



# Applying For Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Funding

A Plain Language Guide from the  
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project

## In This Guide You Will Learn About:

- Who Can Apply
- Parts of the EQIP Application
- How to Apply
- Uses of EQIP Money
- Resources and Contact Information



# New Entry Sustainable Farming Project

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Updated September 2017.

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Production of this document was supported by the USDA/CSREES 2501 Program, and by USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA Partnership Agreement No. 06IE08310159).

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# Purpose of this Guide

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## Who should read this guide?

This guide is written for people who would like to change their farming practices to have a positive impact on the environment. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), a department of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) gives farmers and ranchers money to implement practices that protect water, soil, and air quality on and around farms. Each state decides which environmental issues are most important for their local communities and gives priority funding to farmers who will address those issues. This guide will help you understand the process of applying for funding from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

## You will benefit from this guide if you:

- **Are a forest landowner, rancher, or farmer who raises crops or animals.**
- **Would like to receive money to implement a conservation practice on your farm.**
- **Would like to learn more about how to complete an EQIP application.**

It may be helpful for you to use this workbook with someone who can guide you to more information, such as an experienced farmer, USDA employee, or other service provider.

## What is Plain Language?

This guide is presented in a format called **Plain Language**. Plain Language provides clear, simple, and accessible text for readers in order to reduce misunderstandings, errors, and lack of comprehension. It also helps guide you to take action steps to practice what you learn, and gives examples of other people using the information. We present this guide in Plain Language in order to make the topic accessible to everyone.

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# What is EQIP?

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Farmers and ranchers in the United States may be able to get money to help pay for conservation practices on their land. The NRCS offers help to use these practices through EQIP.

EQIP stands for **Environmental Quality Incentives Program** and is a program that helps farmers and ranchers pay for designing and installing conservation practices on their land.

## Conservation Practices That EQIP Will Pay For Are Ones That:

- **Protect water and air**
- **Help increase soil health**
- **Manage livestock manure and barnyard runoff**

# Can I Get EQIP Money?



If you are a landowner, forest landowner, rancher, or farm operator who raises crops or animals you can participate in EQIP.

Individuals who operate on many different types of privately-owned agricultural land are eligible for this program.

You cannot apply for EQIP money for conservation practices if you already receive other USDA program payments for those same practices.

You must make at least \$1,000 per year from your agricultural products to be eligible.

If you are not the landowner, you must receive written consent from the landowner to implement any practice that is considered permanent or “structural,” such as building a greenhouse or a concrete manure containment area.

You must have control of the land for the life of the contract, so having a long-term lease may be important.

You must follow certain practices if your land has a lot of erosion or contains a wetland. Your local NRCS office can help you determine the quality of your land.

**In Massachusetts, EQIP funding is prioritized for projects that deal with:**

- **Water Quality**
- **Water Conservation**
- **Soil quality and health**

- **At-risk species habitat conservation**
- **Invasive species control**



# Type of Money Available Through EQIP

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EQIP is a cost-share program, which means it will pay for part of the conservation practice, but not all of it. The amount of money you can get from EQIP will vary. The most you can usually receive is 75% of the project cost. EQIP is a reimbursement program. You are responsible for covering the costs up front, saving receipts, and being reimbursed after the project is completed. Some practices get more money because of their environmental importance. Some farmers such as beginning, limited resource, veteran, or socially disadvantaged farmer may also get more money and also advanced reimbursement payments.

## ***You are a **Beginning Farmer or Rancher** if:***

- **Your operation is not more than 10 years old.**

## ***You are a **Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher** if:***

- **You made less than \$155,200 per year from farm sales.**
- **You made money at or below the federal poverty level for a family of four, or made less than 50% of the median county income.**

## ***You are a **Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher** if:***

- **You belong to a nationality or social group that has been historically discriminated against, including American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians, African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics.**

# EQIP Application Process

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**There are 5 steps involved in the EQIP application process:**



**1. Determine if you are eligible.**

Contact your Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office to make sure you are able to apply to EQIP. You will describe your operation to them and the conservation issues that you would like to correct. You will show them your tax returns to make sure you are financially eligible for their assistance.



