

State Conservation Program Dashboard Index

This index supports the [State Conservation Program Dashboard](#) created by American Farmland Trust’s Farmland Information Center. It defines the terms used to categorize program features in the dashboard.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

On-Farm Conservation	2
Administration.....	2
Inclusion and Access for Producers of Color (POC)	2
Eligibility	2
Technical Assistance	3
Financial Assistance.....	3
Outcomes	3
Technical Assistance Capacity.....	4
Administration.....	4
Inclusion and Access for Producers of Color (POC)	4
Eligibility	4
Financial Assistance.....	5
Outcomes	5
Research and Demonstration.....	5
Administration.....	5
Inclusion and Access for Producers of Color (POC)	6
Eligibility	6
Financial Assistance.....	6
Deliverables	7
Outcomes	7

ON-FARM CONSERVATION

ADMINISTRATION

AUTHORITY | Legal authority for the program. Programs are created by the legislature in statute or by an executive branch agency in regulation or other policy. Programs created exclusively by appropriations acts and not further codified are classified as "created by policy" due to their impermanent nature.

ADMINISTERING ENTITY | State agency that administers the program. Designating an agency in statute gives it responsibility for the program. Programs are sometimes administered in partnership with local entities, such as soil and water conservation districts.

FUNDING SOURCES | Types of funding that support the program. Specific taxes or fees may provide a consistent source of funding if they are dedicated to the program. Bonds and appropriations vary in their longevity.

PROGRAM PURPOSE | Purpose of the program stated in its legal authority. Purpose statements can indicate a program's priorities when offering assistance. These statements are generally found in the program's enabling statute; otherwise, they are in public program materials.

INCLUSION AND ACCESS FOR PRODUCERS OF COLOR (POC)

PRIORITIZATION | Prioritization of producers of color in program implementation. This can be achieved by designating funding for producers of color or prioritizing them through the application ranking process in an effort to remediate historic disenfranchisement.

FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR | Mechanisms for connecting with producers of color. This may include in-person outreach, such as hosting or attending events, workshops, or field days to encourage participation by producers of color. Programs may also partner with entities representing producers of color, such as Tribal entities or Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

REPORTING | Reporting requirements for participant demographics. This information can be used to track a program's inclusion and access efforts to gauge success. When partnering with local entities, collection and reporting demographic data may be left up to the local partner.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND JUSTICE (DEIJ) COMMITTEE | Presence of a diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) committee, commission, or task force. DEIJ entities with a role in program implementation can provide guidance on how to ensure inclusion and access for producers of color.

ELIGIBILITY

GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE | Area eligible for program participation. Statewide coverage may allow for broader participation, though some programs prioritize or limit participation to specific areas to target conservation efforts.

MULTIPLE PRACTICES FUNDED | Support for multiple on-farm conservation practices in one application form or cycle. Implementing multiple practices or an integrated system of practices enables greater soil health outcomes.

On-Farm Conservation

FARM SIZE NEUTRALITY | Neutrality towards farm size. Removing minimum acre, income, or animal unit requirements for eligibility may allow for broader program participation.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

ON-SITE DIRECT CONSULTATION | On-site consultation about practices to implement. This type of technical assistance can help producers assess their land and plan on-farm conservation practices. Verification of practices for reimbursement purposes is not counted.

CONSERVATION PLANNING | Conservation planning assistance. This type of technical assistance creates a conservation plan (or a similar plan such as a whole farm management or comprehensive nutrient management plan) for the producer or covers the cost of developing a plan so practice implementation can be strategic.

PRACTICE IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE | Assistance with implementing on-farm conservation practices. This type of technical assistance involves experts helping to apply practices in the field or engineering assistance to ensure quality implementation.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

PRACTICE PAYMENTS | Payment rates for practice implementation. Programs may offset a portion of the cost of practice implementation (up to 100%) based on actual expenses shown on receipts, estimates, or average expenses. Some programs instead pay producers a flat rate. Not all technical assistance programs provide financial assistance.

PROJECT CAP | Maximum payments per project. Payment caps limit how much a producer can receive to install practices but enable programs funds to be available for more producers. For programs implemented in partnership with local entities, the state may choose not to set a payment cap but may allow the local partner to set caps.

