



U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

Resource Conservation & Development Program

Customer Satisfaction Survey

Final Report
April 2007

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Introduction

This report is about customer perceptions of services from the Resource Conservation & Development of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service. This report was produced by CFI Group in collaboration with the University of Michigan. If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact CFI Group at 734-930-9090.

Overview of ACSI Methodology

ACSI is produced by the University of Michigan in partnership with CFI Group, and the American Society for Quality. The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) is the national indicator of customer evaluations of the quality of goods and services available to U.S. residents. It is the only uniform, cross-industry/government measure of Customer Satisfaction. Since 1994, the ACSI has measured satisfaction, its causes, and its effects, for seven economic sectors, 41 industries and more than 200 private sector companies. ACSI has measured more than 100 programs of federal government agencies since 1999. This allows benchmarking between the public and private sectors and provides information unique to each agency on how its activities that interface with the public affect the satisfaction of customers. The effects of satisfaction are estimated, in turn, on specific objectives (such as public trust).

Additional information can be found in the appendices of this report.

Appendix A: Questionnaire

The questionnaires used in the study were developed through a collaborative effort between CFI Group and the USDA NRCS Resource Conservation and Development Program. The questionnaire used is shown in Appendix A in the back of this report.

Appendix B: Respondent Background

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provided respondent sample of customers who had participated in the Resource Conservation and Development Program. Information about the respondents' organization and responses to other questions such as 'frequency of interaction with council' and 'frequency of interaction with coordinator' can be found in Appendix B.

Appendix C: Attribute Score Tables

Respondents were asked to evaluate items on a 1 to 10 scale. Results to these questions are reported on a scale of 0 to 100 and are included in Appendix C: Attribute Tables. Aggregate scores are included in these tables as well as comparisons of scores by segments, such as organization, 'frequency of interaction with council' and 'frequency of interaction with coordinator.'

Appendix D: Verbatims

Verbatim comments from all open-ended responses are included in Appendix D.

Data Collection

Interviews were conducted between January 31 and February 6, 2007 by the professional interviewers of Discovery Research Group working under monitored supervision according to specifications from CFI Group. Interviewers used CATI (computer-assisted-telephone-interviewing) terminals programmed for the specific questionnaire. The Resource Conservation and Development Program provided CFI Group with customer names of those who had participated in the program. A total of 253 responses were collected. Of these, 250 responses were valid for modeling purposes. Respondent cooperation, participation among those who were qualified and successfully contacted was 87.5%. The response rate that also accounts for non-interview events, where a respondent could not be reached (e.g., busy, answering machine, voice mail) was 32.8%.

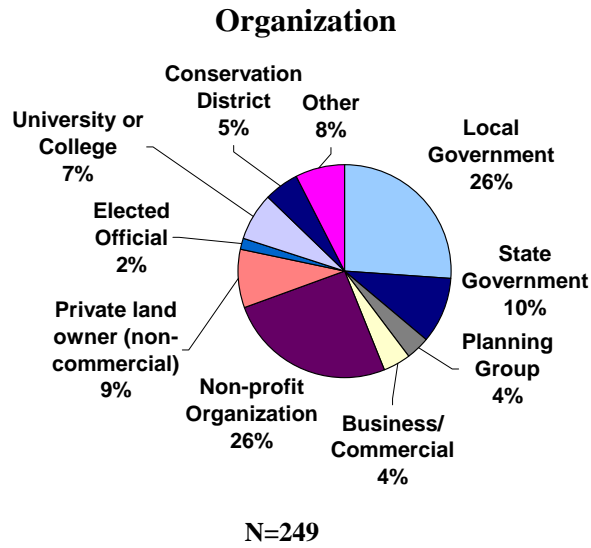
ACSI Code	Definition	n
U	UNIVERSE OF SAMPLED TELEPHONE NUMBERS	883
	Interviews	
I	Total completed interviews	253
P	Partial interviews	6
I+P	Total interviews	259
	Eligible cases that are not interviewed (Non-respondents)	
	Break-offs	0
	Refusal, qualified cases	30
RQ	Total qualified cases refusals	30
	Cases of unknown eligibility (Unknown eligibility/No contact—Non-interview)	
	Cases of unknown eligibility (Unknown eligibility/No contact—Non-interview)	510
	Foreign language/hard of hearing	3
UE	Total unknown eligibility	513
	Cases that are not eligible (Non-eligible Respondents)	
	Disconnect/out of service	37
	Computer/FAX	17
	Wrong number	25
	Filter	0
	Other Non-eligible respondent	2
NER	Total Non-eligible Respondents	81
	Quota Filled so respondent not eligible for interview	
	Case of quota-filled subgroup	0
	Scheduled for callback, but subgroup quota filled or interview period ended	0
QF	Total Quota Filled Respondents	0
U	Universe of Sampled Numbers	883
NER	Less Non-eligible Respondents	81
QF	Less Quota Filled Respondents	0
EU	Universe of Eligible Numbers	802

COOPERATION RATE (AAPOR (2)) = $I/(I+P)+RQ$ 87.5%

$e = (I+P+RQ+QF)/(I+P+RQ+QF+NER)$ 78.1%

RESPONSE RATE (AAPOR RR(3)) = $I+COOP(QF)/(I+P+RQ+QF+NER+e(UE))$ 32.8%

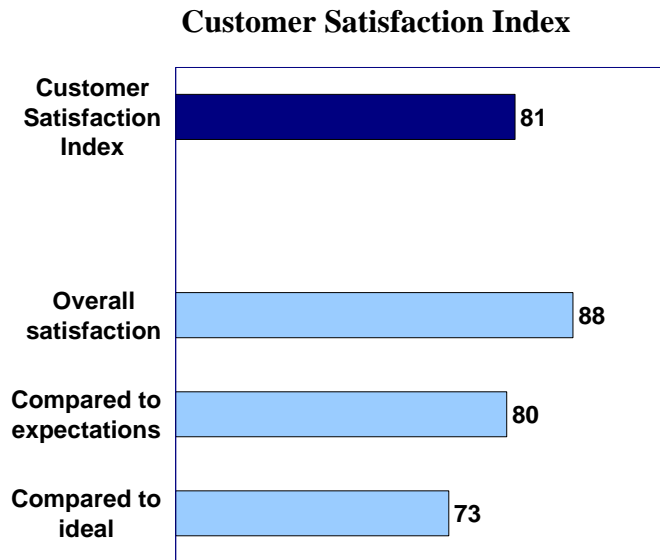
One-quarter of respondents were from Non-profit organizations and another quarter of respondents were from local governments. State governments accounted for 10% of respondents and 9% were private landowners. The remainder of organizations is shown in the pie chart below.



Customer Satisfaction (ACSI)

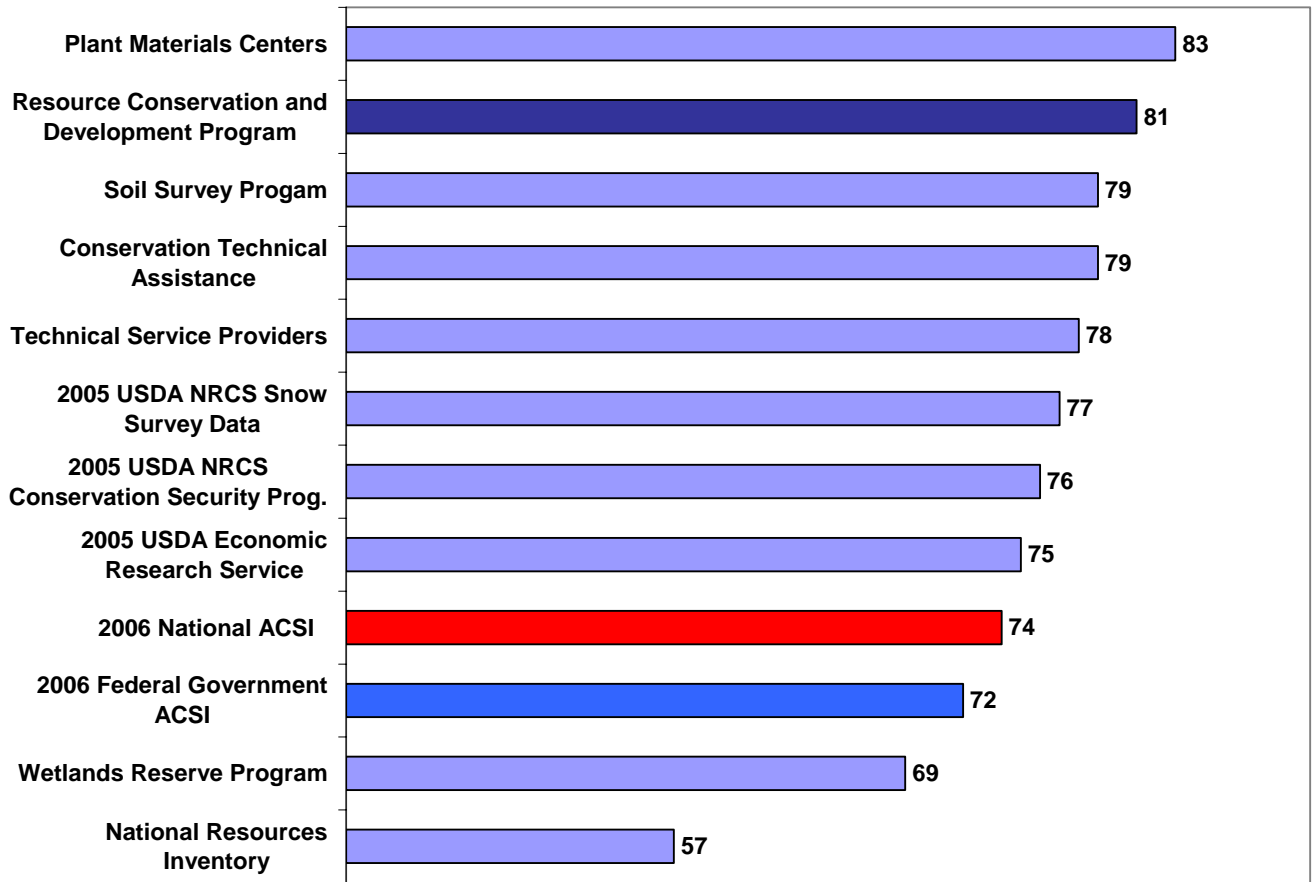
The **Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI)** is a weighted average of the three ACSI benchmark questions in the questionnaire in Appendix A. The questions are answered on 1-10 scale and converted to a 0-100 scale for reporting purposes. The three questions measure: Overall satisfaction; Satisfaction compared to expectations; and Satisfaction compared to an ideal organization. The model assigns the weights to each question in a way that maximizes the ability of the index to predict changes in agency outcomes.

The Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) for the Resource Conservation and Development Program is 81 on a 0-100 scale. This score compares favorably to the Federal Government’s Customer Satisfaction Index for 2006 (72). Benchmarks with other Government and NRCS satisfaction scores are shown on the following page.



