



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service, Vermont

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary federal conservation program that provides technical and financial assistance to producers who want to improve and protect soil, water, air, plants and animals on their land.

What's in it for You?

Through EQIP, you can receive financial and technical assistance to plan and install conservation practices designed to benefit the natural resources you depend on as a producer.

When you apply to EQIP, you begin by working with an NRCS conservation professional to develop a conservation plan that identifies natural resource concerns and conservation practices that best address specific conditions with your land.

EQIP funding can help pay for implementing your planning decisions.



Application Process:

Applications are accepted on a continuous basis and should be submitted to local NRCS field offices to be considered for the next available round of funding.

Initially, applicants must complete and sign application form NRCS-CPA-1200. This form can be found on the NRCS website or at your local field office. Applicants need to read and understand the appendix to the contract, as it contains the 'rules' of the contract, and implications for not following these rules.

Once the forms are complete, applicants should contact the local NRCS field office to make an appointment to submit the application and complete the eligibility process. After the applicant and land are determined eligible for the program, NRCS field staff will work closely to create a resource inventory of all the soil, water, air, plant, and animal (both domestic and wildlife) resource concerns on the land.

Using the resource inventory, field staff works with landowners to develop a list of practices that can be included in the contract to address identified resource concerns. In some cases more than one practice could be used to address a specific resource concern.

Landowners decide what practice best fits their operation and management style. The amount of the least cost alternative practice that addresses the resource concern will be used for contracting. Applications are ranked with all other Vermont eligible applications. The applications that achieve the greatest resource benefit at the least cost are ranked the highest.

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EQIP Eligibility Process:

The EQIP eligibility process has two parts: person eligibility and land eligibility. Applicants must meet both of these requirements to be eligible for the program.

Eligible applicants must be an individual, legal entity, or joint operation and have an interest in the agricultural operation or be engaged in livestock, agricultural or forestry production. The land being offered in the program must be in agriculture, livestock or forestry production or be capable of growing trees.

All agricultural producers must have an interest in the land being offered in the application, have control of this land for the life of the contract, be in compliance with the provisions for protecting the interests of tenants, be in compliance with highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions, be within the \$300,000 payment limitation requirement (unless the applicant has requested a waiver to the state conservationist based on environmental significance) and be in compliance with Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) requirements.

Examples of conservation practices eligible for EQIP funding:



Waste Storage



Nutrient Management



Cover Crops



Grazing Management



Stream Crossings



Forest Management



Fence and Pipeline



Habitat Management

Things to know about EQIP:

- Higher payment rates are available for historically underserved customers
- Payments are limited to \$300,000 per participant over a six year period
- There is no minimum acreage requirement, however, projects that address significant resource concerns are more likely to receive funding
- You will be reimbursed after the practices have been installed
- Financing may be available through the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), or private lending agencies

Vermont USDA Service Centers & NRCS Offices

Berlin: 802-828-4493

Brattleboro: 802-254-9766

Middlebury: 802-388-6748

Morrisville: 802-888-4935

Newport: 802-334-6090

Rutland: 802-775-8034

St. Albans: 802-524-6505

St. Johnsbury: 802-748-2641

White River Junction: 802-295-7942

Williston: 802-288-8155



<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/vt/home/>

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