

**Natural Resources Conservation Service
Report To
Papio-Missouri River NRD Board
December 8, 2016
Neil Jensen, District Conservationist**



USDA Announces Applications Available for Conservation Stewardship Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is currently accepting applications for enrollment in the Conservation

Stewardship Program (CSP), the nation's largest conservation program. Applications are available at local USDA service centers.

NRCS offices are now taking applications for the program, with sign-up running through February 3, 2017. People interested in the additional opportunities the updated CSP will offer can find information on the new CSP portal, located at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/csp>. This one-stop shop, which provides information to help producers determine whether CSP is right for them, will be continually updated as more information becomes available. Changes that producers can expect to see include nearly double the enhancements and conservation practices offered and better reporting tools to tell producers the results of their conservation efforts on their land.

Through CSP, agricultural producers and forest landowners earn payments for actively managing, maintaining, and expanding conservation activities like cover crops, buffer strips, and pollinator habitat – all while continuing active agriculture production on their land. CSP also encourages the adoption of cutting-edge technologies and new management techniques such as precision agriculture applications and new soil amendments to improve water quality.





USDA Providing Funds to Protect and Restore Agricultural Working Lands, Grasslands and Wetlands across Nebraska

Applications due Dec. 31 at USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Offices.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service is now accepting applications for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). This program, created under the 2014 Farm Bill, provides funding for the purchase of conservation easements to help productive farm and ranch lands remain in agriculture and to restore and protect critical wetlands and grasslands.

Applications can be submitted at any time, but to be considered for 2017 funding opportunities, applications in Nebraska must be received by December 31. Applications are currently being accepted for both agricultural land and wetland reserve easements.

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance directly to private and tribal landowners to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands through the purchase of conservation easements. Eligible landowners can choose to enroll in a permanent or 30-year easement. Tribal landowners also have the option of enrolling in 30-year contracts.

A key option under the agricultural land easement component is the "grasslands of special environmental significance" that will protect high-quality grasslands under threat of conversion to cropping, urban development and other non-grazing uses. All applications will be rated according to the easement's potential for protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds, fish and other wildlife. Eligible applicants will be compensated with a payment rate comparable to the local land use value.

Applicants will need to provide accurate records of ownership and ensure they have established current year ownership eligibility with USDA's Farm Service Agency. Application information is available at your local [USDA Service Center](#) and at www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted.

For more information about the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the programs and services it provides, visit your local USDA Service Center.



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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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(866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.