N=250

Satisfaction Benchmarks



Satisfaction with the Resource Conservation and Development is significantly above the Federal Government and National ACSI. RC & D satisfaction score is also near the top of all other NRCS benchmarks.

Customer Satisfaction Model

The Resource Conservation and Development Customer Satisfaction model illustrated on the following page should be viewed as a cause and effect model that moves from left to right. The rectangles are multi-variable components that are measured by survey questions. The numbers in the lower right corners of the rectangles represent the strength of the effect of the component on the left to the one to which the arrow points on the right. These values represent "impacts." The larger the impact value, the more effect the component on the left has on the component on the right.

The NRCS Resource Conservation and Development Program can use the scores (in ovals) and impacts (in rectangles) from the model shown on the next two pages to target areas for improvement that will have the greatest leverage on Customer Satisfaction.

Attribute scores are the mean (average) respondent scores to each individual question that was asked in the survey. Respondents are asked to rate each item on a 1-10 scale with "1" being "poor" and "10" being "excellent." CFI Group converts the mean responses to these items to a 0-100 scale for reporting purposes. It is important to note that these scores are averages, not percentages. The score is best thought of as an index, with "0" meaning "poor" and "100" meaning "excellent."

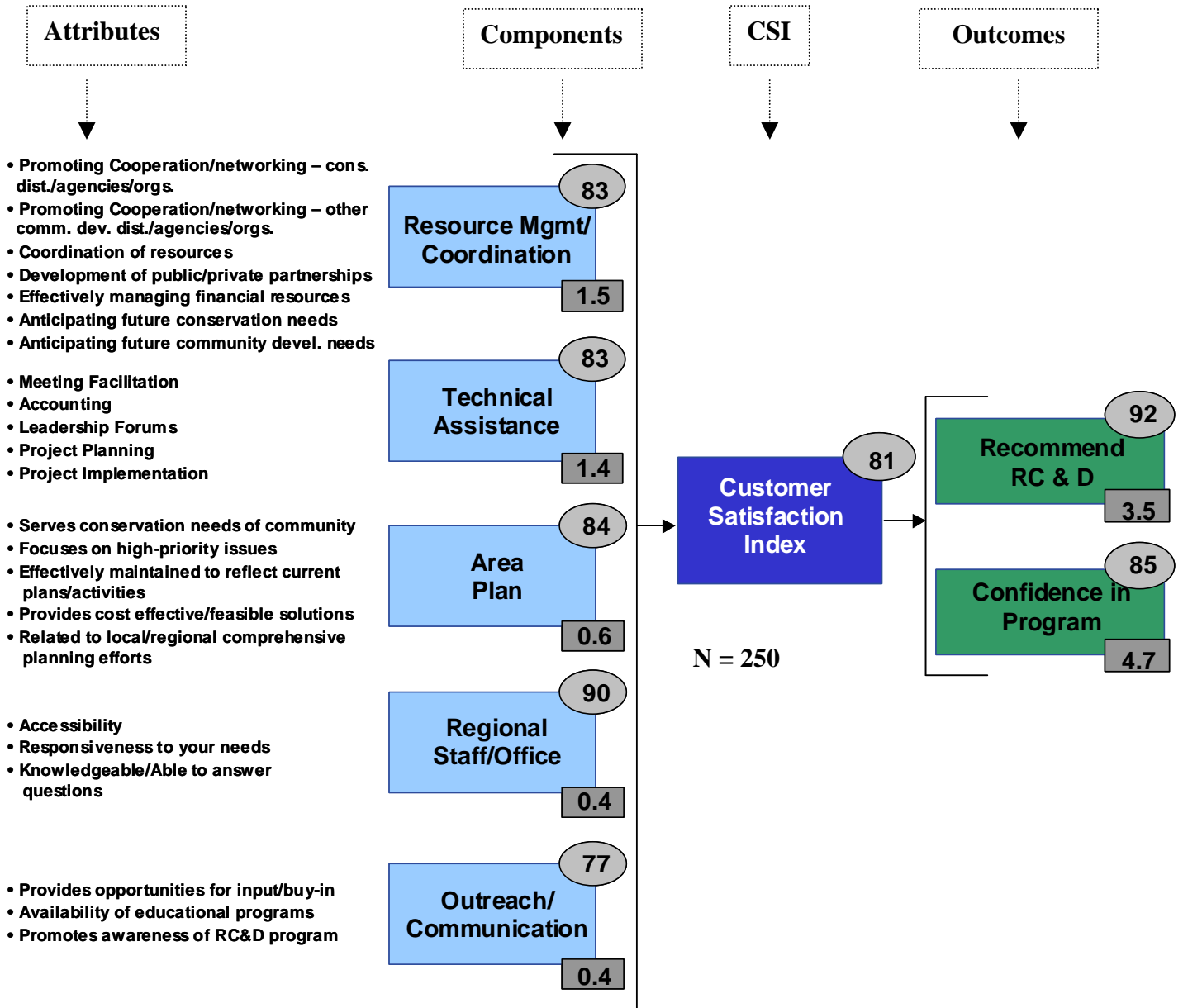
A component score in the ovals in the upper right corners is the weighted average of the individual attribute ratings given by each respondent to the questions presented in the survey. A score is a relative measure of performance for a component, as given for a particular set of respondents. In the model illustrated on the following page, scores for attributes such as 'Meeting facilitation', 'Accounting', 'Leadership Forum' and the others listed are combined to create the component score for 'Technical Assistance.'

Impacts should be read as the effect on the subsequent component if the initial driver (component) were to be improved or decreased by five points. For example, if the score for Technical Assistance increased by five points (83 to 88), Customer Satisfaction would increase by the amount of its impact, 1.4 points, (from 81 to 82.4). If the driver increases by less than or more than five points, the resulting change in the subsequent component would be the corresponding fraction of the original impact. Impacts are also additive. Thus, if multiple areas were to each improve by five points the related improvement in satisfaction will be the sum of the impacts.

Similarly, if the Customer Satisfaction Index were to increase by five points, outcomes such as 'Recommending RC&D' or 'Confidence in Program' would increase by the amount of their impact. In the case of Recommending RC&D, the likelihood to recommend would increase by 3.5 points with a five-point increase in satisfaction.

As with scores, impacts are also relative to one another. A low impact does not mean a component is unimportant. Rather, it means that a five-point change in that one component is unlikely to result in much improvement in Satisfaction at this time. Therefore, components with higher impacts are generally recommended for improvement first, especially if scores are lower for those components.

USDA NRCS Resource Conservation and Development Program Customer Satisfaction Model



Drivers of Customer Satisfaction

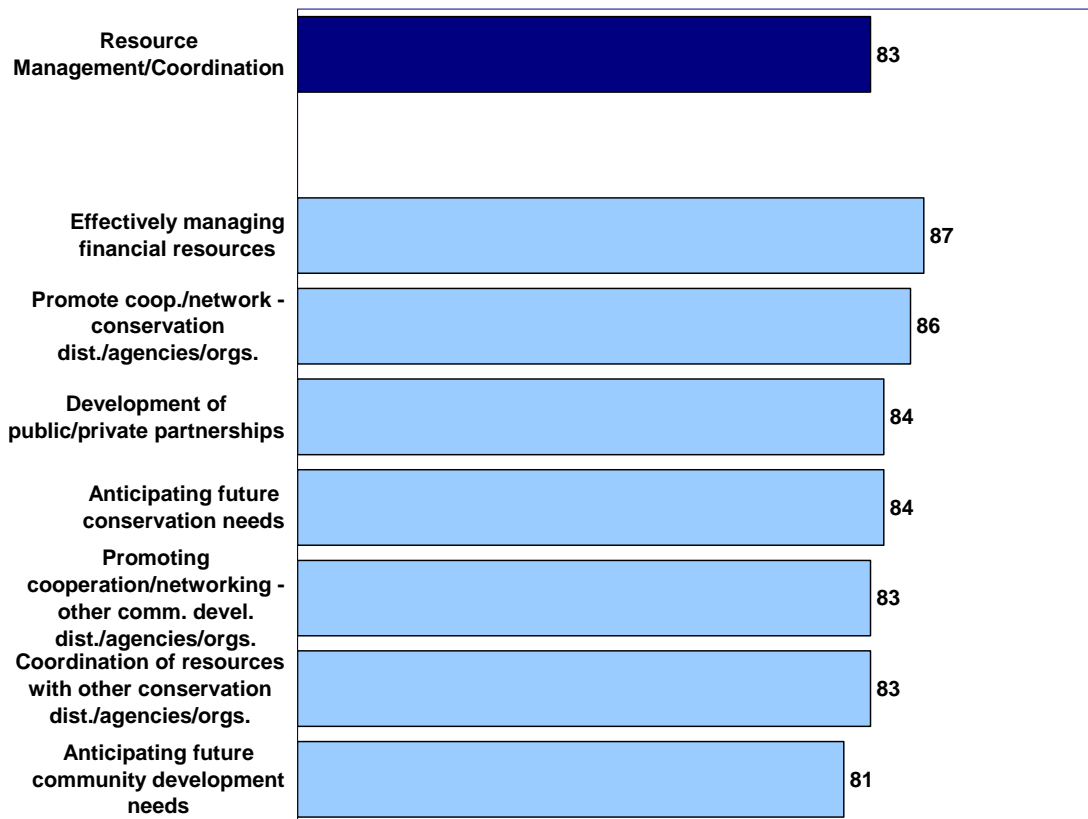
Resource Management/Coordination

Impact 1.5

Resource Management and Coordination was one of two key drivers of Customer Satisfaction. Respondents gave positive ratings to RC&D for their Resource Management/Coordination efforts. Customers thought that RC&D was effectively managing financial resources and promoting cooperation and networking with other conservation districts, agencies and organizations. Likewise, RC&D received solid rating for their promotion of cooperation and networking with other community development districts, agencies and organizations. Coordinating resources and developing public/private partnerships had similar ratings. In anticipating future needs, ratings were slightly higher for conservation needs (84) than anticipating community development needs (81). This three-point difference is statistically significant at a 90% level of confidence.

Given the high-impact Resource Management/Coordination has on Customer Satisfaction, any improvements in this already strong area will leverage the impact to boost satisfaction.