**2. Develop a conservation plan.**

You will make an appointment with an NRCS agent to visit your farm and come up with conservation goals for your land.



**3. Complete the application.**

Complete the EQIP application which can be found at a USDA Service Center or local NRCS office. USDA staff, both NRCS and Farm Service Agency (FSA) employees will work with you to complete it.



**4. Submit application.**

Turn in your application along with your conservation plan. A state official will rank your application based on how well it meets the conservation and environmental goals, and compares it to the other applicants.



**5. Sign the EQIP contract.**

If your application is selected, you and NRCS will sign a contract. You can start the conservation practices that are in the conservation plan after the contract is signed and the designs and specifications have been given to you.



# EQIP Contracts

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If your application is selected for funding, you will enter into a contract with the USDA. A contract is an agreement between two or more people. It outlines what each person promises to do or to pay.



## **You will sign these parts of the EQIP contract:**

- The Contract Document explains how much money you will receive and what date you have to finish the work by.
- The Appendix to the Contract Document describes your responsibilities and the NRCS's responsibilities.
- The Schedule of Operations lists each project that needs to be completed and by what date. It explains the amount of money you will receive for each practice.
- The Conservation Plan details the goals for your farm.
- A Conservation District Agreement
- The summary report of your application in case you need to modify the contract during the project.

- You will be required by USDA to follow the contract in order to get paid.
- You are responsible for contacting the NRCS one week before starting the work and must complete one of the agreed upon practices within 12 months.
- You must acquire all permits and hire approved contractors.
- If you lose the control of your land during the contract, you must notify the NRCS.
- It is the NRCS's responsibility to provide technical assistance in the design process. The NRCS is responsible for certifying that you completed the project and approves your cost-share payments once the project is done.

# EQIP Limits and Restrictions

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There are some restrictions to EQIP funding and a number of important records and documents that you will need.

## **Restrictions**

If you wish to participate in EQIP, you must have made more than \$1,000 in agricultural products but less than \$1 million in off-farm income the year before your contract begins.

All farmers and ranchers applying for EQIP money must provide their tax ID number.

To participate in EQIP, you must meet certain standards if you are farming on wetlands or highly erodible land (land where soil washes away easily).

Sometimes there is a waiting list to have NRCS staff to come visit your farm to work with you on your conservation plan. If you are interested in applying, contact your local NRCS office as soon as possible.

In order to receive EQIP money, you must be managing the land during the time you have an EQIP contract. For example, you would not be able to participate if your lease ends three years before your EQIP contract ends. You must have a written agreement (lease or rental agreement) with the landowner stating that you control and manage the land for the entire time you participate in the EQIP program or contract.

## **Records**

Farm records need to be current and filed with the appropriate USDA offices. You are required to register with an FSA agency to verify your adjusted gross income or certify if you have land that is “highly erodible” or a wetland. Also, once you start completing an EQIP contract, make sure to save your receipts. After NRCS approves the completion of a contract, they will ask you to turn in your receipts to be paid back.

# Application Components

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## Conservation Program Application

In order to get EQIP money, you will need to fill out a Conservation Program Application and Appendix (NRCS-CPA-1200). You can get this form at a USDA Service Center or from the Massachusetts NRCS website: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ma/programs/financial/eqip/>. As part of the application process, you will select a funding pool to apply to. Funding pools include projects such as land use (wildlife habitat for example), special initiatives (high tunnels for example) or underserved farmers (beginning farmer for example).

Remember, your conservation plan that was designed with the help of NRCS staff must be complete in order for your application to be evaluated. You can submit your application in person, by mail, or by fax to your local USDA Service Center. You can submit your application anytime during the year.

