



PROGRAMS 101: Explaining the MRBI Application and Contract Process

Applying for USDA conservation program assistance involves several steps and multiple forms. This fact sheet will explain the application process as well as the responsibilities and obligations of holding a USDA contract, once an application is approved and funded.

Applying for USDA Programs

You will need to submit the following forms and paperwork prior to any program sign-up cutoff dates. The NRCS office will have these forms and can assist you with the paperwork. Additional items may be needed for specific programs.

- **Form NRCS CPA 1200 (conservation practice application)**, signed and dated by all applicants. Please be sure to answer all questions, one through 11. You may be eligible for additional program benefits if you are able to apply as a:
 - Limited resource farmer,
 - Beginning farmer, or
 - Socially disadvantaged (minority) farmer.
- **Form NRCS CPA 1202 CPC (Conservation Practice Contract) appendix**, signed and dated by all applicants. Please read the appendix and address any questions you have to the NRCS representative.
- **Form 1199 A, direct deposit form**. You may apply for a one-time hardship waiver if you do not wish to utilize direct deposit.
- **Land ownership or control** – You will be required to provide evidence of control of land through ownership documents (deeds, etc.) or lease information (rental agreements, permits, lease, etc).
- **Signature authority** – If the applicant is an entity, documents such as articles of incorporation, charter, bylaws, partnership agreements, trust agreements, wills and similar legal evidence will be needed.

It takes time for the paperwork to be processed and additional information may be needed. Please start this process early in order to ensure you are eligible **prior** to any program sign-up cutoff dates. If you apply for a USDA

program and the system does not show you or your entity as eligible, your application will not be processed or funded.

Applicants typically have 30 days from the date of the original application to correctly complete all the paperwork.

Application and Ranking

Your NRCS representative will complete the application(s) for specific programs in the computer system, ask for any additional information needed and rank the application(s). The ranking is based on federal, state and local ranking factors.

If your application is selected for funding, the NRCS office will contact you.

After the sign-up cutoff date, the highest ranked applications will be funded until the money is exhausted.

Signing the Contract

If the application is funded, the applicant and USDA complete the contract documents (CPC 1202 and CPC 1202 Appendix). By signing the contract, you are committing to the terms of the contract. The applicant should be

PROGRAMS 101: Explaining the MRBI Application and Contract Process

aware of all contract terms, penalties for noncompliance and requirements for implementation before signing. The applicant may then begin implementing the contracted practices. If you start a practice before contract approval, this causes the practice to be ineligible for conservation program financial assistance.

What's next?

If you sign a MRBI contract within the ACWA project, you will be required to write and apply a nutrient management plan, as well as implement at least two enhancements such as planting cover crops and using a late spring nitrate test.

If your nutrient management plan is written by a private provider, other than a registered technical service provider, you will be asked to provide a copy of your plan to your local NRCS office.

The nutrient management plan will require you to follow ISU guidelines when determining N, P and K application rates and timing. For this ACWA project, you will also be required to use nitrogen stabilizers in your primary nitrogen application, regardless of timing. However the use of stabilizers will allow fall anhydrous application which is not normally permitted under EQIP.

Before you receive payment, you will need to submit records to certify that you followed the requirements of your contract and that your nutrient management activities met NRCS technical standards.

Every contract will be reviewed annually by NRCS staff to make sure activities are on schedule. Farmers are only involved in the annual review if activities are not on schedule.