Actual Cost Recovery Evaluation System (ACRES)

NRCS
Natural Resources Conservation Service

What is the Actual Cost Recovery Evaluation System (ACRES)?

ACRES is the web based data application that the Agency uses to determine how the agency staff resources are being utilized. This is accomplished by linking NRCS financial management to the costs of Conservation Programs and Activities.

ACRES uses data from the web-based Total Cost and Accounting System, (WebTCAS); a time and attendance, web-based, software application that all NRCS employees use to record actual hours worked by Conservation Program and Activity.
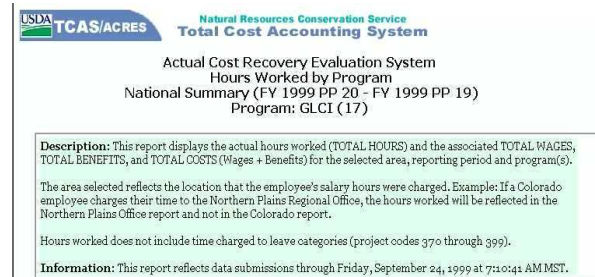
From employee time and attendance data…

WebTCAS data are transferred each pay period to a centralized location to be used for national, regional, and state reports. ACRES summarizes data collected by the WebTCAS system. The ACRES reports display the actual hours worked (TOTAL HOURS) and the associated TOTAL WAGES, TOTAL BENEFITS, and TOTAL COSTS (Wages + Benefits) for the selected Conservation Program, Activity, Location, and Reporting Period.

How does WebTCAS work?

Each pay period, after employees submit their Time & Attendance information through WebTCAS, agency timekeepers review and correct the data

through largely automated processes in WebTCAS. Some of the information for each employee (e.g., hours worked and leave used) is sent to the National Finance Center, while the information for Programs and activities is sent to the ACRES database for use by agency managers.

… to ACRES reports.

What data are collected?

To assure financial accountability, employees record their time used to administer all funded NRCS Conservation Programs and initiatives. Employees also record their time used to provide technical assistance for non-NRCS Programs such as CRP and Support for State & Local Programs. Current examples of program and initiative categories include:

- *Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA), including NRI and GLC*
- *Soil Survey*

- *Plant Materials Center*
- *Snow Survey*
- *Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)*
- *Emergency Watershed Program (EWP)*
- *Watershed Planning (PL-06)*
- *Flood Prevention Operations (WF-03)*
- *Small Watershed Operations (WF-08)*
- *Forestry Incentives Program (FIP)*
- *Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)*
- *Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA)*
- *Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)*
- *Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)*
- *Farmland Protection Program (FPP)*
- *Soil and Water Conservation Assistance Program (SWCA)*
- *Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)*
- *Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Program (CRBSCP)*
- *Great Plains Conservation Program (GPCP)*
- *Rural Abandoned Mine Program (RAMP)*
- *Water Bank Program (WBP)*

In addition to recording hours by specific conservation programs, WebTCAS also records hours used by specific activity categories.

The specific activity categories recorded in WebTCAS include:

- *Planning Assistance* - Technical assistance for planning to individuals, governments, organizations, and other groups.
- *Application Assistance* - Survey, design and installation of land treatment practices and structures.
- *Practice/System Maintenance and Follow-up* Contacts and follow up with customers to ensure practices are maintained per plan.
- *Program Management* - Policy development and analysis activities.
- *Contract and Project Support* - Development, modification and execution of program contract requirements.

- *Quality Assurance and Evaluation* - Conducting or participating in functional oversight and evaluation, management, administrative and other quality assurance reviews.
- *Resource Surveys, Studies and Analyses* - Development, collection, database input and maintenance for resource data.
- *Activities Supporting Soil Survey*
- *Communication and Relations* - Developing and presenting conservation information
- *Training* - Technical training received.
- *Technology Development, Transfer and Maintenance*
- *Administrative Support Infrastructure Activities* - Activities performed by human resources, financial management, information technology, and civil rights staffs.
- *Management and Supervision* - Providing or receiving supervisory and/or management assistance.

How is WebTCAS information used?
Unlike performance data, WebTCAS data are collected for internal accountability purposes, and are accessible only to NRCS managers

ACRES interfaces with other components of the NRCS Accountability System, such as the Workload Analysis (WLA), Workload Management System (WMS), and the Performance and Results Measurement System (PRMS), and is used to provide information necessary for agency management activities, such as workforce planning, resource allocation, and performance planning. It also provides the NRCS Leadership with the ability to analyze the level of conservation achieved through public investments and improve program efficiency and effectiveness.

Where to get more information on Web-TCAS?
For more information on the Total Cost Accounting System, call the NRCS Financial Management Division at (202) 720-5904.