received. ADFP Trust Fund grant funding may be used to cover survey costs. *(Revised 8-23-23)*

Easement Requirements: Applicants may require forest management and conservation plans from the grantor of the easement (landowner, farmer, etc.). Applicants may also require that the grantor of the easement (landowner, farmer, etc.) provide notice of the completion of any forestry activities. However, applicants may not require any prior notice be given before any type of harvest. *(Approved 09-03-08)*

Easement Grants: Allowable transaction costs may be included in grant allocation in addition to determined easement value of the land parcel. The total grant allocation may not be increased above contract amount. *(Approved 12/09/08)*

Easement Purchases: All parcels of a proposed conservation easement application or conservation easement grant contract must be under the same ownership. Parcels under different ownership must be submitted as separate applications. Quit Claim Deeds are not accepted as proof of ownership.

Recorded easement acreage shall have no more than a 5 percent variance less than the proposed number of acres contracted. The Grantee may request an exception to this variance with written justification to the ADFP Trust Fund. The request requires written approval of the ADFP Trust Fund.

If the variance is greater than 5 percent of the contracted acres, the additional acreage will be approved under one of the following scenarios:

1. The additional acres are included in the original parcels, and the variance is due to the Conservation Easement Survey updates.
2. The additional acres are parcels or areas within the original parcels under the same ownership as the original parcels, are in working lands use, and are within, adjacent, or contiguous to the original parcels.

If the variance is greater than 5 percent of the contracted acres and is less than the contracted acres, the grant funds for conservation easement purchase will be reduced proportionally based on the new acreage. *(Approved 8/23/2023)*

Easement Contracted Purchase Exceptions: The ADFP Trust Fund may grant an exception to the share of the funds provided that matching resources for easement purchase or donation of value is 50% or greater. If proposed matching resources for easement purchase are not provided or reduced, the contracted easement acres may be reduced equivalently to the reduction of proposed matching resources. *(Approved 5/12/2015)*

Baseline Documentation: The baseline documentation report (BDR) must contain all the information required in the BDR checklist document. After initial approval of the document by ADFP Trust Fund staff, the Grantee will submit the final version with a landowner acknowledgment and signature page at the time of closing check request. *(Approved 8-23-23)*

Environmental Audit: All easements are required to conduct either a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment or complete the NRCS Hazardous Materials Checklist and Landowner Interview or equivalent. This must be completed and submitted with the easement parcel ID suite of due diligence.

If the on-site inspection identifies environmental conditions that negatively impact the property, such as the presence of petroleum products or hazardous substances in the subsurface of the site, and these findings necessitate further investigation of environmental conditions with a Phase II ESA or equivalent, the Grantee is required to conduct these assessments through a qualified environmental firm.

If the EA or ESA includes required remediation to resolve environmental concerns, the Grantee must complete all required remedies in the EA or ESA and are encouraged to complete all recommended remedies. All required remedies must be completed before the recording of the conservation easement. The conservation easement project will be canceled if the remediation requests identified therein are not completed. *(Approved 8-23-23)*

Building envelopes: Up to 3 building lots may be designated per easement. All lots must be clearly defined by a survey and properly described in the easement language and recorded with the County Register of Deeds. Lots may not compromise the conservation value of the property or restrict the agricultural production of agricultural crops, horticulture or forestry production on the parcel of land being considered for an agricultural easement. Building envelopes must comply with all county zoning regulations and be limited to only one housing unit. *(Approved 12-09-08)*

Farmstead Area Designations: Agricultural conservation easements may allow for one or more "Farmstead Areas". A "Farmstead Area" must be clearly defined in the baseline documentation and properly described in the easement language. A "Farmstead Area" may not compromise the conservation value of the property or restrict the agricultural production of agricultural crops, horticulture or forestry production on the parcel of land being considered for an agricultural easement. Any structure in the Farmstead Area must be complimentary to agriculture production and comply with all county zoning regulations. *(Approved 12-09-08)*