FUNDS FOR EQUIPMENT | Equipment to implement practices funded by program. Financial assistance for producers or local partners to purchase or rent equipment offsets the high cost of the equipment needed to install practices.

IN-KIND MATCH | Consideration of in-kind services towards financial assistance match, if applicable. Programs allowing for in-kind contributions offer more options for producers to satisfy a fund matching requirement without requiring out-of-pocket cash. Not all financial assistance programs require funding match.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TIMING | Timing of financial assistance disbursement. Providing funds prior to practice implementation or reimbursement in stages may provide more financial flexibility to participating producers.

OUTCOMES

AVERAGE ANNUAL STATE EXPENDITURES | Approximate average state funds disbursed to producers or entities. Tracking funds disbursed to producers demonstrates a program's impact. These averages are based on the program's start date or the number of years for which data is available.

Technical Assistance Capacity

AVERAGE ANNUAL ACRES ENROLLED | Approximate average annual acres enrolled. Tracking acres that have practices installed as a result of participation demonstrates a program's impact. These averages are based on the program's start date or the number of years for which data is available.

CONSERVATION OUTCOMES TRACKED | Conservation-oriented outcomes tracked by the program. This may include soil health metrics, which can be tracked as soil organic matter dynamics; soil structural stability; general microbial activity; carbon food sources; bioavailable nitrogen; and microbial diversity. See NRCS Soil Health Technical Note No. 450-03. Soil conservation outcomes include erosion prevented or soil saved. Water quality outcomes include reductions in nitrogen and phosphorus levels, sedimentation, or pesticide residues. Climate outcomes may include carbon sequestration and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CAPACITY

ADMINISTRATION

AUTHORITY | Legal authority for the program. Programs are created by the legislature in statute or by an executive branch agency in regulation or other policy. Programs created exclusively by appropriations acts and not further codified are classified as "created by policy" due to their impermanent nature.

ADMINISTERING ENTITY | State agency that administers the program. Designating an agency in statute gives it responsibility for the program.

FUNDING SOURCES | Types of funding that support the program. Specific taxes or fees may provide a consistent source of funding if they are dedicated to the program. Bonds and appropriations vary in their longevity.

PROGRAM PURPOSE | Purpose of the program stated in its legal authority. Purpose statements can indicate a program's priorities when offering assistance. These statements are generally found in the program's enabling statute; otherwise, they are in public program materials.

INCLUSION AND ACCESS FOR PRODUCERS OF COLOR (POC)

PRIORITIZATION | Prioritization of producers of color in program implementation. This can be achieved by designating funding or prioritizing projects benefiting producers of color in an effort to remediate historic disenfranchisement.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND JUSTICE (DEIJ) COMMITTEE | Presence of a diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) committee, commission, or task force. DEIJ entities with a role in program implementation can provide guidance on how to ensure inclusion and access for producers of color.

ELIGIBILITY

Research and Demonstration

ELIGIBLE RECIPIENT | Entities eligible to participate in the program. States can choose to provide program funds expanding technical assistance capacity to entities with an existing framework for providing this assistance.

APPLICATION PROCESS | Process by which entities receive funding. Automatic funding allocations allow entities to plan around guaranteed funds. Competitive grants allow funds to be directed based on ranking criteria that are important to the state.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

ALLOWED ACTIVITIES | Capacity activities eligible for financial assistance. States can enable recipients to choose how to use funding based on individual needs, or target funding toward a more specific type of activity.

MATCH REQUIREMENT | Requirement to provide matching funds. A match requirement may ensure the entity has sufficient independent funding available, while programs without a match requirement may be accessible to entities without access to additional resources.

IN-KIND MATCH | Consideration of in-kind services towards financial assistance match, if applicable. Programs allowing for in-kind contributions offer more options for entities to satisfy a fund matching requirement without requiring out-of-pocket cash. Not all programs require funding match.

OUTCOMES

AVERAGE ANNUAL EXPENDITURES | Approximate average state funds disbursed to participants. Tracking funds disbursed demonstrates a program's impact and, in cases where local entities lack independent funding, shows the total amount available to spend on technical assistance in the state. These averages are based on the program's start date or the number of years for which data is available.