Resource Management/Coordination



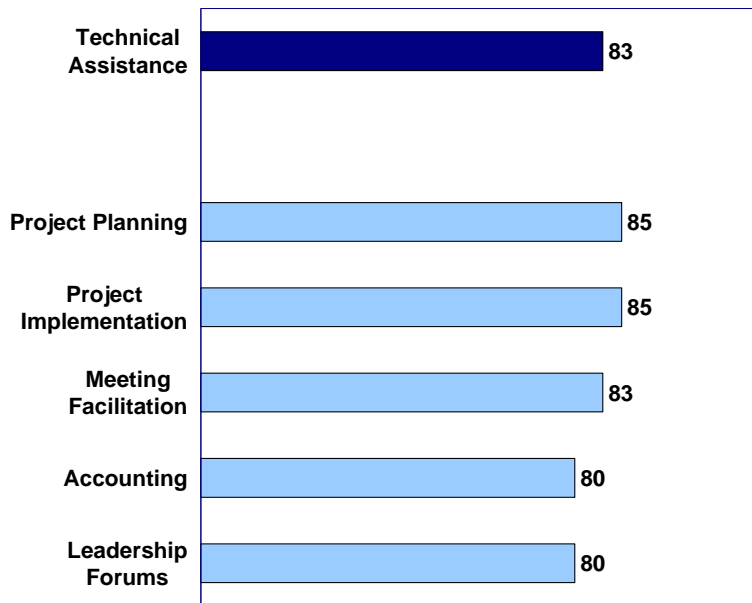
N= 250

Technical Assistance

Impact 1.4

Technical Assistance from RC&D is another key driver of Customer Satisfaction with an impact of 1.4. Respondents gave Technical Assistance its highest marks for the Project Planning and Project Implementation provided. Meeting Facilitation was slightly, but not significantly lower than Project Planning and Project Implementation. Accounting and Leadership Forums, were the lowest rated Technical Assistance items. However, these items were still rated 80.

Technical Assistance

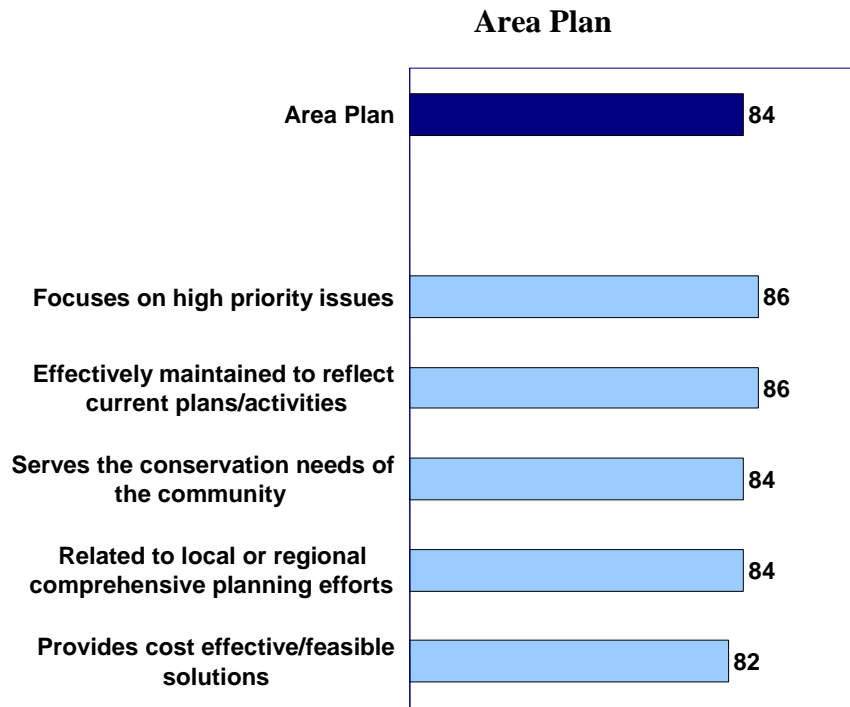


N= 247

Area Plan
Impact 0.6

Respondents were asked about their familiarity with the Area Plan and the Annual Plan of Work. Familiarity with the Area Plan received a score of 59 on a scale of 0 to 100 where ‘0’ means ‘not at all familiar’ and ‘100’ means ‘very familiar,’ while familiarity with the Annual Plan of Work received a score of 62. Respondents scored familiarity on a 1 to 10 scale, which is converted to a 0 to 100 scale for reporting purposes. Just over one-quarter (28%) of respondents indicated they were very familiar with the Area Plan rating familiarity ‘9’ or ‘10.’ Likewise 31% of respondents rated their familiarity with the Area Plan of Work that high. Conversely, 29% of respondents scored their familiarity with the Area Plan less than ‘5’ and 26% scored their familiarity with the Annual Plan of Work under ‘5.’

The Area Plan had a moderate impact on satisfaction with an impact of 0.6. Ratings for the Area Plan were positive. Respondents felt the Area Plan focused on high priority issues and it was being effectively maintained to reflect the current plan. Area Plan received solid ratings for serving the community’s conservation needs and being related to local or regional comprehensive planning efforts. Solutions proposed were mostly thought to be feasible and cost-effective.

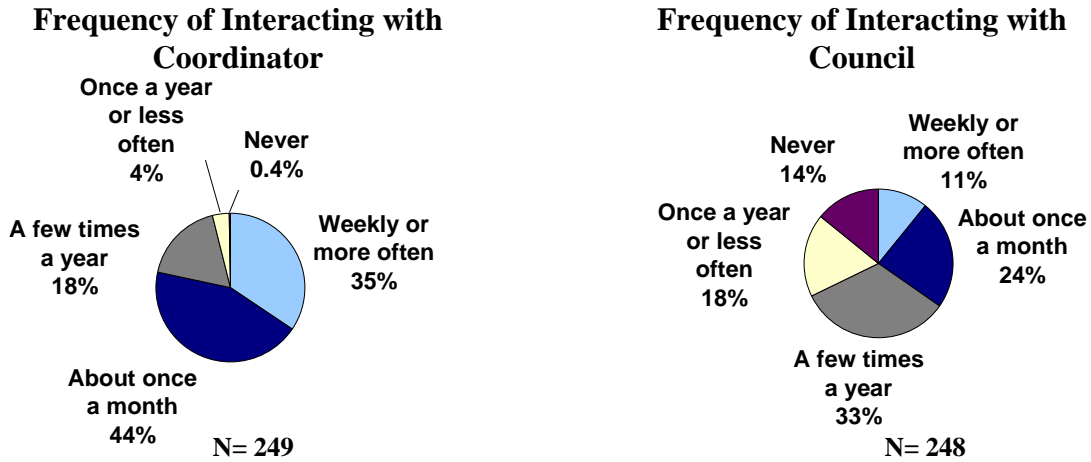


N= 176

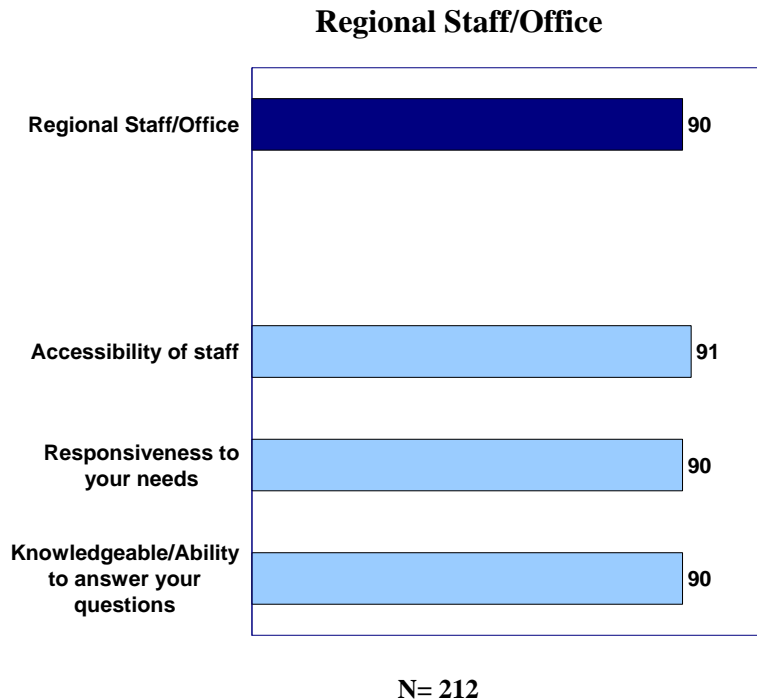
Note: Only those who rated familiarity with Area Plan ‘5’ or higher on a scale from 1 to 10 were asked the Area Plan questions.

Regional Staff/Office
Impact 0.4

Respondents indicated that they had frequent interaction with Coordinators. Over one-third were in contact with the coordinator on a weekly basis and another 44% were in contact on at least a monthly basis. In comparison, interactions with the Councils were less frequent. Only 11% had weekly contact and about one-quarter (24%) had monthly contact with the Council.



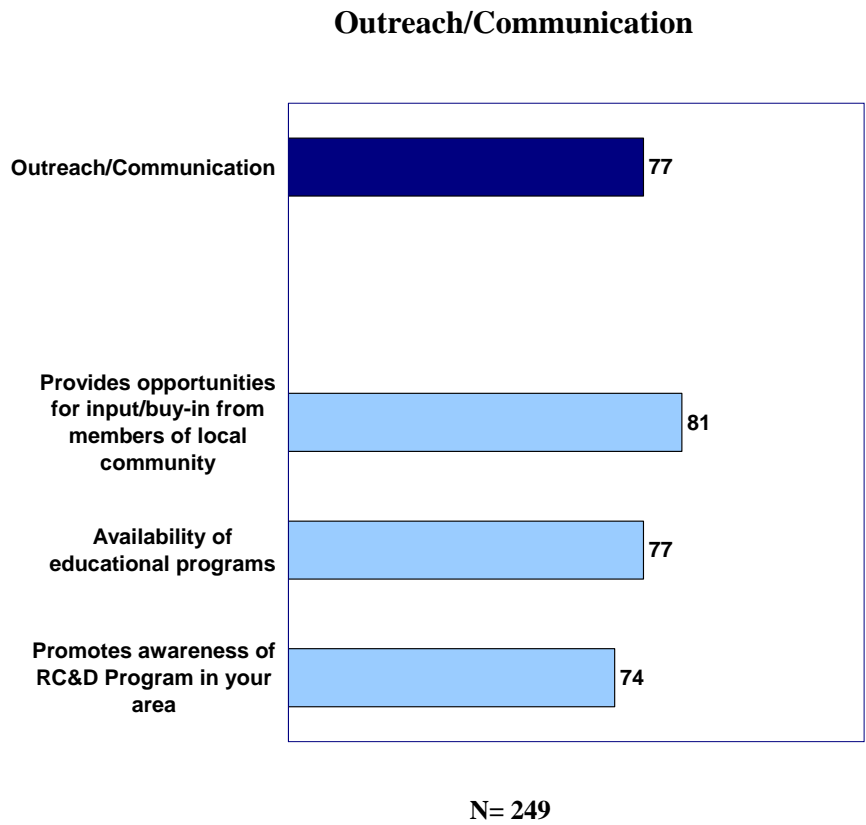
Respondents gave very positive ratings to the NRCS Resource Conservation and Development staff. They found the staff to be accessible, responsive to their needs and knowledgeable. Given the high level of performance from the staff, improvements in this area will only yield a modest increase in satisfaction as the impact of 0.4 indicates.