Impervious Surfaces: An agricultural conservation easement funded by the N.C. ADFP Trust Fund has an impervious surface limit of two (2) percent of the total acreage of the agricultural conservation easement. This restriction applies to permanent and temporary impervious surfaces, both existing and proposed. An impervious surface is defined as an area covered by water-resistant materials. These include, but are not limited to, paved or packed roads, structures and rooftops, concrete pads, oil and gas well pads, and solar panels. To ensure the current and long-term viability of an agricultural operation, an increase in the impervious surface limit may be allowed up to five (5) percent of the total acreage of the agricultural conservation easement if there is a need based on current or planned agricultural uses and residential and farm support housing structures are limited. This waiver may be submitted during the open contract period prior to the recording of the conservation easement. No amendments to the impervious surface limit will be accepted after recording the conservation easement. *(Approved 12-06-22)*

Matching Requirements

Match Source: Match may not be from a like kind appropriation source as the ADFP Trust Fund grant funding. Example, NCDA&CS state appropriated funding matching ADFP Trust Fund state appropriated funding. *(Approved 5/12/2015)*

Special Recognition for Landowner Donation for Military: A landowner donation of conservation easement value may be used a replacement of military funding provided the following criteria are achieved.

- The military service provides documentation that the land is a high priority protect parcel.
- The military service provides funding to assist with appraisal, closing, legal and other administrative expenditures to secure the conservation easement.
- ADFPTF grant funds for the purchase of the conservation easement are limited to 50% or less of the appraised value.
- ADFPTF grant funds may be used to assist with administrative expenditures except for the appraisal to secure the conservation easement.
- ADFPTF grant funds may be considered for monitoring and stewardship funding.

(Approved 5-23-2019)

Matching Requirements for Permanent Easements: Matches can be in-kind, cash, donated easement value, or money from other programs of like kind to the ADFP Trust Fund. Programs used for matching must restrict the development rights and have restrictive language attached to the deed. For example, a funding match from USDA Farm & Ranch Protection Program would be eligible while a USDA Conservation Reserve Program would not be eligible. Matches must be directly associated with and concurrent to the

land parcel being considered for an ADFP Trust Fund grant. Monitoring and transaction fees associated with the land parcel under consideration may be considered a match provided all cost values can be fully disclosed and certified before final grant payment is received. Monitoring fee matches are capped at 3% of the agricultural conservation easement value of the land parcel. ADFP Trust Fund grants can not be used for indirect costs. *(Revised 12-09-08)*

Matching Requirements for Term Easements: By defining the value of a term easement, land owner donations and any partnering term easement program restricting development rights on the deed could then be considered for match. ADFP Trust Fund grants can not be used for indirect costs. Programs used for matching must restrict the development rights and have restrictive language attached to the deed. Matches must be directly associated with and concurrent to the land parcel being considered for an ADFP Trust Fund grant. Monitoring and transaction fees associated with the land parcel under consideration may be considered a match provided all cost values can be fully disclosed and certified before final grant payment is received. Monitoring fee matches are capped at 3% of the term agricultural conservation easement value of the land parcel. *(Revised 12-09-08)*

Matching Requirements for Agricultural Development Programs: Agricultural development programs can use in-kind services, cash, land donation, labor hours, and equipment costs as matches but the burden of proof lies on the applicant. A statement of value for such items as equipment must be certified by a specialist or an authority in the respective field. ADFP Trust Fund grants can not be used for indirect costs. *(Approved 12-11-07)*

Monitoring and Stewardship Funding

Beginning with grant cycle IX, ADFP Trust Fund may provide funding for monitoring and stewardship of ADFP Trust Fund easements. Funding is limited to 3% of the appraised easement value being purchased by the ADFP Trust Fund and must be equally matched *or up to 1.5% of the appraised easement value of a donated conservation easement without match requirement*. The ADFP Trust Fund shall approve the administrative account management and the monitoring / stewardship policies of the easement holder. The grant funding will be restricted to expenditures associated with monitoring and stewardship of the property. *(Approved 2/22/17)*