In the section describing Program Eligibility, the USDA asks that you fill out additional forms. You can get these forms from the USDA Service Center or NRCS staff. They may include:

- **Form AD-1026:** By signing this you agree that you do not and will not produce agricultural products on wetlands or highly erodible land.
- **Form CCC-941:** Filling out this form provides the USDA with information about how much money you make and your income eligibility.
- **Form CCC-901:** This form identifies all of the members of your business.
- Registration in the System for Award Management (SAM).
- Proof of land ownership or lease.
- **Form SF-1199:** This is a direct deposit form.
- **Form FSA-211:** Power of Attorney
- **IRS-1040:** Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification



### Conservation Program Application

Kali has been farming on 40 acres of rented land for the past five years. She irrigates with a sprinkler system and has noticed that after watering and heavy rains she loses some of her soil. Some of this soil ends up in a nearby stream. Kali is concerned that her crops will produce less because of this soil loss. She is also worried that along with the soil, fertilizers and pesticides are also entering the stream on her property.

Kali believes that there is a way that she can stop this and improve the land. She contacts her local NRCS office for help. After talking with them, NRCS decides that she is eligible for EQIP money.

Before filling out the EQIP application, Kali spoke with her landowner about enrolling in the program. He agreed that it was okay and wrote a signed letter giving permission and granting Kali control of the property to participate in the program. Kali will include this letter when she turns in all of her paperwork.

### Conservation Program Application and Appendix

As a next step, Kali began to read the Appendix to the Conservation Program Application. Here she saw the requirements for the program that showed she was eligible. She learned that she had to start a practice in the first year of the contract. In this section it also states that all conservation practices are to be finished one year before the end of the contract. She also learned that if she did not follow the contract, she may be asked to give the money back.

Reading through this section, Kali found that she had a couple of questions. She called her local NRCS office to ask for help. After getting answers to her questions, she filed the Appendix. Kali has now completed all of the paperwork she will do on her own. See Appendix A for a copy of the Conservation Program Application and Appendix.

# Conservation Activity Plan

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The Conservation Activity Plan is the most important part of the EQIP contract and program. The Conservation Plan is created on a form that NRCS will fill out with you. The plan may be as short as one page, depending on how many conservation practices you plan to use. For an example, see Appendix B of this guide. Different examples can be found on the NRCS website. A NRCS employee will visit your property to look at your farm. They will help you find areas you can use help with and improve on your farm. Together you will decide how to address concerns on your property. Your decisions will be recorded in the Conservation Plan.

## One Grower's Story



### Conservation Plan

After filling out the Conservation Program Application and Appendix, Kali contacted NRCS to make an appointment for a farm visit. Two weeks later an NRCS employee came out to her farm and together they came up with a conservation plan.

They both decided that a good way to stop the soil erosion and reduce water running off into the stream would be to use drip irrigation. They also decided to plant a filter strip on the edge of Kali's field. A vegetative filter strip is a patch of grass or other plants grown in an area that helps stop water and soil from leaving fields. All of these plans were recorded in the Conservation Plan by the NRCS agent. Kali's application is now complete. She will immediately submit it into NRCS to see if she will be selected to receive funding in the EQIP program.

# What Happens After I Turn In My Application?



Once NRCS has received your application, it will be compared to other farmers' applications in the state and the funding pool that you selected. Your application will receive a score. The higher your score, the greater chance you will have of getting EQIP money. Your score is made up of many different components.

## Some factors that influence your score are:

- **The seriousness of the environmental problem.**
- **How much you are able to fix the problem.**
- **The environmental benefit that will come from your conservation practices.**
- **The cost of your plan.**

## One Grower's Story



A few months after Kali turned in her complete application, she learned that it was approved. Kali then had to sign the official contract documents and the Appendix. NRCS agreed to pay for a large portion of the cost of putting in a drip irrigation system. A large percentage of Kali's costs will be covered because she is a beginning farmer.

In the contract, NRCS requires Kali to continue to use these practices for five years. These five years start after she installs a drip irrigation and filter strips on her land. Six months after getting the contract Kali purchased all of the equipment necessary for drip irrigation and she installed the system. She saved all her receipts.

NRCS came out to her farm to check the system while she was installing it. They agreed that she had done a good job. A few days later they reimbursed her for most of the money she spent. Within 8 months after getting the contract, she also planted filter strips that worked very well. NRCS came back out to the farm and again approved her work. Kali now has all of the EQIP money. She will continue using these practices for at least 5 more years.