Outreach/Communication

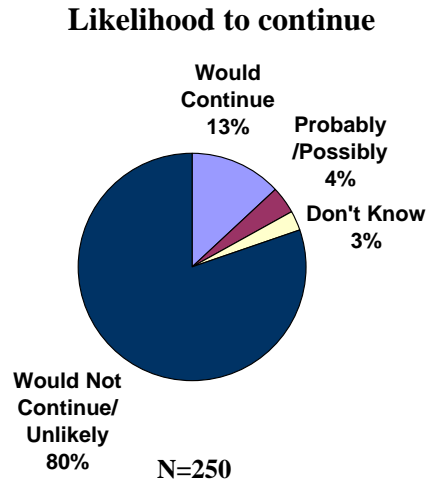
Impact 0.4

Outreach has a relatively low impact on Customer Satisfaction with an impact of 0.4. Respondents rate RC&D’s opportunities for input and buy-in from the local community the highest among Outreach/Communication items. Availability of educational programs rates slightly lower. However, promoting awareness of the RC&D Program in the respondent’s area was the Outreach/Communication item where respondents thought RC&D could most improve.

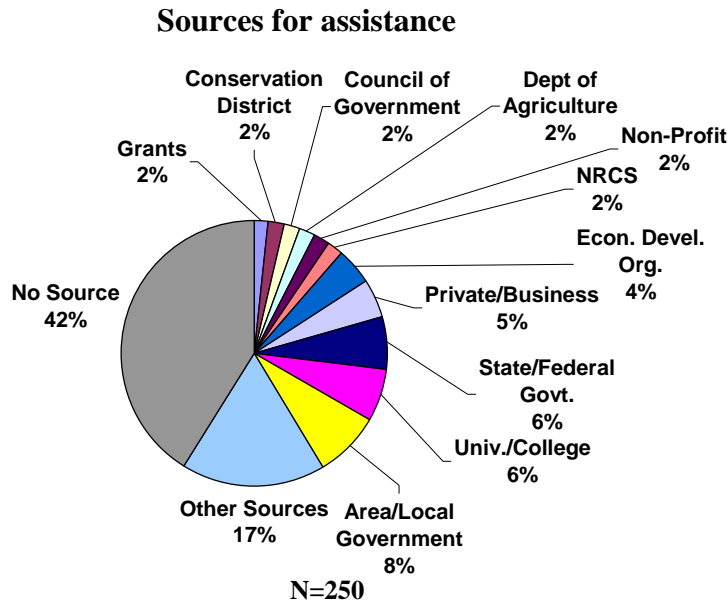


Other Sources

Respondents were asked the following: ‘Suppose the Resource Conservation and Development Program was not providing you with assistance for your project. How likely would it be that you would still receive the same assistance from some other source?’ Eighty percent of respondents indicated that the project would not continue while only 13% responded that the project would continue.



As to where the respondents would find the assistance if it were not for RC&D, the most common response (42%) was that there would be no source. Governments either area/local (8%) or state/federal (6%) were mentioned by 14%. Universities/colleges and extensions were mentioned by 6% and private business sources were mentioned by 5% of respondents.



Outcomes of Customer Satisfaction

In addition to determining drivers of Customer Satisfaction, two outcome behaviors were also measured. Respondents were asked about their likelihood to recommend the Resource Conservation and Development Program and about their confidence in the Program.

Likelihood to recommend

Respondents are very likely to recommend RC&D. They rated this item 92 on a scale from 0 to 100. Customer Satisfaction has an impact of 3.5 on the likelihood to recommend RC&D. Thus if satisfaction were to improve by five points, customers likelihood to recommend RC&D would increase by 3.5 points.

Confidence in program

Customers expressed confidence in the RC&D Program with a rating of 85 on a scale of 0 to 100. Satisfaction's impact on confidence in the program is 4.7.

Summary and Recommendations

Satisfaction with Resource Conservation and Development compared quite favorably to the Federal Government average and other NRCS satisfaction scores. Respondents found the RC&D Regional Staff/Office to be the greatest strength of the areas evaluated while the key drivers of satisfaction were Resource Management/Coordination and Technical Assistance.

Respondents found the area of Resource Management/Coordination to be meeting their needs with the highest ratings for the items effectively managing financial resources and promoting cooperation/networking with conservation districts.

The Technical Assistance provided by RC&D was the other key driver. RC&D received the highest scores in this area for its project planning and project implementation, while accounting and leadership forums rated solidly but may be opportunities to improve Technical Assistance.

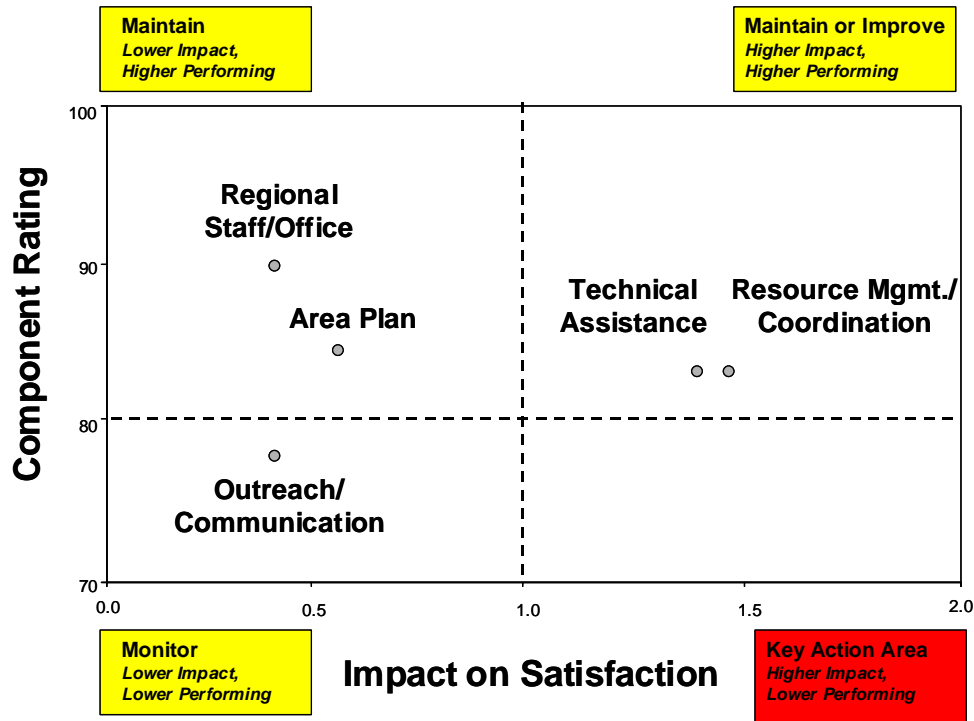
Respondents were somewhat familiar with the Area Plan and the Annual Plan of Work as their ratings of familiarity of 59 and 62 respectively indicate. Overall the Area Plan received positive ratings. Most notably, respondents felt the Plan focused on high priority issues and was being effectively maintained.

The high performing area was RC&D Regional Staff/Office with a rating of 90. Staff was accessible, responsive to needs and knowledgeable. Respondents had fairly frequent interactions with Coordinators, as almost four-fifths had contact at least monthly or weekly. The interaction with the Council was less frequent as just over one-third reported weekly or monthly contact.

Although Outreach/Communication is the lowest performing area, it is also the lowest impact. The lowest rated item was 'promoting awareness of RC&D program in the area.' Many verbatim comments also reflected this sentiment about the profile of the program and the need for more publicity of it.

When asked if RC&D were not available, most respondents (80%) indicated they would not continue with their project. When asked about possible alternative resources, two-fifths claimed there was no other source. Area/local government (8%) had the most mentions.

While it is recommend to focus on the high-impact, lower performing items as a first priority, the chart below shows there are not key action areas for RC&D to target. Instead the focus should be on leveraging areas with the highest impact, Technical Assistance and Resource Management/Coordination, and building upon the performance in these already strong areas. With Technical Assistance, Accounting and Leadership Forums are opportunities to improve. While in the area of Resource Management/Coordination activities such as better anticipation of



community development needs, providing more coordination of resources and developing partnerships may be areas to target. While Outreach/Communication does not have a great impact on the area of promoting awareness of RC&D, it was the lowest scoring attribute of all areas and had frequent mentions in verbatim comments; for those reasons it may be worth focus as a secondary priority.

APPENDIX A : SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

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RC& D – Resource Conservation and Development Program Customer Satisfaction Survey Final Version

Verify Respondent

Intro1. Hello. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has hired my company, [Data Collection Company], to call on their behalf to conduct a brief survey about their Resource Conservation and Development Program. My name is _____. May I please speak with _____?

WAIT FOR RESPONSE

1. **Correct Person on Phone** (GO TO INTRO)
2. **Not correct person, but Person is available** (HOLD UNTIL RESPONDENT ANSWERS AND READ BELOW)

Intro2. Hello. The Resource Conservation and Development Program of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has hired my company, [Data Collection Company], to call on their behalf. My name is _____. **(GO TO INTRO)**

1. **If Person not available** (Schedule a call back)
2. **If No Such Person** "Thank you and have a nice day!"
3. **Refusal/Hung Up**

Introduction

IF SPEAKING WITH CORRECT PERSON CONTINUE BELOW

The Resource Conservation and Development Program of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) would like your feedback about its program to ensure that they deliver the services that meet your needs.

Intro3. ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FROM THE NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)?

1. Yes (Skip to Intro 4)
2. No/Don't Know (IF NO/DON'T KNOW PLEASE READ BELOW **IN BOLD**)

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers several programs in order to provide technical assistance and financial incentives to enable owners and managers of privately owned land to make sound natural resource decisions and to promote conservation. Resource Conservation and Development Program is one of these programs.

Intro4. We ask on behalf of the Resource Conservation and Development Program for your participation in a short survey that asks about your satisfaction with the services it provides. YOU HAVE BEEN RANDOMLY SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS SURVEY. ALL INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL AND FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES ONLY. (NOTE TO INTERVIEW: IF RESPONDENTS ASKS WHERE HOW YOU GOT THEIR NAME. IT WAS RANDOMLY SELECTED FROM THE NRCS DATABASE)

This survey will take approximately 8-10 minutes of your time. This survey is authorized by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget Control No. 1505-0191.

(NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: IF THE RESPONDENT HAS ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SURVEY PLEASE RECORD THE NATURE OF THEIR QUESTION AND HAVE THEM CONTACT MAGGIE RHODES)

Just to confirm, have you received assistance from the Resource Conservation and Development Program Natural Resources Conservation Service in the past two years?

1. Yes (Continue)
2. No (Terminate)
3. Don't Know (Terminate)

Intro5. Is now a good time?

1. Yes (Continue)
2. No "Can we schedule a time that is more convenient for you?"

(For all questions, please include choices 98 = Don't Know and 99 = Refused/Hung Up)

Demographics

Demo1. Which of the following best describes your organization?