Property Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for a conservation easement through the ADFP Trust Fund's program, the property must be privately-owned, located within the borders of the State of North Carolina, and in working lands use (agriculture, horticulture, forestry). Minimum acreage requirements must follow the present-use value guidelines: Five acres for horticulture, 10 acres for agriculture (row crops or pasture), 20 acres for forestry, or a combination of working lands use. If there are existing easements that have removed the development rights from the property, those easement areas will be ineligible for the program and do not count towards the minimum acreage requirements. *(Approved 3-1-22)*

Contracts

Determination: If a selected grant recipient fails to return a completed grant contract by the stipulated deadline, ADFP Trust Fund will notify the selected grant recipient in writing as a warning. The selected grant recipient will be allowed a grace period of 10 working days from the date of correspondence to return the completed contract. After the stipulated grace period the offer will be rescinded and the grant funding reallocated. *(Approved 12-09-08)*

Grant Recipient Eligibility: Recipients must be either a North Carolina county entity or a non-profit conservation organization. Any non-profit conservation organization whose headquarters are outside North Carolina must maintain an office in North Carolina and be registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State's office. *(Approved 12-09-08)*

Contract Extensions: Extension requests and all required documentation must be received by ADFP Trust Fund a minimum of 60 days prior to the contract termination date. For ADFP Trust Fund contracts that do not include associated requests for USDA-NRCS funding issued under an initial two-year term, a maximum of two extension requests for one year each may be granted, bringing the maximum term to four years. For contracts with associated requests for USDA-NRCS funding issued under an initial three-year term, a maximum of one extension request for one year may be granted, bringing the maximum term to four years. The Grantee may request an emergency one-year extension due to the death of a landowner or severe illness or incapacitation of a landowner. *(Approved 8-23-23)*

Subcontracting: The Grantee shall not subcontract any of the work contemplated under ADFP Trust Fund Contract without prior written approval. Any approved subcontract shall be subject to all conditions of the ADFP Trust Fund Contract. Only the subcontractors or subgrantees specified in the contract documents are to be considered approved upon award of the contract. The ADFP Trust Fund shall not be obligated to pay for any work performed by any unapproved subcontractor or subgrantee. The Grantee shall be responsible for the performance of all of its subgrantees and shall not be relieved of any of the duties and responsibilities stipulated in the ADFP Trust Fund Contract. *(Approved 12-09-08)*

Contract Awards: Contract awards are based on funding availability. If total grant requests exceed the funding allocation for the grant cycle, the ADFP Trust Fund will fund a maximum of four (4) applications per category (perpetual easements, term easements, agricultural development projects/agricultural plans) per applicant. Applications for donated easement proposals requesting only transaction cost assistance are not considered in this contract limit. Each organization or agency may submit up to four (4) donated easement proposals per funding cycle. If the funding allocation for the grant cycle is greater than the total grant requests, the contract maximum per applicant is waived for the grant cycle. *(Revised 3-1-22)*

Maintaining Grantee Eligibility Status:

ADFPTF shall apply the following guidelines when assessing a grantee’s eligibility status as a grant recipient:

<i>Frequency of Adverse Actions</i>	<i>Severity of Consequences</i>		
	Low Severity	Medium Severity	High Severity
High Frequency	Medium Risk	High Risk	High Risk
Medium Frequency	Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
Low Frequency	Low Risk	Medium Risk	Medium Risk

Definitions:

- High Frequency: Five or more times per reporting period
- Medium Frequency: Three or four times per reporting period
- Low Frequency: One or two times per reporting period
- Low Severity: These adverse actions cause disruptions and delays to the division.
- Medium Severity: These adverse actions put grantees out of compliance with the terms of grant contracts and reporting requirements.
- High Severity: These adverse actions cause significant financial, programmatic, or legal issues that jeopardize the grantee's status as an eligible grant recipient.

Review Period

- ADFP Trust Fund staff will notify Grantees in a timely manner, no more than one month, of any late reports.
- Reports shall be considered delinquent 90 days after the reporting deadline.