# More Questions?

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If you want to apply to the EQIP program, it is important that you fully understand the application process. If you have more questions after using this guide, please contact your local NRCS office. A list of Massachusetts office contact information is provided at the end of this guide in the Resources section.

## In Summary:

- **The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) gives farmers and ranchers money to implement certain practices on your farm that protect the environment.**
- **The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) is the government agency that distributes funding to farmers.**
- **A NRCS employee will help you with the application and visit your farm to make suggestions for ways you could improve your farm.**
- **In order to receive the money, you must complete an application telling NRCS what you plan to do on your farm that will have positive environmental impacts.**
- **The Massachusetts branch of NRCS will review your application and give you a score based on your proposed practice.**
- **You will receive a higher score if you plan to address a more serious environmental problem that Massachusetts wants to address or if your practice costs less than other farmers' practices.**
- **In most situations, you will receive the money after you have started or completed the practice.**
- **You are limited in how much money you can receive from EQIP during a given time period.**



# Glossary

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**Beginning Farmer:** According to the USDA, someone who has farmed for fewer than 10 years is a beginning farmer. Also, if your farm operation is fewer than 10 years old, you are also considered a beginning farmer.

**Conservation Practices:** These are growing practices that farmers can use to stop or prevent harm to their land and the area around it.

**Payment:** The farmer or rancher will split the cost of the conservation practice on their land with the USDA. USDA will usually pay for a portion of the practice. Usually between 25% and 75% of the total cost, but in some cases up to 90%, depending on eligibility.

**EQIP:** Environmental Quality Incentives Program

**FSA:** The Farm Service Agency manages commodity, disaster, credit, loan, and conservation programs for the USDA.

**Limited Resource Farmer:** A farmer or rancher who makes less than \$155,200 each year in farm sales for the past two years. Also, farmers or ranchers who earned at or below the federal poverty level for the past two years. Farmers and ranchers who make less than half (50%) of the median country average income are also part of this category.

**NRCS:** Natural Resource Conservation Service. This agency is part of the USDA and is in charge of EQIP.

**Program Eligibility Requirements:** Found in the Appendix of the Conservation Program Application. These explain who is eligible to apply and receive money from the EQIP program.

**USDA Service Center:** These are locations where customers can reach FSA, NRCS, and Rural Development Agencies. To locate the Service Center near you, see the Additional Resource section in this guide for contact information.

# Resources

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## NRCS Massachusetts Field Offices

### Massachusetts State Office

451 West Street  
Amherst, MA 01002  
Tel: 413-253-4350

### Barnstable Field Office

270 Communications Way  
Hyannis, MA 02601  
Tel: 508-771-6476

### Greenfield Field Office

55 Federal Street  
Greenfield, MA 01301  
Tel: 413-772-0384 ext. 3

### Hadley Field Office

195 Russell Street  
Hadley, MA 01035  
Tel: 413-585-1000 ext. 3

### Holden Field Office

52 Boyden Road  
Holden, MA 01520  
Tel: 508-829-4477 ext. 3

### Pittsfield Field Office

78 Center Street, Suite 206  
Pittsfield, MA 01201  
Tel: 413-443-1776 ext. 3

### Westford Field Office

319 Littleton Road Westford,  
MA 01186  
Tel: 978-692-1904 ext. 3

### West Wareham Field

**Office** 15 Cranberry Highway  
West Wareham, MA 02576 Tel:  
508-295-5151 ext. 2

# Resources

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## Online Resources

### Limited Resource Farmer and Rancher Self-Determination Tool

Helps you determine if you qualify for increased EQIP funding as a limited resource farmer. <https://lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/DeterminationTool.aspx?fyYear=2016>

### "How NRCS Financial Assistance Programs Work" Brochure

Explains the 5 steps to follow for any of the NRCS cost-share programs, including EQIP. [file:///C:/Users/mdella02.TUFTS/Downloads/MA\\_HowNRCSFinancialAssistanceProgramsWork\\_2016%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/mdella02.TUFTS/Downloads/MA_HowNRCSFinancialAssistanceProgramsWork_2016%20(1).pdf)

### Massachusetts NRCS/EQIP

Provides information on how EQIP is administered in Massachusetts, including priority funding areas, contact information, and application forms.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ma/programs/financial/eqip/>

### NRCS/EQIP

Provides information on EQIP funding, resources from previous years, and a link to the current application.

