

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

North Carolina - The Update



Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Program Updates

Funding Updates

While most of our application deadlines have passed, applications for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) are still being accepted. Here is the CSP breakdown:

CSP (IRA & Classic)- \$8,285,000 has been allocated for IRA funds and \$13,875,000 has been allocated for Classic.

Timeline-

Application Reception- January 12, 2024

Ranking/Assessment- June 14, 2024

Obligation Deadline- August 16, 2024

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Currently, we're working through our received applications for eligibility along with ranking and assessment. To date, we've received the following number of applications:

- EQIP Classic- 2,409
- EQIP IRA- 434

To demonstrate where the workload is, here are the number of total EQIP applications by area:

- Area 1- 671
- Area 2- 1026
- Area 3- 1134

Proposed 2nd Sign-up

A second sign-up is being considered due to the amount of funding available this year and the desire to obligate as much as possible. The second application reception deadline is being drafted for early March.

Act Now

An Urban Act Now pool was added to address applications in urban areas as part of the IRA funding opportunity. The other fund pools are:

- Seasonal High Tunnel (Classic)
- Cropland (IRA)
- Forestry (IRA)
- CPA/DIA/CEMA (Classic)
- Long leaf Pine (Classic)

In ACT Now, states can immediately approve and obligate a ranked application in a designated ranking pool when an eligible application meets or exceeds a state determined minimum ranking score without waiting until the field office ranks all applications in the ranking pool.

General FY 2024 Updates

First Time Customers

Capturing new customers and recording brief technical assistance requests is now required to meet agency priorities. New customers are customers who have not worked with NRCS before and never received direct assistance from NRCS.

Examples of New Customers:

- A person or entity who has never received financial assistance from NRCS.
- A person who has not directly worked with NRCS before but has inherited land from a deceased spouse who had worked with NRCS in the past.
- A person who has never had a brief technical assistance or site visit by NRCS.
- A person who has received technical or financial assistance from a partner that was done outside of NRCS.

Highly Erodible Land (HEL) Determinations

The Farm Service Agency staff is now required to input all HEL and Wetland determination requests into Conservation Desktop (CD). NRCS will then pull the data from CD as the basis for all of the agency reports.

Conservation Desktop is where:

- Farm Service Agency offices upload HEL Conservation (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) determination requests.
- NRCS Resource Soil Scientist (RSS) and State Compliance Specialist uploads data packets, Preliminary Technical Determinations, and completed FSA-569 Determination.
- NRCS and FSA staff can download the HEL and or WC documents.
- Tracks the length of time it takes determinations to be completed. (from request to completed determination).

The North Carolina tracker is still being utilize for:

- Transmittal of documents between the RSS and the state office that are ready for mailing.
- Transmittal of FSA-569 HEL determination requests between the state office and the Teams.
- Transmittal of completed FSA-569 HEL data packets between the teams and state office.
- Entering of USPS certified mail tracking numbers for record keeping.

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