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Technical Service Providers

Expanding Conservation Technical
Assistance Capacity on Private Lands



What are Technical Service Providers?

Technical Service Providers (TSPs) are individuals, private businesses, nonprofit organizations, or public agencies outside of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that help agricultural producers apply conservation practices on the land. These Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) certified professionals provide for convenient access to technical services, quality work, and professional one-on-one technical assistance to landowners or producers who participate in USDA conservation programs.

TSPs can...

- Develop conservation plans and perform selected compliance studies
- Plan, design, and lay out conservation practices
- Check out completed conservation practices

How Did The Technical Service Provider Process Begin?

The 2002 Farm Bill expanded the capacity of USDA conservation programs to protect the Nation's natural resources on private and tribal lands. In order to better serve agricultural producers, the 2002 Farm Bill also encouraged USDA to use technical service providers to increase the technical assistance available to help landowners meet their conservation goals.

Who Can Become a Technical Service Provider?

Individuals, private businesses, nonprofit organizations, and public agencies can become part of a cadre of certified professionals to help meet the technical assistance needs of America's farmers and ranchers.

How Do You Become a Certified Technical Service Provider?

To become a certified TSP and assure quality delivery of technical services, you must follow these four steps:

Step 1- Obtain an eGovernment account and password

Log on to <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/> and establish a Level 2 eGovernment account. Visit a USDA Service Center near you to activate your account. You can locate USDA Service Centers at <http://offices.usda.gov>. You will obtain a user ID and password to register on TechReg, an Internet-based registry for TSPs.

Step 2- Register on TechReg

Log onto TechReg (<http://techreg.usda.gov>) and fill out the sections that pertain to you as an individual, business, or public agency. Potential TSPs must be able to demonstrate knowledge in their respective areas of expertise through documentation of training or experience.

Step 3 - Become certified

To become certified, applicants must meet all of the certification requirements contained in TechReg for the specific category or categories of technical services they wish to provide. They must obtain licenses or certifications required by local, State, or tribal law. Applicants must document their qualifications in TechReg and indicate how they meet specific certification criteria. They must also sign a certification agreement electronically. Once certified by NRCS, TSPs will be placed on an "approved list" in TechReg to provide specific technical services in specific States.

Step 4 - Provide technical services to the producer

Producers can search TechReg to find certified TSPs. Once selected and hired by the producer, the TSPs can provide the technical services they are certified to perform.



Key USDA staff sign a Technical Service Provider agreement with American Society of Agronomy.

Need Help to Get Certified?

NRCS has agreements with several organizations to streamline the certification process. Prospective TSPs can work with one or more of these organizations to become qualified for certification in specific areas of expertise. These organizations include:

- American Society of Agronomy
- Environmental Management Solutions, LLC
- National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants
- Society of American Foresters
- Society for Range Management
- The Irrigation Association
- The Wildlife Society
- University of Tennessee

Prospective TSPs should check the TechReg Web site for a complete list of organizations approved for certification assistance.

What Does a Technical Service Provider Do?

A TSP has many responsibilities, including the following:

- provides high-quality technical service,
- complies with all Federal, State, tribal, and local laws and requirements,
- certifies that all technical services provided meet NRCS standards and specifications,
- develops, maintains and provides the producer with complete documentation for the technical services provided, and
- maintains the producer's confidentiality.

How Does a Technical Service Provider Receive Payment?

TSPs must negotiate directly with the producer for the technical services to be provided and their costs. When the technical services are completed, documented, and reported, the TSP provides the documentation and an invoice to the producer and NRCS. The producer pays the TSP. NRCS reimburses the producer for the technical services obtained at a not-to-exceed rate contained in the producer's conservation program contract with USDA. NRCS has established maximum payment rates for technical services in each State. The rates can be found at <http://www.tsp-nrcs.usda.gov>.

[usda.gov](http://www.tsp-nrcs.usda.gov).



Technical service providers can use conservation practices such as riparian buffers to help landowners protect water quality.

For More Information

Additional information on technical service provider assistance is available at <http://techreg.usda.gov> or by contacting a USDA Service Center. USDA Service Centers can be located on the Web at <http://offices.usda.gov> or through the local telephone directory under U.S. Government. A list of State TSP Coordinators

can be found at <http://techreg.usda.gov/RptStateContact4Admin.aspx>. Information also can be obtained by contacting the National Technical Service Provider Coordinator, Conservation Engineering Staff, USDA-NRCS, P.O. Box 2890, Washington, DC 20013. All updates and changes on technical service providers will be posted on the TechReg Web site.



Contour farming is an effective conservation practice that technical service providers can use on private lands.

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