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip/>

### USDA Service Center Locator

This website provides the address of a USDA Service Center and other Agency offices serving your area along with information on how to contact them.

<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>

### EQIP Massachusetts Brochure

Brief information on eligibility and approved practices under EQIP in Massachusetts.

[https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/nrcs144p2\\_013715.pdf](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs144p2_013715.pdf)

# Appendix A: EQIP Application

For Reference Only

US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

NRCS-CPA-1200  
10/2015

## CONSERVATION PROGRAM APPLICATION

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Application Number:</b>
<b>Address:</b>	<b>Application Date:</b>
<b>Email:</b>	<b>County and State:</b>
<b>Telephone:</b>	<b>Watershed:</b>
	<b>Subaccount:</b>
<b>Location (Legal Description or Farm and Tract Number):</b>	

1. ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** **Do you have farm records established with the appropriate USDA Service Center Agency?**

*If no, you must establish them with the appropriate USDA Service Center Agency prior to submitting this application.*

2. **This is an application to participate in the:**

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>CSP Renewal</b>	<b>Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) - Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE)</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>EQIP</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>CSP</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>ACEP- (WRE)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Healthy Forest Reserve Program (HFRP)</b>

3. **Are you applying to participate in a conservation program as an (check one of the following):**

☐ **Individual**

- a) Please enter your legal name and tax identification number:

**Name:**

**Tax Number:**

☐ **Entity** (Corporation, Limited Partnership, Trust, Estate, etc.)

- a) Please enter entity legal name and tax identification number:

**Name:**

**Tax Number:**

- b) ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** **Do you have appropriate documents including proof to sign for the entity?**

☐ **Joint Operation** (General Partnership, Joint Venture)

- a) Please enter joint operation legal name and tax identification number:

**Name:**

**Tax Number:**

- b) ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** **Do you have appropriate documents including proof to sign for the joint operation?**

# Appendix A: EQIP Application

For Reference Only

US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

NRCS-CPA-1200  
10/2015

4. **A Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and current registrations in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) System for Award Management (SAM) database are required for receiving payment under an Employer Identification Number (EIN). An EIN is also known as a Federal Tax Identification Number, and is used to identify a business entity.**

*Please note that the entity-applicants must obtain a DUNS number, register it under the legal business name which matches the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) records for the applicable EIN, and such legal business name must match the name identified above as the applicant requesting participation in the named program. If your entity does not have a DUNS number, information is available at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. To register with SAM, go to <https://www.sam.gov/>*

**DUNS Number:**

**Registration Activation Date:**

5. **Is the land being offered for enrollment used for crop (including forest-related) or livestock production?**

☐ **Crop Production**

**Crop Type:**

☐ **Livestock Production**

**Livestock Type:**

6. **The land offered under this application is (check all that apply):**

☐ **Private Land**

☐ **Public Land (Federal, State, or Local Government)**

☐ **Tribal, Allotted, Ceded or Indian Land**

7. **You certify that Certification of control of the land offered under the application is evidenced by:**

☐ **Deed or other evidence of land ownership (required for all ACEP-WRE applications)**

☐ **Written lease agreement**

Years of control are      through

☐ **Other agreement or legal conveyance (describe):**

Years of control are      through

8. ☐ **Yes**   ☐ **No**   **Is the land offered under this application enrolled in any other conservation program?**

9. **Do you meet the criteria for any of the following categories? (mark all that apply)**

☐ **Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher**

☐ **Beginning Farmer or Rancher**

☐ **Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher**

☐ **Veteran Farmer or Rancher**

☐ **Not Applicable**

*If you wish to apply in any of these categories, you must meet the self certification requirements. Definitions are provided below. For more information please go to this website:*

<http://lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/>

**Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher** – The term “Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher” means a participant:

- With direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than the current indexed value in each of the previous two years, and
- Who has a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous two years.