Adverse Actions

- Low Frequency, Low Severity: Low Risk
 - Failure to return one or two completed grant contract packets within 10 working days without staff approval. The reporting period is a grant award cycle.
 - All grant payments and proposed grant contracts are frozen until reports are filed and approved.
- Medium Frequency, Low Severity: Low Risk
 - Failure to return three or four completed grant contract packets within 10 working days without staff approval. The reporting period is a grant award cycle.
 - All grant payments and proposed grant contracts are frozen until reports are filed and approved.
- High Frequency, Low Severity: Medium Risk
 - Failure to return five or more completed grant contract packets within 10 working days without staff approval. The reporting period is a grant award cycle.

- All grant payments and proposed grant contracts are frozen until reports are filed and approved. The review of proposed grant requests may continue but no grant contracts may be offered.
- Low Frequency, Medium Severity: Low Risk
 - One or two late budget and progress reports, conservation easement deliverables report, or monitoring reports in the previous reporting period. The reporting period is either semi-annually or quarterly for open contracts, and annually for monitoring reports.
 - All grant payments and proposed grant contracts are frozen until reports are filed and approved.
- Medium Frequency, Medium Severity: Medium Risk
 - Three or four late budget and progress reports, conservation easement deliverables report, or monitoring reports in the previous reporting period. The reporting period is either semi-annually or quarterly for open contracts, and annually for monitoring reports.
 - All grant payments and proposed grant contracts are frozen until reports are filed and approved. The review of proposed grant requests may continue but no grant contracts may be offered.
- High Frequency, Medium Severity: High Risk
 - Five or more late budget and progress reports, conservation easement deliverables report, or monitoring reports in the previous reporting period. The reporting period is either semi-annually or quarterly for open contracts, and annually for monitoring reports.
 - One or more late budget and progress reports or monitoring reports in the two previous reporting periods. The reporting period is either semi-annually or quarterly for open contracts, and annually for monitoring reports.
 - All grant payments and proposed grant contracts are frozen until reports are filed and approved. The review of proposed grant requests is discontinued, and no grant contract may be offered.
- Low Frequency, High Severity: Medium Risk
 - Failure to submit the final report and all invoices within 20 working days (28 calendar days) following the closing and recording date of one or two conservation easement projects. The reporting period is annual.
 - Failure to submit the final report and all invoices by the 10th of the month following the contract's ending date or within 20 working days (28 calendar days) following the completion of the project for one or two agricultural development projects or agricultural plans. The reporting period is annual.
 - All grant payments and proposed grant contracts are frozen until reports are filed and approved. The review of proposed grant requests may continue but no grant contracts may be offered.
- Medium Frequency, High Severity: High Risk
 - Failure to submit the final report and all invoices within 20 working days (28 calendar days) following the closing and recording date of three or four conservation easement projects. The reporting period is annual.
 - Failure to submit the final report and all invoices by the 10th of the month following the contract's ending date or within 20 working days (28 calendar days) following the completion of the project for three or four agricultural development projects or agricultural plans. The reporting period is annual.
 - Material weakness found in audit. Remain at high risk until it is corrected.
 - All grant payments are frozen. The Grantee is not eligible for an ADFP Trust Fund grant application or contract.
- High Frequency, High Severity: High Risk
 - One or more late budget and progress reports, conservation easement deliverables report, or monitoring reports in the three previous reporting periods. The reporting period is either semi-annually or quarterly for open contracts, and annually for monitoring reports.
 - Named on the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM) Suspension of Funding List (SOFL). The reporting period is weekly.
 - Failure to submit the final report and all invoices within 20 working days (28 calendar days) following the closing and recording date of five or more conservation easement projects. The reporting period is annual.
 - Failure to submit the final report and all invoices by the 10th of the month following the contract's ending date or within 20 working days (28 calendar days) following the completion of the project for five or more agricultural development projects or agricultural plans. The reporting period is annual.