1. Local Government
2. State Government
3. Planning Group
4. Business/Commercial
5. Non-profit Organization
6. Private land owner (non-commercial)
7. Federally recognized Tribal Government
8. Non-Federally Recognized Tribal Government
9. Elected Official
10. University or College
11. Conservation District
12. Other (Specify)

Awareness

Please indicate how familiar you are with the following elements of the Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Program for your community. Use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means 'not at all familiar' and 10 means 'very familiar.'

Q1a. Area Plan (If '4' or lower SKIP AREA PLAN questions Q6-Q10)

Q1b. Annual Plan of Work

Regional Staff/Office

Q2. Which best describes how frequently you interact with your local NRCS RC&D Coordinator?

1. Weekly or more often
2. About once a month
3. A few times a year
4. Once a year or less often
5. Never (Skip to Q7)

- Q3. Which best describes how frequently you interact with your local RC&D council?
1. Weekly or more often
 2. About once a month
 3. A few times a year
 4. Once a year or less often
 5. Never (Skip to Q7)

Thinking about the NRCS RC&D staff, on a scale from 1 to 10, where "1" is "Poor" and "10" is "Excellent" please rate the following:

- Q4. Accessibility of staff
- Q5. Responsiveness to your needs
- Q6. Knowledgeable/Ability to answer your questions

Area Plan

Think about the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area Plan for your region. Use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means "Strongly Disagree" and 10 means "Strongly Agree" to evaluate the following:

- Q7. The Area Plan serves the conservation needs/interests of the community or communities.
- Q8. The Area Plan focuses on high priority issues.
- Q9. The Area Plan is effectively maintained to reflect current plans/activities.
- Q10. The Area Plan provides cost effective/feasible solutions.
- Q11. The Area Plan is related to local or regional comprehensive planning efforts

Outreach/Communication

Think about the outreach and related communication efforts with respect to the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program. Use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means "Poor" and 10 means "Excellent" to rate the following:

- Q12. Provides opportunities for input/buy-in from members of local community.
- Q13. Availability of educational programs concerning area resource conservation and development Issues.
- Q14. Promotes awareness of RC&D Program in your area

Resource Management /Coordination

Think about the resource management and coordination with respect to the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program. Use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means "Poor" and 10 means "Excellent" to rate the following:

- Q15. Promoting cooperation/networking with conservation districts/agencies/organizations
- Q16. Promoting cooperation/networking with other community development districts/agencies/organizations
- Q17. Coordination of resources with other conservation districts/agencies/organizations
- Q18. Development of public/private partnerships
- Q19. Effectively managing financial resources
- Q20. Anticipating future conservation needs
- Q21. Anticipating future community development needs

Technical Assistance

Think about the technical assistance that your area receives through the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program. Use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means "Poor" and 10 means "Excellent" to rate the following areas of technical assistance provided:

- Q22. Meeting Facilitation
- Q24. Accounting
- Q25. Leadership Forums
- Q26. Project Planning
- Q27. Project Implementation

ACSI Benchmark Questions

Now we are going to ask you to please consider your experiences with the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program in answering the following.

- Q28. First, please consider all of your experiences to date with Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D). Using a 10-point scale on which "1" means "Very dissatisfied" and "10" means "Very satisfied," how satisfied are you overall with Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program?
- Q29. To what extent has Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program fallen short of your expectations or exceeded your expectations? Please use a 10-point scale on which "1" now means "Falls short of your expectations" and "10" means "Exceeds your expectations."
- Q30. Forget about Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) for a moment. Now, imagine the ideal resource conservation program. How well do you think the NRCS Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program compares with that ideal? Please use a 10-point scale on which "1" means "Not very close to the ideal" and "10" means "Very close to the ideal."

Outcomes

- Q31. How likely are you to recommend the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program to others? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where "1" means "not very likely" and "10" means "very likely."
- Q32. How confident are you in the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program helping you meet your area's/region's conservation and development needs? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where "1" means "not very confident" and "10" means "very confident."

Open-End

- Q33. Suppose the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program was not providing you with assistance for your project. How likely would it be that you would still receive the same assistance from some other source?
- Q34. If you would still receive the same assistance from another source, what is that source?
- Q35. How could the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program better serve the needs of its customers?

Closing

The NRCS would like to thank you for your time and participation today. Your feedback is greatly appreciated.

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APPENDIX B: CUSTOMER BACKGROUND

	Percent of Respondents
Organization	
Local Government	26%
State Government	10%
Planning Group	4%
Business/Commercial	4%
Non-profit Organization	26%
Private land owner (non-commercial)	9%
Elected Official	2%
University or College	7%
Conservation District	5%
Other	8%
Number of Respondents	
249	
Frequency of interacting with local RC&D Coordinator	
Weekly or more often	35%
About once a month	44%
A few times a year	18%
Once a year or less often	4%
Never	0%
Number of Respondents	
249	
Frequency of interacting with local RC&D Council	
Weekly or more often	11%
About once a month	24%
A few times a year	33%
Once a year or less often	18%
Never	14%
Number of Respondents	
248	

APPENDIX C: ATTRIBUTE TABLES

Attribute Table - Aggregate

	Score	Total Impact
Regional Staff/Office	90	0.4
Accessibility of staff	91	
Responsiveness to your needs	90	
Knowledgeable/Ability to answer your questions	90	
Area Plan	84	0.6
Serves the conservation needs/interests of the community or communities	84	
Focuses on high priority issues	86	
Effectively maintained to reflect current plans/activities	86	
Provides cost effective/feasible solutions	82	
Related to local or regional comprehensive planning efforts	84	
Outreach/Communication	77	0.4
Provides opportunities for input/buy-in from members of local community	81	
Availability of educational programs	77	
Promotes awareness of RC&D Program in your area	74	
Resource Management/Coordination	83	1.5
Promoting cooperation/networking - conservation dist./agencies/orgs.	86	
Promoting cooperation/networking - other comm. devel. dist./agencies/orgs.	83	
Coordination of resources with other conservation dist./agencies/orgs.	83	
Development of public/private partnerships	84	
Effectively managing financial resources	87	
Anticipating future conservation needs	84	
Anticipating future community development needs	81	
Technical Assistance	83	1.4
Meeting Facilitation	83	
Accounting	80	
Leadership Forums	80	
Project Planning	85	
Project Implementation	85	
Customer Satisfaction Index	81	
Overall satisfaction	88	
Compared to expectations	80	
Compared to ideal	73	
Likelihood to recommend the RC&D Program	92	3.5
Likelihood to recommend the RC&D Program	92	
Confidence in the RC&D Program	85	4.7
Confidence in the RC&D Program	85	
Awareness[^]		
Familiarity with Area Plan	59	
Familiarity with Annual Plan of Work	62	
Number of Respondents	250	

Attribute Table - Organization

	Local Government	State Government	Business/Commercial	Non-profit Organization
Regional Staff/Office	89	87*	94*	92
Accessibility of staff	89	91*	95*	92
Responsiveness to your needs	88	84*	93*	93
Knowledgeable/Ability to answer your questions	90	86*	95*	93
Area Plan	82	81*	89*	86
Serves the conservation needs/interests of the community or communities	83	83*	93*	84
Focuses on high priority issues	85	83*	91*	86
Effectively maintained to reflect current plans/activities	84	84*	91*	88
Provides cost effective/feasible solutions	80	74*	83*	85
Related to local or regional comprehensive planning efforts	83	81*	89*	86
Outreach/Communication	74	72*	80*	81
Provides opportunities for input/buy-in from members of local community	76	81*	78*	84
Availability of educational programs	74	70*	81*	82
Promotes awareness of RC&D Program in your area	72	69*	81*	77
Resource Management/Coordination	79	81*	89*	86
Promoting cooperation/networking - conservation dist./agencies/orgs.	82	84*	89*	88
Promoting cooperation/networking - other comm. devel. dist./agencies/orgs.	79	87*	89*	85
Coordination of resources with other conservation dist./agencies/orgs.	78	86*	86*	86
Development of public/private partnerships	78	82*	96*	86
Effectively managing financial resources	87	80*	91*	89
Anticipating future conservation needs	81	80*	88*	87
Anticipating future community development needs	78	75*	88*	84
Technical Assistance	80	80*	92*	85
Meeting Facilitation	81	82*	86*	85
Accounting	81	71*	83*	83
Leadership Forums	76	76*	92*	81
Project Planning	81	82*	96*	88
Project Implementation	81	85*	96*	89
Customer Satisfaction Index	79	79*	82*	86
Overall satisfaction	87	86*	82*	93
Compared to expectations	76	79*	83*	85
Compared to ideal	72	70*	83*	77
Likelihood to recommend the RC&D Program	88	92*	92*	96
Likelihood to recommend the RC&D Program	88	92*	92*	96
Confidence in the RC&D Program	82	84*	88*	89
Confidence in the RC&D Program	82	84*	88*	89
Awareness^				
Familiarity with Area Plan	63	48*	52*	65
Familiarity with Annual Plan of Work	62	57*	52*	66
Number of Respondents	65	25*	10*	64

Attribute Table – Organization (continued)

	Private Land Owner (non-commercial)	University or College	Conservation District	Other
Regional Staff/Office	88*	86*	90*	91*
Accessibility of staff	87*	85*	93*	92*
Responsiveness to your needs	89*	87*	90*	92*
Knowledgeable/Ability to answer your questions	87*	89*	88*	90*
Area Plan	82*	88*	83*	91*
Serves the conservation needs/interests of the community or communities	79*	88*	83*	92*
Focuses on high priority issues	84*	93*	85*	92*
Effectively maintained to reflect current plans/activities	82*	88*	84*	91*
Provides cost effective/feasible solutions	82*	86*	84*	90*
Related to local or regional comprehensive planning efforts	82*	86*	77*	93*
Outreach/Communication	73*	78*	82*	83*
Provides opportunities for input/buy-in from members of local community	77*	80*	82*	89*
Availability of educational programs	72*	78*	79*	80*
Promotes awareness of RC&D Program in your area	70*	74*	84*	79*
Resource Management/Coordination	82*	84*	86*	88*
Promoting cooperation/networking - conservation dist./agencies/orgs.	86*	87*	88*	91*
Promoting cooperation/networking - other comm. devel. dist./agencies/orgs.	81*	84*	83*	87*
Coordination of resources with other conservation dist./agencies/orgs.	79*	83*	85*	84*
Development of public/private partnerships	81*	87*	88*	90*
Effectively managing financial resources	85*	87*	91*	86*
Anticipating future conservation needs	84*	84*	85*	88*
Anticipating future community development needs	78*	82*	84*	86*
Technical Assistance	84*	81*	83*	85*
Meeting Facilitation	83*	84*	81*	90*
Accounting	78*	79*	84*	79*
Leadership Forums	81*	81*	83*	88*
Project Planning	86*	81*	82*	90*
Project Implementation	86*	80*	85*	85*
Customer Satisfaction Index	78*	77*	79*	83*
Overall satisfaction	87*	85*	86*	88*
Compared to expectations	76*	74*	77*	85*
Compared to ideal	66*	71*	71*	75*
Likelihood to recommend the RC&D Program	88*	88*	91*	96*
Likelihood to recommend the RC&D Program	88*	88*	91*	96*
Confidence in the RC&D Program	84*	80*	84*	89*
Confidence in the RC&D Program	84*	80*	84*	89*
Awareness[^]				
Familiarity with Area Plan	49*	52*	62*	57*
Familiarity with Annual Plan of Work	54*	48*	76*	64*
Number of Respondents	22*	18*	13*	19*