# Appendix A: EQIP Application

For Reference Only

US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

NRCS-CPA-1200  
10/2015

A legal entity or joint operation can be a Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher only if all individual members independently qualify. A Self-Determination Tool is available to the public and may be completed on-line or printed and completed hardcopy at: <http://www.lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/>

**Beginning Farmer or Rancher**– The term “Beginning Farmer or Rancher” means a participant who:

- Has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years. This requirement applies to all members of a legal entity, and who
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch.

In the case of a contract with an individual, individually or with the immediate family, material and substantial participation requires that the individual provide substantial day-to-day labor and management of the farm or ranch, consistent with the practices in the county or State where the farm is located.

In the case of a contract made with a legal entity, all members must materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch. Material and substantial participation requires that the members provide some amount of the management, or labor and management necessary for day-to-day activities, such that if the members did not provide these inputs, operation of the farm or ranch would be seriously impaired.

**Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher**- The term “Socially Disadvantaged” means an individual or entity who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. For an entity, at least 50 percent ownership in the farm business must be held by socially disadvantaged individuals. A socially disadvantaged group is a group whose members have been subject to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities.

These groups consist of the following:

- American Indians or Alaskan Natives
- Asians
- Blacks or African Americans
- Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders
- Hispanics.

Note: Gender alone is not a covered group for the purposes of NRCS conservation programs. The term entities reflect a broad interpretation to include partnerships, couples, legal entities, etc.

**Veteran Farmer or Rancher**- The term “Veteran Farmer or Rancher” means a farmer or rancher who:

- Served in the active military, naval, or air service, and
- Who was discharged or released from the service under conditions other than dishonorable, and
- Who has not operated a farm or ranch; or has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years.

A legal entity or joint operation can be a Veteran Farmer or Rancher only if all individual members independently qualify.

## 10. Is any of the land offered for enrollment under this application:

- ☐ **Certified Organic by the National Organic Program (NOP)**
- ☐ **Transitioning to become Certified Organic by the NOP**
- ☐ **Exempt from Organic Certification as defined by the NOP**
- ☐ **Not Applicable**

*Certification in any of these categories is to assist with planning and will not automatically result in the application being considered in any initiatives made available for organic-related production. Applicants must specifically request to participate in an organic initiative. Note that the EQIP Organic Initiative has a lower payment limitation (\$20,000/year and \$80,000 over any*

# Appendix A: EQIP Application

For Reference Only

US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

NRCS-CPA-1200  
10/2015

*6-year period per person or legal entity) than payments made to a person or legal entity under General EQIP.*

On the farm(s) identified above, the Applicant agrees to participate in the identified program if the offer is accepted by the NRCS. The undersigned shall hereafter be referred to as the "Participant." The participant understands that starting a practice prior to contract approval causes the practice to be ineligible for program financial assistance. The participant will obtain the landowner's signature on the contract or provide written authorization to install structural or vegetative practices. The Participant agrees not to start any financially assisted practice or activity or engage the reimbursable services of a certified Technical Service Provider before a Contract is executed by CCC. The Participant may request, in writing, a waiver of this requirement for financially assisted practices by the NRCS State Conservationist.

All participants that certify land control or certify eligibility as Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher, Beginning Farmer or Rancher, or Veteran Farmer or Rancher will provide all records necessary to justify their claim as requested by a NRCS representative. It is the responsibility of the Participant to provide accurate information to support all items addressed in this application at the request of NRCS. False certifications are subject to criminal and civil fraud statutes.

The Participant acknowledges that highly erodible land conservation/wetland conservation, adjusted gross income certifications, and member information for entities and joint operations are on file with the FSA.

Each participant that is a non-individual receiving payment under an EIN is required to be registered in the CCR on SAM.gov before submitting this application and must provide a valid DUNS number on this application. Each applicable entity must continue to maintain an active registration with current information at all times during which it has a conservation program contract/agreement or an active application under consideration. NRCS may not enter into a conservation program contract/agreement with a non-individual until the all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements have been met. If a non-individual has not fully complied with these requirements by the time NRCS is ready to award the conservation program contract/agreement, NRCS may determine that the non-individual is not qualified to receive a conservation program contract/agreement and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

11. ☐ Yes ☐ No I have received a copy of the applicable conservation program contract appendix.

