

News Release

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USDA Announces Application Deadlines for Conservation Program Funding in New Mexico

ALBUQUERQUE, NM, September 22, 2025 –The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is announcing application deadlines for conservation program funding in New Mexico. The deadline for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts (CIC), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) is **October 17, 2025**. All other conservation programs offered through NRCS New Mexico will be announced later.

Programs with an October 17, 2025, Application Deadline

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts (CIC)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

Although applications are accepted on a year-round basis, only applications received by these deadlines will be considered for funding for fiscal year 2026 for projects where the majority of the land is located in New Mexico.

USDA NRCS provides financial assistance to farmers and ranchers to address natural resource concerns and to deliver environmental benefits while also improving agricultural operations. Examples of potential environmental benefits include:

- Improved water and air quality
- Conserved ground and surface water
- Increased soil health and reduced soil erosion and sedimentation
- Improved or created wildlife habitat
- Mitigation against drought and increasing weather volatility

Financial assistance is provided through a competitive process that includes creating a conservation plan, ranking applications, and establishing eligibility of the land and the applicant(s).

Information on the eligibility requirements, ranking criteria, and ranking pools will be posted at the links below.

- [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#)
- [EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts \(CIC\)](#)
- [Conservation Stewardship Program \(CSP\)](#) and [CSP Enhancements](#)

“Applicants are encouraged to apply as soon as possible so that NRCS staff can begin working on the conservation plan, which is the basis for program funding,” said Kenneth Branch, New Mexico Assistant State Conservationist for Programs. “Projects cannot start until the contract is obligated. The application deadline was set to give farmers and ranchers a few months to apply and still get contracts funded as early as possible in the year so that farmers and ranchers can start on their important projects. Field offices are ready to help you with your application and will conduct appointments and field visits.” To find your local USDA service center click [here](#).

Application Information

For EQIP and CSP, applicants must create a farm record with the Farm Service Agency and submit the application form NRCS-CPA-1200 to NRCS. CSP applicants must also provide a map of the operation that shows the eligible acres by the application deadline.

The following forms must be on file with FSA for each applicant selected for funding. The forms can be found at <https://forms.sc.egov.usda.gov>. Click “Browse Forms” and enter the form number.

- AD-2047, “Customer Data Worksheet Request for Business Partner Record Change”
- AD-1026, “Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification”
- CCC-941, “Average Adjusted Gross Income Certification and Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information”
- CCC-902, “Farm Operating Plan”

About the Programs

EQIP, CSP, and ACEP funding are authorized by the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (the 2018 Farm Bill). The program priorities are customized for each state and incorporate local priorities. EQIP provides a higher payment rate to historically underserved (HU) participants and also allows an advance payment to HU participants to help offset costs related to purchasing materials or contracting services through EQIP. Water management entities who assist private agricultural producers with managing water distribution or conservation systems are eligible to apply for EQIP. Water management entities are defined as the following: State, irrigation district, ground water management district, acequia, land grant-merced, or similar entity that has jurisdiction or responsibilities related to water delivery or management to eligible lands.

Applications are ranked using the Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART) which assesses the site vulnerability, existing conditions, and the effects of planned practices on selected resource concerns on a unit of land. Through CART an application is ranked in all applicable ranking pools. Veteran Farmers and Ranchers receive program priority in some

ranking pools. Projects located in source water protection areas may receive higher priority in a ranking pool and may receive higher payment rates in EQIP for practices that address water quality and/or water quantity.

ACTNow will be used in the following select EQIP fund pools: National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI), WaterSMART, Source Water, Organic, Energy and Conservation Planning Activities (CPAs), Design and Implementation Activities (DIAs), and Conservation Evaluation and Monitoring Activities (CEMAs). ACTNow allows NRCS to 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 NRCS field office ranks all applications in the ranking pool.

More Information

To learn more about NRCS programs, producers can contact their local [USDA Service Center](#). Producers can also apply for NRCS programs, manage conservation plans and contracts, and view and print conservation maps by [logging into their farmers.gov account](#). If you don't have an account, [sign up today](#).

For more than 90 years, NRCS has helped farmers, ranchers and forestland owners make investments in their operations and local communities to improve the quality of our air, water, soil, and wildlife habitat. NRCS uses the latest science and technology to help keep working lands working, boost agricultural economies, and increase the competitiveness of American agriculture. NRCS provides one-on-one, personalized advice and financial assistance and works with producers to help them reach their goals through voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs. For more information, visit [nrqs.usda.gov](#).



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