- All grant payments are frozen. The Grantee is not eligible for an ADFP Trust Fund grant application or contract. *(Approved 02-18-2025)*

Partnership and Special Appropriation Funding & Granting Process

Application Process: Application for grant funding will follow authorizing appropriation protocols and consider the objectives of partner funding directives. ADFPTF may restrict or designate areas within North Carolina to give recognition of partnership protocols when using partnership funding, provided all legal and state budget rules are met. ADFPTF staff shall review applications for partnership and special appropriation grant requests and report their recommendations for grant awards to the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee shall then review and make recommendations to the Commissioner of Agriculture for grant contracting consideration. *(Approved 2-18-2021)*

Statewide Grant Applications Protocols:

Public Notice: The grant cycle or application period will be announced in a reasonable and acceptable time on the ADFPTF website and other approved methods before the initial application period. Unless revised by the Commissioner of Agriculture, an annual application period will last a minimum of 60 calendar days between mid-October and mid-December. *(Approved 2-18-2021)*

Evaluation Protocols: The evaluation method for selection and ranking applications for consideration of a grant shall be posted on the ADFPTF website. Evaluation tools used for the selection of potential grants shall be exhibited. ADFPTF staff will provide an evaluation ranking of all eligible applicants for the ADFPTF Advisory Committee review. After considering the staff recommendations, the Advisory Committee shall provide a ranked evaluation of the applicants to the Commissioner of Agriculture for consideration as potential grantees. *(Approved 2-18-2021)*

Maximum Grant Request Amount: The maximum grant requests per application are as follows:

- There is no maximum grant request for agricultural conservation easement applications.
- The maximum grant request per agricultural development project application is capped at \$500,000.
- The maximum grant request per local agricultural growth zone application is capped at \$2,000,000.
- The maximum grant request per additional conservation easement funds application is capped at 50 percent of the easement purchase value.
- The maximum grant request per Voluntary Agricultural District application is capped at \$8,500.
- The maximum grant request per Farmland Protection Plan or Cost of Community Services Study application is capped at \$17,000. *(Approved 8-23-2023)*

Grant Contract Budgeting & Payments

10% Hold Back: Grant contract budgeting and payments shall hold back 10% on all line items until ADFPTF receives all required reports and documentation. The full ADFPTF easement funding allocated for easement purchase may be submitted at closing, provided the closing attorney holds the 10% in escrow until all recorded documents and reports have been received and approved by NCDA&CS. This policy applies to all ADFPTF grant contracts.

Grantees may request lowering of the hold back percentage provided the following criteria have been provided:

1. An official request to the Commissioner of Agriculture with reasoning why the 10% hold back is an incomprehensible burden, and a proposed revised hold back percentage.
2. The Grantee has no record of infractions or late reports for ADFPTF within the last two years from the date of the revised hold back percentage request.
3. If an infraction or late report occurs during the contract period of the grant, the hold back percentage shall be reinstated at 10% or higher as a corrective measure. *(Approved 2-18-2021)*

Advancement of Conservation Easement Purchasing Funding: The conservation easement closing payment request may be submitted in writing by the Grantee 30 days before the set closing date provided the following items have been achieved:

- a. All closing documents, i.e., conservation easement, HUD statement, title commitment, subordination agreement if required, have been reviewed and approved by ADFPTF and NCDA&CS legal staff.

- b. All progress/budget reports and other administrative reports, such as monitoring, audit, etc., must be current with the ADFPTF. These reports include all current and previous grants associated with the Grantee using ADFPTF funding.
- c. The Grantee has followed the contractually-obligated work schedule as detailed in the grant contract. If Grantee fails to maintain contractual agreement between NCDA&CS and the Grantee, NCDA&CS ADFPTF shall consider additional measures to ensure Grantee follows department policies and contract procedures.
- d. The proposed conservation easement closing date shall be no less than 30 days before the contract end date. This timeline is set to eliminate the risk of losing grant funds due to the contract's expiration.
- e. All parties, including ADFPTF, Grantee, landowners, and all funding partners with a financial interest in the conservation easement, will confirm the closing date.
- f. An electronic check may be submitted to the closing attorney named in the grant contract, provided all required information provided by the Grantee is approved by ADFPTF and NCDA&CS legal staff.
- g. If a contract is determined to be at risk of not being completed, NCDA&CS may provide alternatives to reduce that risk, including revisions of the holdback provisions or the payment delivery options for services rendered by contractual arrangement. *(Approved 2-18-2021)*