Attribute Table – Frequency of interacting with council

	Weekly or more often	About once a month	A few times a year	Once a year or less often	Never
Regional Staff/Office	92*	93	90	86	--
Accessibility of staff	93*	94	90	86	--
Responsiveness to your needs	90*	94	89	84	--
Knowledgeable/Ability to answer your questions	93*	91	90	88	--
Area Plan	88*	85	85	82*	75*
Serves the conservation needs/interests of the community or communities	89*	86	85	80*	76*
Focuses on high priority issues	90*	87	87	86*	74*
Effectively maintained to reflect current plans/activities	86*	87	86	86*	75*
Provides cost effective/feasible solutions	86*	83	82	80*	80*
Related to local or regional comprehensive planning efforts	89*	84	85	86*	73*
Outreach/Communication	86*	81	79	70	68
Provides opportunities for input/buy-in from members of local community	88*	84	84	76	68
Availability of educational programs	88*	80	78	70	68
Promotes awareness of RC&D Program in your area	84*	78	76	66	68
Resource Management/Coordination	90*	86	85	79	76
Promoting cooperation/networking - conservation dist./agencies/orgs.	93*	90	87	81	76
Promoting cooperation/networking - other comm. devel. dist./agencies/orgs.	89*	83	83	81	78
Coordination of resources with other conservation dist./agencies/orgs.	90*	86	83	78	77
Development of public/private partnerships	92*	84	84	81	79
Effectively managing financial resources	94*	90	88	80	81*
Anticipating future conservation needs	88*	86	85	80	78
Anticipating future community development needs	85*	83	82	77	77*
Technical Assistance	94*	85	82	79	76
Meeting Facilitation	96*	86	82	81	75
Accounting	95*	84	79	73	72*
Leadership Forums	88*	84	80	74	74*
Project Planning	93*	87	86	81	78
Project Implementation	95*	85	84	83	80
Customer Satisfaction Index	90*	81	81	79	78
Overall satisfaction	95*	88	89	86	85
Compared to expectations	88*	78	81	77	76
Compared to ideal	84*	74	71	69	71
Likelihood to recommend the RC&D Program	99*	95	92	85	86
Likelihood to recommend the RC&D Program	99*	95	92	85	86
Confidence in the RC&D Program	91*	88	85	82	79
Confidence in the RC&D Program	91*	88	85	82	79
Awareness^					
Familiarity with Area Plan	75*	76	64	42	28
Familiarity with Annual Plan of Work	82*	75	65	47	34
Number of Respondents	27*	59	82	45	35

Attribute Table – Frequency of interacting with coordinator

	Weekly or more often	About once a month	A few times a year
Regional Staff/Office	91	90	89
Accessibility of staff	91	90	92
Responsiveness to your needs	90	90	86
Knowledgeable/Ability to answer your questions	91	90	90
Area Plan	85	84	81*
Serves the conservation needs/interests of the community or communities	86	84	81*
Focuses on high priority issues	87	85	85*
Effectively maintained to reflect current plans/activities	85	86	83*
Provides cost effective/feasible solutions	84	83	79*
Related to local or regional comprehensive planning efforts	84	84	85*
Outreach/Communication	81	79	72
Provides opportunities for input/buy-in from members of local community	84	83	76
Availability of educational programs	81	78	71
Promotes awareness of RC&D Program in your area	77	76	70
Resource Management/Coordination	88	84	77
Promoting cooperation/networking - conservation dist./agencies/orgs.	91	86	78
Promoting cooperation/networking - other comm. devel. dist./agencies/orgs.	87	81	80
Coordination of resources with other conservation dist./agencies/orgs.	87	83	74
Development of public/private partnerships	88	84	77
Effectively managing financial resources	90	88	81
Anticipating future conservation needs	87	83	80
Anticipating future community development needs	84	81	78
Technical Assistance	86	82	79
Meeting Facilitation	87	84	76
Accounting	81	80	78
Leadership Forums	85	78	76
Project Planning	89	84	82
Project Implementation	88	84	83
Customer Satisfaction Index	84	81	79
Overall satisfaction	91	88	87
Compared to expectations	83	79	77
Compared to ideal	74	73	72
Likelihood to recommend the RC&D Program	95	91	90
Likelihood to recommend the RC&D Program	95	91	90
Confidence in the RC&D Program	88	85	83
Confidence in the RC&D Program	88	85	83
Awareness[^]			
Familiarity with Area Plan	71	58	47
Familiarity with Annual Plan of Work	77	60	44
Number of Respondents	86	109	44

APPENDIX D: VERBATIM COMMENTS

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DEMO1. Which of the following best describes your organization? (Responses to ‘Other’)

Between local and state government

Educational facility

Elementary school

Federal

Federal agency

Federal government

Federal government office of USDA

Federal government through USDA

High school

Livestock, cattle raising and selling

Local and state government and planning group

Local, state & federal government.

Non-entity

Political subdivision of the state.

Regional government

Regional organization

Resource conservation and development is helping the community to get fire stations

State, federal and local government

USDA Forest Service

Q33. Suppose the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program was not providing you with assistance for your project. How likely would it be that you would still receive the same assistance from some other source?

Very likely/Would continue (33 comments)

Be very likely

Fairly likely

I would achieve some assistance from another source.

I am going to continue on with my projects but it's good when RC & D steps up and helps us

I believe there are other sources out there.

It would be likely that there would be another source like a federal agency.

Likely (4)

Likely that there are alternative sources.

Likely. We would be able to find those resources elsewhere

Pretty likely (2)

Quite likely

Since we are county government we would receive assistance from some other source

Somewhat

Somewhat likely (3)

They're out there, but I'd rather use RC & D.

This was a one-time thing. Somewhat likely.

Use anything

Very likely (5)

We have received assistance from other sources, so somewhat likely

We would always find a way to make it happen.

We would assume the whole responsibility that the RC & D now is helping with us. If RC & D did not become a funding partner with a third party, then our department will have to seek other funding partners which may or may not assist.

We would be apt to go out and find other sources.

We would go to another organization for grant writing.

Probable/Possible (10 comments)

Hard to answer. Average likelihood.

It's a probability

In some cases we would not get the support if it were not for RC & D

It is possible that there would be another source.

It would be about fifty-fifty

Maybe

More difficult but likely

*Possible, but the NRCS provides a great source.
Some programs there is another source, but for some there are not.
That would be variable*

Don't Know (7 comments)

I don't know (3)

I don't know because they call me or email me with ideas. They are always letting me know what's out there.

N/A

No answer

On the RC&D board, so I cannot answer.

Not very likely/Considerably less likely/Would not (202 comments)

A lot less likely

Another company comes in to discuss maps, but RC & D does land, conservation and land training for all of the teachers.

*Because RC & D is essentially run by volunteers, there is limited time to fundraise and I feel if the government withdraws its normal support, the program may falter. I guess I would like to see the coordinators in the state be willing to give the kind of assistance that I see one or two coordinators giving. I really believe in the RC & D program and I am disturbed to see them trying to cut funding every year. We count on that seed money to serve the people in our community and I would like to see the government enable coordinators to tell council what they can do, not what they cannot do. This program returns fifteen dollars for every dollar spent
Considerably less likely.*

Depends on the project. Some yes some no, but not very likely.

Don't even imagine having another resource

Don't know another group that would do what the RC & D does.

Don't think we can get what we are doing from another source.

Fairly difficult if not impossible for us to receive the same kind of assistance.

Fairly unlikely (2)

Highly unlikely (2)

I am very confident in RC & D, but they need more funding locally

I cannot imagine another source meeting my needs effectively

I do not feel that I would get the same response from another source if I didn't have RC & D assistance

I don't know any other organization that has the same type of program as the RC & D

I don't know if another source could do what RC & D is doing for us

I don't know that there is one that could help.

I don't see any other organizations stepping up to that plate

I don't think I would get that from another source, they're very unique.

I don't think it would be possible

I don't think we would be able to accomplish our conservation without RC & D

I see them as good fit to our overall organizing I am very impressed

I think that it would be unlikely because there are no other local sources comparable to RC & D and their sources.

I think that the partnership has been more than just a financial arrangement and it has been outreach, finances, and coordination and participation, so there would not be another source that would be the same.

I would not receive assistance from another source because RC & D completed our projects and there was no one else there.

I would not receive other sources because I went to other sources before I went to RC & D and others would not cooperate. I am very happy with this local RC & D group for they are excellent and the director is great.

I wouldn't

I wouldn't have been able to manage the grants that they secured, so unlikely

It is unlikely there is not another source like the RC & D

It would be difficult to get the same assistance from another source

It would be difficult, very difficult

It would be not very likely at all because there is no one else who does this service.

It would be unlikely (2)

It would be unlikely that we would use another source.

It would be very difficult because other sources would fall short of community development.

It would not be likely at all.

It would not be very likely because I do not think that others provide the services that RC & D does so efficiently.

It's unlikely that some one else can help

It's possible, but not very likely.

Less likely to get the work done

Less likely, I think RC & D has done a great job working with diversity

Likely, but not very

Low to midway likely

Maybe or maybe not

Maybe unlikely

Might happen, but probably not.

More difficult to get the program done.

No chance for what they are working on to get it elsewhere.

No other help, unlikely

None

Not as likely (3)

Not at all (5)

Not at all likely

Not likely (15)

Not likely at all (4)

Not to the quality. Unlikely

Not too likely.

Not very (2)

Not very likely (14)

Not very likely (19)

Not very likely as there are not any organizations that provide those services

Not very likely at all (4)

Not very likely without cost share

Not very likely. Our program provided a unique need in our community.

Not very likely. The RC & D is one of the only resources available to this region.

Not very likely. There are not many organizations that have the same focus.

Not very unlikely

Not very well

Pretty unlikely

Probably less likely

Probably likely. RC&D is asked to do planning in certain areas. We have similar organizations in our region, which can do the same type of work. Frankly, there is overlap and duplication of efforts. There's confusion about who's responsible for what such as statewide and federal planning, water conservation, other overlapping. There should be better coordination and streamlining of efforts

Probably none

Probably none at all

Probably not

Probably not any

Probably not likely

Probably not likely. Just for the availability and ease, and what I do on a day-to-day basis.