Applicant Signature	Date
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## NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers. If you believe you experienced discrimination when obtaining services from USDA, participating in a USDA program, or participating in a program that receives financial assistance from USDA, you may file a complaint with USDA. Information about how to file a discrimination complaint is available from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex (including gender identity and expression), marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

To file a complaint of discrimination, complete, sign, and mail a program discrimination complaint form, available at any USDA office location or online at <http://www.ascr.usda.gov>, or write to:



# Appendix A: EQIP Application

For Reference Only

US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250-9410

NRCS-CPA-1200  
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Or call toll free at (866) 632-9992 (voice) to obtain additional information, the appropriate office or to request documents. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

## PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

The following statements are made in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (U.S.C. 522a). Furnishing this information is voluntary; however, failure to furnish correct, complete information will result in the withholding or withdrawal of such technical or financial assistance. The information may be furnished to other USDA agencies, the Internal Revenue Service, the Department of Justice, or other state or federal law enforcement agencies, or in response to orders of a court, magistrate, or administrative tribunal.

This information collection is exempted from the Paperwork Reduction Act under 16 U.S.C. 3801 note and 16 U.S.C. 3846.

# Appendix B: Conservation Activity Plan

For Reference Only

## IRRIGATION WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN CRITERIA PRACTICE/ACTIVITY CODE (118) (NO.)

### 1. Definition of an Irrigation Water Management Plan

The objective of Irrigation Water Management (IWM) is to control the volume, frequency, and rate of water for efficient irrigation, and for the following purposes:

- Promote desired crop response.
- Optimize the use of available water supplies.
- Improve water quality, by reducing irrigation sources of surface and ground water contamination.
- Minimize irrigation induced soil erosion.
- Improve soil environment for vegetative growth.
- Manage salts in the root zone.
- Improve air quality, by reducing movement of particulate matter.
- Provide appropriate and safe fertigation and chemigation.
- Reduce energy consumption.

The objective of an Irrigation Water Management Plan (IWMP) is to provide the producer a guide for the proper management and application of irrigation water resources. The potential benefits of IWM can be effectively determined by interviewing the producer to identify fields, soils, crops, climate, and available water supply; measuring the volumes of water withdrawn or applied; determining irrigation system uniformity, selecting a method to schedule irrigations, and then combining these components to produce an IWMP for the farm.

### 2. IWMP Criteria

This section establishes the minimum criteria to be addressed in the development of Irrigation Water Management Plans.

#### A. General Criteria:

1. Irrigation Water Management Plans shall be developed by certified Technical Service Providers (TSPs). In accordance with Section 1240 (A), the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) program provides funding support through contracts with eligible producers to obtain services of certified TSPs for development of Irrigation Water Management Plans. The specific TSP criteria required for Irrigation Water Management Plan development is located on the TSP registry (TechReg) web site at:  
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/technical/tsp>.
2. The IWMP should address the resource concerns identified, and the conservation practices needed to comprise a conservation system for IWM. In addition, the IWMP should be based on the economics of water use, energy consumption, and crop yield. Management may be limited by water (deficit irrigation), or limited by land (unlimited water). The two general management schemes for irrigation water conservation in agriculture are: Demand Management (reducing withdrawals or reducing crop requirements), and Supply Management (increasing water storage, yield, or supplies).

# Appendix B:

## Conservation Activity Plan

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Technologies available for Demand Management include:

- Irrigation scheduling.
- Increased system uniformity.
- Increased irrigation efficiency.
- Reduced water evaporation.
- Reduced soil evaporation (utilize crop residue or mulch).
- Reduced water use by non-beneficial vegetation.
- Limited irrigation (applying less than maximum  $ET_C$ ).
- Crop selection (lower  $ET_C$  or drought resistant strains).
- Decision-making models (optimize water, energy, and nutrient use).
- Conversion of irrigated cropland to dry land farming.