Emergency Grant Contract Extension Requests: If the Grantee has not provided all closing documents and progress/budget reports 30 days before the contract's end date, the Grantee may request an emergency contract extension of the grant to the Commissioner of Agriculture. This request must include reasons for not completing the grant and following the timetable of scheduled activities to complete the grant project. All other grant contract extension requests shall follow the protocols outlined in the NCDA&CS ADFPTF grant contract. *(Approved 2-18-2021)*

Emergency Supplemental Grant Funds Requests for Conservation Easement Projects: During the open contract period, unanticipated costs may be required to complete conservation easement projects. The Grantee must maximize allowable Budget Revision Requests before submitting an Emergency Supplemental Grant Funds Request. If there are required costs to complete the conservation easement project with no available funds in the grant contract, the Grantee may request a one-time Emergency Supplemental Grant Funds Request on a conservation easement project for allowable expenses beyond the maximum line item in the grant contract. Emergency Supplemental Grant Funds Requests may be used for Attorney Fees, Baseline Documentation Report, Closing Costs (Recording Fee, Title Insurance), Environmental Assessment/Audit, or Survey. The Emergency Supplemental Grant Funds Request must be submitted in writing to the Commissioner of Agriculture or designee, and must include justification for the request, documentation of the unanticipated costs, and documentation of the exhaustion of alternative funding sources. Failure by the Grantee to initiate deliverables on the conservation easement project, Grantee staff shortages or changes, Grantee time management issues, Grantee or contractor failure to follow project deliverable requirements, and Grantee or contractor fraud or waste are not acceptable justifications for the Emergency Supplemental Grant Funds Request. The Grantee must have current grant reporting documents before submitting the request. The maximum Emergency Supplemental Grant Funds Request is \$15,000. Emergency Supplemental Grant Funds Requests for Conservation Easement Projects are subjective to funds availability. *(Approved 8-23-23)*

Average Cost Estimates: The average cost by grant line item for documents and activities for closing and recording an easement shall be presented annually to the ADFPTF Advisory Committee. The average cost estimates may be broken down into regional areas or statewide and based upon actual ADFPTF conservation easement costs within the previous five (5) years. The Advisory Committee shall provide the staff recommendations or may modify the report to the Commissioner of Agriculture. The ADFPTF staff, upon approval of the Commissioner of Agriculture, shall use the approved average costs in the development of conservation easement contract budgets. The contract budgets shall use the approved average cost estimate when the requested amount in the application budget exceeds the approved average cost. *(Approved 2-18-2021)*

Easement Purchase and Stewardship Endowment Line Items: The Easement Purchase and Stewardship Endowment line items in conservation easement grant contracts are ineligible for Budget Revision Requests. A Budget Revision Request exception for the Easement Purchase and Stewardship Endowment line items may be approved if all other grant funds are expended for allowable costs, the final appraised easement purchase is lower than the contract value, and the percentage of cash considerations to the landowner(s) is not reduced. The exception must be submitted in writing with a detailed explanation of the request and is subject to approval. *(Approved 3-1-22)*

General Information on Direct and Indirect Costs

Direct Costs: Costs that can be specifically identified with a particular project or program. *(Approved 12-09-08)*

Indirect Costs: Costs that are incurred by a grantee organization for common or joint objectives and which therefore cannot be identified specifically with a particular project or program. *(Approved 12-09-08)*

Special Terminology Use

Family Farm or Generation: The term "Family Farm" or "generation" shall recognize any private business entity legally accepted by the State of North Carolina associated with food or fiber production with the exception of municipal, county, state, or federal ownership. *(Approved 2-18-2021)*

Producer: Is defined as an individual or entity that produces an Agricultural Commodity through participation in the day-to-day labor, management, and field operations; or that has the legal right to harvest an Agricultural Commodity. *(Approved 2-18-2021)*

NOTE: Please also refer to the NC ADFP Trust Fund **Application Guidelines** and other instructional documents located on the ADFP webpage for additional guidance. Please see **General Information on Direct and Indirect Costs** for definitions and **Application Guidelines** for more cost information.