Probably not very likely (2)

Probably unlikely

Probably wouldn't

RC & D provides unique services, so it would be hard

The RC & D provides a unique niche in terms of organizations in the area. It provides a bridge environmentally as well as local partners. Because they are a regional organization they have the mission to go beyond to coordinate with others. It would be difficult to get other projects off the ground without RC & D

There are some areas where I don't know where funding or better funding would come from.

There would be no other assistance like RC & D but sometimes, it takes different funding sources and we use others.

There's not other source

They are a great asset.

They give us specialty use.

This would be marginally likely that we would receive assistance from another source.

Unlikely (19)

Unlikely because that is the only source

Unlikely in a lot of instances

Unlikely that they would be able to provide the same service

Unlikely, we could not get assistance as fast

Unlikely. I just think that it works hard to provide what is not already provided. They usually help me find stuff that I cannot find

Unlikely. They are the main outlet.

Very difficult, unlikely

Very minimal.

Very unlikely (18)

We are in a remote area and we do not see other people who have similar programs.

We would not receive any.

We wouldn't.

Will not receive it

Would be moderately likely but hard to find the same source.

Would not know where to turn.

Wouldn't be very likely.

Q34. If you would still receive the same assistance from another source, what is that source?**Arca (3 comments)**

Arca might be one, the corporation of engineers, earmark, and DEQ

The only other thing I might think about is Arca

The different departments of agriculture or Arca but we do not see their representatives very often.

Area/Local Government (21 comments)

Any other community funding or grants

Cooperative extension. Local government.

Could be a Coachella Valley Water District and Imperial Valley Water District. Local municipal, cities, industries

County commissioner

County government

County or state resources.

County, government

County. Group of counties that does regional planning.

Grant writing organization in the community.

It would be community donors

It would be several sources, we would partner with several organizations in our area

Local

Local bank

Local consultants, county commissioners, extension agents

Local government agencies

Local land conservancy

Local offices and other non-profit agencies

The county and state

The local community

There is none unless it's local government

We could ask for more assistance from our local government agencies. If you could hire a grant writer you could fundraise. Starting a business but that takes seed money too. The local governments are expended already in giving money to our local police fire sewer and water departments.

Conservation District (5 comments)

Conservation district

Conservation district for conservation efforts

Soil and water conservation district

The conservation district

Water conservation district or Department of Agriculture

Councils of Government/Planning Commissions (5 comments)

Council of government

Council of government, Eastern Maine Development Corporation. Not sure if they would be able to give the same assistance, but if there were no RC&D I would have to try.

Local council of governments, but can't see them being of any use

Local council of governments

Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission

Department of Agriculture (5 comments)

Regional planning commissions. Dept of Agriculture

Texas Department of Agriculture

The local USDA office or the chamber of commerce

The USDA agencies

USDA or Department of Natural Resources of Missouri

Economic Development Organizations (11 comments)

Area and community economic groups

Depends on the project. Area development district

Economic development area

I would have to go to the area development district

I would turn first to the regional development commission for the same type of services, or the watershed districts, the NRCS last.

If we did, probably the area development district offices

Rural Development Council

Rural development, which is a state funding source and it has been cut.

SE Nebraska Development

Sierra Business Council or cooperative extension

Snowy Mountain Development Corporation

Fish and Wildlife (2 comments)

Funding for U.S. Fishing and Wildlife and some from TECQ

Probably other federal and state agencies, like Fish and Wildlife

Forest Service (2 comments)

Forest Service

Forest Service, community service

Grants (4 comments)

Grant funded and I give grants.

Grants or fees for services

Greener grant

Probably be a grants program

Non-profit (5 comments)

Another non-profit organization

Environmental non-profits

Non-profit groups.

Non-profits.

Private, non-profits

NRCS (5 comments)

Go to the NRCS to find help

It would probably be just NRCS, not RC & D

Just NRCS, district conservationist

NRCS

NRCS or local planning department

Private/Business (12 comments)

A private facilitator

Consultants

Grants from businesses

Maybe private, but unsure

Private companies. Hamburger Helper, Lowes, etc.

Private contractor

Private donations (2)

Private grants

Private grants and internships or technical assistance from other employees

Private proprietary people

Unit of government or a company in private industry.

State/Federal Government (16 comments)

California Department of Forestry, another NRCS program, state-funded program, county program.

Combination of state and federal organizations. Department of economic development, department of agriculture.

I guess it would be from the government or the state

Other state and federal agencies

Other state sources

State agencies, local water district, landowners association.

State agency (2)

State and local agencies

State department, but we're not going to get the same assistance.

State government

State of Texas

State system

The source would be a state agency.

The state of Tennessee was our source and we had to borrow state and local funds.

Various government and state agencies

University/College/Extensions (16 comments)

A university or extension service would be helpful or a non-profit organization.

Extension service (3)

From our university

I don't know, Arkansas Farm Bureau. University of Arkansas

It could be Cornell Cooperative Extension

It would be resources through our college or a consulting firm that our foundation would hire.

No other source known, maybe a local university or college

The technical colleges

Through the university

University of California

University or consultants

University or regional planning

UNL extension office but they can't

Various colleges and other community groups

Watersheds/Water Districts (3 comments)

Sloan Water Office

Water districts

Watershed groups. State and federal agencies.

No Source (104 comments)

Cannot think of another source

Can't find another source.

Can't put a finger on one that would provide the same service

Can't think of any.

Can't think of one

Couldn't think of one

Don't know (5)

Don't know if there is another source available, would think I'd have to find other partnerships.

Don't know of another one that would fill their shoes

Don't know of any other sources.

Don't know of one, not aware of any other organization that does what they do

Don't know. The value is they fill the gap

Don't think we would

Good question

Have no idea

Have no idea. There are none available.

Have not used any other sources.

Honestly, I don't know. I never looked for anything else.

I always rely on the resource conservation and development source

I am not sure I could say, as we receive a lot of assistance

I am really not sure

I am really not sure that I have another availability in my area

I can't really answer that question

I do not know (8)

I do not know of another source

I don't even know

I don't have any idea. I don't think anyone else is equipped to do it.

I don't have one

I don't know (3)

I don't know any other sources that would help us out

I don't know of any other funding source that would do what RC & D does

I don't know of any other source

I don't know of any type of source

I don't know of anyone

I don't know of anywhere else to go.

I don't know what else is available

I don't know what other source that would be

I don't know what source I would find

I don't know, don't have another one, maybe government grants

I don't think there is another source to do that

I don't think there is one

I have no idea (4)

I have no idea what it would be, maybe a county source

I have no idea. Thank god for the RC & D.

I have no idea. The RC & D is the only one I'm aware of.

I live in rural Utah so basically RC&D fits the niche so I don't know if there is another agency to make it happen.

I really can't answer that as I don't know what other sources there are as I have been involved with RC & D for ten years now

I really don't know. There's been places we can go to get parts of it but not the whole thing

I really don't know. The project I'm working on would probably fail.

I wouldn't know if there was another source

I wouldn't use another source

I wouldn't.

I'm not for sure, I don't know.

I'm not sure what other assistance I would receive

N/A (4)

No answer

No other

No other source

No other source to receive it from.

No other source.

None that I am aware of

None that I can think of.

None that I know of.

Not any one agency

Not applicable

Not applicable

Not aware of any other sources.

Not sure at this point

Not sure.

On the RC&D board, so I cannot answer.

R C & D is the only one in our county

There are none

There aren't any

There is no other source in this county.

There isn't another.

There isn't any

There isn't one

There would be no other source as far as what exists now.

There would not be another source.

They would not be a same source

To my knowledge there are no other sources

Unknown

We would not receive any.

We wouldn't

Well there isn't one. I think that our RC & D is an incredibly open, creative organization that really helps. What I am really trying to say is that they create programs that help plug in the gaps, I am referring to the quilt square program is only one example. Another very recent example where the RC & D stepped in to help in November, they developed the mini sheep conference when they realized that the sheep farmers needed education and technical assistance. I could go on and on listing the wonderful things that the RC & D is doing but I will stop there.

Other Sources –General Comments (17 comments)

A lot of sources

Funds the elected official could garner

Go off on your own

I guess it would have to be donations

I would work with the local conservation district and it would depend upon the contacts that I have made with my years of networking with NRCS.

It would be a foundation of some sort

It would not be the same source.

More for them. My life will not change

Other districts

Our own conservation district

Partnerships, everyone networks together. But that would be one less partner.

Several sources

The lottery

We would be going to too many different agencies. It would be ineffective

We would go non-profit and handle it ourselves

We would have to search for someone to meet the needs.

We'd have to try to do it with in our association

Other Sources – Specific Organization (17 comments)

Department of Commerce, HUD, or local county and state government.

Department of Local Affairs

DNR. No success there.

Farm Bureau (2)

Federal government

FEMA

Forestry board

Garrison division

Governmental agency

KDAT

Lobbying firms

Metro but they don't provide resources.

Nature conservatory

Probably the local soil, land, water district, could be some from the EPA

Risk Management

Rural Action

Q35. How could the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program better serve the needs of its customers?**Advertise/Awareness/Education (48 comments)**

Better education about other agencies to work with, promotional money and staff, encourage better cooperation among other government organizations.

Better education on available grants

Better education to the public and more advertising

Better marketing

Better outreach

Better outreach program.

Better promotion and advertising of what it does. Not very many people know what a great program it is.

Better public awareness of what they can do, annual reports or advertisement. I don't think a lot of people know about the RC&D.

Better public relations, and better advertisement. More workshops and more assistance to small business

Broader public exposure. More advertising.

Continue what they're doing. Increase awareness; blow their own horn more.

Continuing outreach development.

Education and public awareness outside of their user base. General public is not aware of what good they do.

Get the word out there that they are available.

Getting more information out to the public.

Getting the word out more about what they do, and more funding.

I am fresh out of ideas this morning; maybe publicize more for the rural areas.

I think continuing to make more people aware of their services, especially in this area, as it's new to the area.

If more people knew of their services. There are people who are in need of their services but don't know of the availability of them.

Increase public education. Be better at informing the public of the present day of life so that they are informed to make their own decisions.

Increase publicity and awareness of program availability. Permanent funding for natural resource councils. Funding of applicant areas. Increase coordinator staff, for natural resource councils.

Just getting the word out that they are available.

Letting more public know they are out there

Main thing would be to become more widely known.

Make itself better known through the communities.

Make people aware of their services.

Maybe more outreach

More awareness to the general public of their services

More education among the people.

More explanation of what they have to offer.

More outreach, email newsletters, publicizing and letting the community know they are there.

More promotion (2)

More visibility to it, even though I know it's difficult.

More visibility, more public relations.

National awareness would help. Urban places are still struggling with what the RC&D program is. I'm very happy that they started a council here.

Promote itself more so more people know about it. Our council doesn't know anything about the RC&D so I have to explain it to them.

Promoting education, and making communities aware of RC&D.