Technologies available for Supply Management include:

- Increased water storage capacity.
- Groundwater recharge.
- Water harvesting.
- Vegetative management for increased watershed runoff.
- Reuse of waste or drainage water.
- Water transfers

**B. IWMP Technical Criteria.** The IWMP should include, but not be limited to, the following components:

1. Farm and field information:
  - a. Name of producer.
  - b. Farm number.
  - c. Field and/or tract number.
  - d. Crops grown, and planned rotation by field.
  - e. Name of contractor or consultant developing plan.
  - f. Date of plan development.
2. The objectives of the producer, which should involve one of the purposes listed in Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) 449, Irrigation Water Management.
3. A map that includes field boundaries, and a soils map with the predominant soils listed and area quantified. If the qualifying acres for the plan are a subset of fields, the boundaries of the IWMP acreage should also be delineated.
4. An irrigation system map that includes the size, materials, and locations of the mains, laterals, and application systems.
5. Documentation of past water withdrawals and applications, by crop.
6. The methods planned to measure or quantify future water withdrawals and irrigation applications.
7. Planned water application volumes, on a seasonal and/or annual basis, and by crop.
8. Soil tests, to include nutrient levels and salinity. Water tests, to include nutrients, pathogens, salinity, pH, and trace elements.

# Appendix B:

## Conservation Activity Plan

9. Estimates of irrigation system uniformity, based on testing, evaluation, or observation. Distribution Uniformity (DU) should be based on the ratio of the average depth infiltrated in the low one-quarter of the field, to the average depth infiltrated over the entire field.
  10. Documentation of the scientific method planned for scheduling the timing and amount of irrigation applications, based on the measurement or estimation of soil moisture, and the measurement or prediction of evapotranspiration (ET<sub>c</sub>) of the crop(s). The proposed irrigation scheduling method should include:
    - a. Estimated volume of water applied, by field, irrigation event, season, and/or year.
    - b. Estimated frequency or timing of irrigation applications, by field.
    - c. Estimated application rates and depths of irrigation events.
  11. An Operation and Maintenance plan, to include a check list of items to eliminate non-beneficial system losses.
  12. A signature page, with names, dates and signatures of all contract holders and the person who prepared the plan. The signature page should also contain a space for approval by NRCS.
  13. The IWMP components shall be assembled into one complete plan.
- C. Associated Practice Standards.** The IWMP should address the resource concerns identified, and the conservation practices needed to comprise a conservation system for IWM. In addition to the information required in CPS 449, Irrigation Water Management, existing irrigation systems and conveyance facilities may require modification, augmentation, or replacement of components. NRCS Conservation Practice Standards to be incorporated in the IWMP could include:

Code	Practice name
449	Irrigation Water Management
441	Irrigation System, Micro
442	Irrigation System, Sprinkler
443	Irrigation System, Surface & Subsurface
430	Irrigation Pipeline
428	Irrigation Ditch Lining
388	Irrigation Field Ditch
320	Irrigation Canal or Lateral
587	Structure for Water Control
436	Irrigation Reservoir
447	Irrigation System, Tailwater Recovery
533	Pumping Plant
464	Irrigation Land Leveling
450	Anionic Polyacrylamide (PAM) Application
610	Salinity and Sodic Soil Management
590	Nutrient Management



# Appendix B:

## Conservation Activity Plan

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For Reference Only

### D. References

- USDA-NRCS, National Engineering Handbook, Part 623, Section 15, Irrigation.
- USDA-NRCS, National Engineering Handbook, Part 652, National Irrigation Guide.

### 3. Deliverables for the Client – a hardcopy of the IWMP that includes:

- Cover page – name, address, and phone number of producer and TSP; Total Acres of the Plan, signature blocks for the TSP, producer, and a signature block for the NRCS acceptance.
- Soils map and appropriate soil descriptions.
- Resource assessment results (wind and water erosion, water availability, soil fertility, and others that may be needed).
- Complete Hardcopy of the client's plan (MsWord copy). Document the planned conservation practices showing the planned amount, the fields where the practice is to be applied, and the planned year of application.

### 4. Deliverables for the NRCS Field Office:

- Complete Hardcopy and Electronic copy of the client's plan (MsWord and/or other appropriate digital copies).
- Digital Conservation Plan Map with fields, features, and structural practices located.
- Digital Soils Map.