NUMBER OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS IN THE STATE | Number of conservation districts in the state. This number shows how many entities in the state could potentially receive funding. In states where conservation districts are not eligible, this number acts as a proxy.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS | State policy on program reporting requirements. Reporting how entities have used the funds to expand technical assistance capacity helps track program impact.

RESEARCH AND DEMONSTRATION

ADMINISTRATION

AUTHORITY | Legal authority for the program. Programs are created by the legislature in statute or by an executive branch agency in regulation or other policy.

Research and Demonstration

ADMINISTERING ENTITY | State agency that administers the program. Designating an agency in statute gives it responsibility for the program.

FUNDING SOURCES | Types of funding that support the program. Specific taxes or fees may provide a consistent source of funding if they are dedicated to the program. Bonds and appropriations vary in their longevity.

PROGRAM PURPOSE | Purpose of the program stated in its legal authority. Purpose statements can indicate a program's priorities when funding research and demonstration projects. These statements are generally found in the program's enabling statute; otherwise, they are in public program materials.

INCLUSION AND ACCESS FOR PRODUCERS OF COLOR (POC)

PRIORITIZATION | Prioritization of producers of color in program implementation. This can be achieved by designating funding for producers of color or prioritizing them through the application ranking process in an effort to remediate historic disenfranchisement.

FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR | Mechanisms for connecting with producers of color. This may include in-person outreach, such as hosting or attending events, workshops, or field days to encourage participation by producers of color. Programs may also partner with entities representing producers of color, such as Tribal entities or Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

REPORTING | Reporting requirements for participant demographics. This information can be used to track a program's inclusion and access efforts to gauge success.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND JUSTICE (DEIJ) COMMITTEE | Presence of a diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) committee, commission, or task force. DEIJ entities with a role in program implementation can provide guidance on how to ensure inclusion and access for producers of color.

ELIGIBILITY

PROJECT TEAM | Required project participants. Technical experts are those with subject matter expertise that will strengthen the project.

SUPPORTED PRACTICES | Types of practices supported. Programs may choose to prioritize established, Indigenous, culturally-significant, or innovative conservation practices, which can include innovative application of an established practice. Producers who implement a new conservation technique can demonstrate its potential to their peers.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

PROJECT CAP | Maximum payment per project. Payment caps limit how much a participant can receive to support research and demonstration but enable programs funds to be available for more projects.

ALLOWED COSTS | Research and demonstration costs covered by the program. The expenses that can be included in a project's budget often determine the activities undertaken by the project. The examples listed can cover expenses for both the producer and technical expert.

DELIVERABLES

INFORMATION SHARING | Required information sharing of project outcomes. Live demonstrations may include field days, workshops, or peer-to-peer programming. Educational resources developed for producers can include podcasts, publications, or other learning opportunities. Communicating project findings informs the wider agricultural community.

PROJECT LENGTH | Length of project supported by program agreement. Grant duration may impact the types of research or demonstration that can be carried out because the impacts of a conservation practice are often not realized until multiple growing seasons have passed.

OUTCOMES

AVERAGE ANNUAL STATE EXPENDITURES | Approximate average state funds disbursed to producers or entities. Tracking funds disbursed demonstrates a program's impact. These averages are based on the program's start date or the number of years for which data is available.

PROJECTS COMPLETED | Number of research and demonstration projects completed. Tracking projects completed as a result of participation demonstrates program impact.

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS AND DEMONSTRATION ATTENDEES | Number of individuals reached by the program. Tracking how many agricultural producers and landowners are reached by the program either by direct participation or by learning opportunities demonstrates the program's impact on peer-to-peer education.

CONSERVATION OUTCOMES | Conservation-oriented outcomes tracked by the program. This may include soil health metrics, which can be tracked as soil organic matter dynamics; soil structural stability; general microbial activity; carbon food sources; bioavailable nitrogen; and microbial diversity. See NRCS Soil Health Technical Note No. 450-03. Soil conservation outcomes include erosion prevented or soil saved. Water quality outcomes include reductions in nitrogen and phosphorus levels, sedimentation, or pesticide residues. Climate outcomes may include carbon sequestration and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.