Promoting what it does better.

Providing better awareness of all their services.

Public relations campaign.

Public relations, people need to know they're there.

They could do some more advertising.

They could make more people aware of the program and have better publicity of what the company entails.

They need more outreach to all ownership owners, which would be private, state, local or public organizations.

They need to have more advertising when they do projects.

They need to have more advertising.

Through education. How it's used and more information about the programs they offer.

Communication/Accessible (17 comments)

Be a little more communicative

Be more directly involved

Be more in touch with the communities.

Be more involved and more visibility

Be more involved in their projects.

Be more local as they are located fifty miles away

Become more available in the community. They are not promoting themselves.

By talking with the customer one-on-one, meeting to discuss issues face to face.

Communication. Get people to open up as to what the need is. I think it's a great program.

Great working relation with RC&D and the NRCS.

Continue to go out and build relationships with the people and see there needs.

Getting more people involved. Better communication about the service it provides and having people a part of it.

It is dependent upon an active council and communication is a key also.

It would be helpful for them to provide training for elected local officials or education as to what RC&D does.

Just keep up to date, keep in touch with folks, and know what's going on.

Keep in contact with their clientele.

Reaching out and communicating more. Informing people about their programs.

They need to get out and get a better pulse on the community to see what's needed. They need more support staff, the executives need to be proactive, and interact with the people.

Funds (48 comments)

Additional funding.

Better funding partnerships. I mean responsive to local needs, not driven by restrictions. One size dose not fit all political funding

Better funding source

Doing a fairly good job, but need more resources.

Federal funding

Give them a bigger budget

Have funding source for local initiative.

I think they should be funded better. They need more space, as their offices are small, and need more room where they hold their meetings. They are constantly being challenged for their direct rate for there service is seven percent.

I think to seek out all available funding from third parties for parting purposes.

If they had more funding and got some more staff.

If they were better funded, it would allow more accessible office help.

More funding (2)

More funding and grants, there is not enough funding for the projects that they used to have

More funding and staff.

More funding available. Guaranteed perpetuity. Very good coordinator right now which definitely helps.

More funding locally, and more secretarial staff.

More funding to continue it's services

More funding, and more time to work with our kids out in the field.

More funding, getting the word out about the program

More funding, then we can go out and practice what we preach. Things aren't getting done due to lack of funding.

More funding. Raising awareness of what RC&D programs are and what services they provide. They need to be treated as a partner and not a program of NRCS

More money

More money available. Very satisfied with the projects I have dealt with.

More money for marketing and outreach. It's a great program.

More money so we could better serve the communities

More money to spend as they always have bigger projects that they can't fund

More money, more financial assistance.

More resources, more funding, more staff

More resources.

More stable funding, more focus and understanding the needs of the people

More time, more grants

Not enough funding available.

Not getting their budgets cut so they could keep paid staff on board.

Overall, doing an excellent job with the resources they have available. With additional resources they could provide more opportunities that are currently not feasible.

Provide some kind of funding, matching money or something.

Provide the seed money, the annual stipend for council. Teach the coordinators how they can help the council. I am passionate about RC&D but when you hear the president say he is cutting funding every year that tells me that my hours of time spent in RC&D activities is not very valuable to him. It doesn't have to be the president, just policy makers also. We need our coordinators to be go-getters.

RC&D is asked to do planning without any implementation money, gathering money from local sources. I'd like to see this money come from the USDA and matched with other local resources through grants.

The administrator could look for more money sources for grants and then follow through to help us implement the projects.

They could be funded more to do more projects.

They could serve us better with more funds and then they would be able to expand.

They do a real good job. Receive more money for grant programs.

They need more funding because it is a minimal referral system.

They need more funding.

They need more monetary help. We have the people available to see that the programs get started if they had the funding.

Use more money.

We need more funding of revenue for rural farmland and timberland. We need the program desperately in Louisiana and across the south. We need a larger budget because we are in a devastated area because of the storm.

Well, it could have improved funding to hire more contractors or assistants to assist in implementing the programs that are recommended by the communities involved in each region.

Local/Regional/Community Focus (10 comments)

As a national priority, focus on a small scale.

*Better input planning on a community base. More expertise.
Continue to implement programs to the local community.
Establishing some longevity in my community. Haven't been able to establish a track record yet.
For here it would be spreading out the meetings so that more rural communities could participate.
Have more seminars basically to provide more organizations to work together on community projects.
Having more regular meetings. There used to be a third Thursday meeting where different organizations met and talked about what was going on in the area. They should continue those type of partnership meetings.
I know they have a lot of projects on their plate but be more familiar with local projects.
Our RC & D is great. They step out of the box and look at the big picture. Keep the existing programming; look for additional programming that will benefit the community's needs.
Smaller geographical areas. More staff. Expand future focus services.*

Partnerships (5 comments)

*Encourage them to seek to cooperate with other organizations that have similar goals and interests.
Hire new coordinators to fill recent retiree positions. Budget support, more promotion on their partnering with other agencies and organizations.
Increase involvement with other agriculture agencies.
Partnering more closely with other agencies.
There should be joint planning done between the regional development commission and RC&D. I'm not sure they even talk; their planning is done without any coordination to my knowledge.*

Staffing (38 comments)

*A little more staffing, I think that would be the major thing
Adding staff.
Additional staff locally
Additional staff.
By staying fully staffed, having the manpower.
Enhance their staffing and enhance their funding by giving them more resources
Full time project coordinator
Have more staff as they are always so busy, better financial accounting
I don't know how it could be explained other than hire fifty more people.
I think probably the biggest thing is to hire good, effective people.
Increase staffing. Most offices have been cut to none or half the staff. Increase funding for staff support. Great partner for northeast Nebraska, even with limited staff they are still doing a great job.
Increase the local staff*

Increasing office staff

Increasing their staff members

Maybe have more staff.

More people

More staff (2)

More staff and manpower

More staff and more funding.

More staff to better serve the area, they do a great job

More staff, staff is the critical thing. More staff would let us accomplish more

More staffing to assist with more projects within the community

My biggest problem is lack of manpower and staff

Need more help. The guy I deal with always seems very busy.

Need more help. We are under staffed. Time for more contacts but that has to do with the lack of staff. Just need more staff

Need more staff

Office help needs to be increased.

Probably additional staff, more assistance staff, technicians and stuff like that.

Put on more staff

The director needs to be given back his secretary because all they have is volunteers.

The federal government could give it a ton more money and they could hire more staff people. If our coordinator could be cloned, many more things could be happening.

They are doing a great job. Have more staff.

They need more employees.

They need more staff and more funding.

They need to adequately staff resource conservation and development regions. The ones in New York are not adequately staffed.

They should maintain or increase staff size to facilitate adequate delivery of program support and this past year staff has been cut in half.

We need better funding for better staffing.

Other (24 comments)

Actually complete a project that is suggested and approved. RC&D people should be able to locate a grant, not make the customers have to do it.

An awful lot is expected from the coordinators.

Biggest thing is that it's tough to know who to contact as the grant and our representative was not in our region. I had no idea I had to go out of the region for a representative. More information on a lot of this stuff would be more helpful

Don't be such a stickler on following the book. There must be adjustments to local, individual situations. An acknowledgment of the knowledge of local people is more important.

Engage NRCS plans into conservation planning. Work with landowners more.

Give us more information in a timely manner on what's available to us.

Grant writer only

I just hope the NRCS and the congress still supports RC&D.

I think they are doing a great job and the reason I gave it a lot of sevens is because they have a big turnover and now hired eager beavers and they are just now learning.

I would like to see more consistency between the offices and they could provide better service.

If they were more helpful on public property, more on beaver control.

It would be nice if they got involved with economic development more.

It's personality as I have met with coordinators with good and bad personality and personality makes a huge difference.

More conservation in the urban and suburbs areas, areas with not so much open land or agriculture

More construction

More flexibility in program development. Programs around urban areas. Federal government cut its bureaucracy.

More frequent surveys and face-to-face meetings in the community.

More timely beginning and end of projects. It takes too long for written plan, and then for them to implement the plan.

Place the governess of the program in the council themselves rather than the NRCS dictating the program.

Possibly sending out emails when things are available for people working on projects.

Professionals who are employed should be paid at a higher rate.

The group we have is pretty outgoing, whatever you ask them for they try to get.

There isn't anyway, less red tape.

They should follow leads that are pertaining to permanent conservation movements. NRCS should continue funding for directors and have assistance for the regional RC&D council. RC&D are extremely helpful for conservation and very innovative for conservation needs

Don't Know/No changes/Positive Feedback (62 comments)

Already doing a pretty good job. Can't think of anything else they could do.

Been doing well

Can't think of anything.

Doing a great job already working with the special projects. I'm grateful for everything they do.

Doing a great job. Our RC&D coordinator has just retired and we are worried about who they are going to replace him with. We're hoping he will be replaced with someone as great.

Don't have time for that.

Don't know (2)

Everything has gone real well for us. Nothing at this time.

I am not aware of any improvements they can do as they are doing everything in this area

I am not really sure; I think they are doing a fantastic job. They listen to you, and I am just very pleased with them.

I am not sure I could answer that as I am very satisfied with my relationship with RC&D.

I can't think of anything.

I can't think of anything. My experience has just been wonderful

I do not know (3)

I don't have any good answer for you right now.

I don't know (6)

I don't know if they could do better.

I don't know if they could, they are doing a pretty good job.

I don't know to be honest with you. Good question.

I don't know, I think they do a pretty good job

I don't know. They are doing a good job. They help customers find funding

I don't know. They're doing a fine job.

I don't think they need to do anything different in my area.

I guess I am not really sure. I have been satisfied.

I think it's doing a pretty good job, I wouldn't recommend any changes.

I think they are doing a fine job.

I think they are doing a good job now with their soil and water projects.

I think they are doing an excellent job.

I think they are doing fine, no complaints.

I think they are working whatever they need to improve. They seem to do the best they can with what they've got.

I think they do a good job now. I don't think they need improvement.

I think they do a good job. Can't think of anything.

I think they're doing a great job. I don't know how they can better our needs.

I think they're really doing everything. They go out in the community, and educate us.

I'm not aware of any other way. I don't have an opinion on that

I'm very satisfied with the assistance I've received from RC&D. I can't think of anything right now that they are not doing.

Just keep doing what they are doing

Keep doing what they're doing. I am very pleased with them

N/A

Not applicable

Nothing (3)

Refused

They are doing a good job, I don't know if I could add anything to it.

They are doing as best as they can.

They are doing such a fabulous job, I can't think of anything more they could do.

They are good. I think they are doing a great job.

They are very prompt and keep everyone informed and are doing a great job, so I don't have any suggestions.

They do a great job right now. They are out there in the community

They do a very good job right now. We have good communication with them. They are very helpful.

They do such a great job and are willing to help and really put themselves out there.

They have done everything to help us. I don't think they need to improve their services.

They serve my needs just fine.