



## Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

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ACEP

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The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance wetlands or protect working farms and ranches through conservation easements.

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**NRCS is streamlining its Agricultural Conservation Easement Program to improve the program for landowners and partners. [Learn more about these changes.](#)**



The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) protects the agricultural viability and related conservation values of eligible land by limiting nonagricultural uses which negatively affect agricultural uses and conservation values, protect grazing uses and related conservation values by restoring or conserving eligible grazing land, and protecting and restoring and enhancing wetlands on eligible land.

ACEP has two components:

- [Agricultural Land Easements](#) (ALE) help private and tribal landowners, land trusts, and other entities such as state and local governments protect croplands and grasslands on working farms and ranches by limiting non-agricultural uses of the land through conservation easements.
- [Wetland Reserve Easements](#) (WRE) help private and tribal landowners protect, restore and enhance wetlands which have been previously degraded due to agricultural uses.

Additionally, through ACEP, USDA offers the [Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership](#) (WREP), a voluntary program through which NRCS enters into agreements with eligible partners to leverage resources to carry out high priority wetland protection, restoration, and enhancement and to improve wildlife habitat.

## ACEP and the Inflation Reduction Act

The [Inflation Reduction Act](#) included \$1.4 billion in additional funding for ACEP over five years and it revised ACEP authority, providing Inflation Reduction Act funding for easements that will most reduce, capture, avoid or sequester greenhouse gas emissions, and extending regular program funding through fiscal year 2031. NRCS is [streamlining ACEP](#), to ensure that the program is easier and more convenient to utilize, and to strengthen implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act. Specifically, NRCS is streamlining ACEP appraisals, land surveys, and certifying eligible entities who help NRCS and producers enroll land into agricultural land easements. In addition, NRCS is expanding the national priority areas eligible for Inflation Reduction Act funding for ACEP easements. For more information, see our fact sheet, [ACEP and the Inflation Reduction Act](#).

### Fiscal Year 2025 State-Led Funding Cycles

NRCS accepts applications year-round for ACEP Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP-ALE) and Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE). Interested producers, landowners, and partners should apply by the next two ranking dates, Oct. 4, 2024, or Dec. 20, 2024, at their local NRCS office, to be considered for these two state-led funding cycles. In addition, any application submitted to NRCS that was unfunded in fiscal year 2024 will be automatically re-considered during the October 4 funding cycle.

In fiscal year 2025, states will receive Inflation Reduction Act funding and all eligible applications within a state will compete. The current ACEP priorities for the Inflation Reduction Act funding are unchanged from last fiscal year and are available in all states. Depending on location, NRCS may also have a state-specific priority. The Inflation Reduction Act funding is in addition to the funding authorized and available under the Farm Bill.

To process applications efficiently, Ohio NRCS will review ACEP ALE applications with a ranking score of 100 or more. Any applications below that ranking threshold will be deferred until batch period 2.

### \$138 Million Investment in Conservation Easements

On March 13, 2024, NRCS announced it will invest about \$138 million of financial assistance from the Inflation Reduction Act in [138 new climate-smart conservation easements](#), through which farmers and ranchers are conserving wetlands, grasslands and prime farmlands.

# Watch How ACEP Works

NM Agricultural Land Easements



NM Wetland Easement 2024



## Related Information

### [Applications and Forms](#)

If you're interested in applying for NRCS conservation programs, contact your local NRCS office. To apply, you'll have to complete an application as well as have other forms on file.




#### Land

No matter if you grow crops or raise livestock, or you manage timber or want to improve your private land, NRCS has options for you that are good for your land and its natural resources.&nbsp;

#### Inflation Reduction Act

The Inflation Reduction Act – part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda – represents the single largest investment in climate and clean energy solutions in American history.

# Additional Documents

-  [Ranking Criteria FY24 Inflation Reduction Act - ACEP \(168.99 KB\)](#)
-  [Ranking Criteria FY23 Inflation Reduction Act - ACEP \(377.69 KB\)](#)
-  [Guide to ACEP-ALE for Heirs' Property Landowners \(1.65 MB\)](#)

## Ready to get started?

Contact your local service center to start your application.

## Find Your Local Service Center

USDA Service Centers are locations where you can connect with Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or Rural Development employees for your business needs. Enter your state and county below to find your local service center and agency offices. If this locator does not work in your browser, please visit [offices.usda.gov](https://offices.usda.gov).

-Please select -



SEARCH

## How to Get Assistance

Step 1: Make a Plan

**Do you farm or ranch and want to make improvements to the land that you own or lease?**

Natural Resources Conservation Service offers technical and financial assistance to help farmers, ranchers and forest landowners.

 [Print this information](#)

**To get started with NRCS, we recommend you stop by your local NRCS field office. We'll discuss your vision for your land.**

NRCS provides landowners with free technical assistance, or advice, for their land. Common technical assistance includes: resource assessment, practice design and resource monitoring. Your conservation planner will help you determine if financial assistance is right for you.

Step 2: Start an Application +

Step 3: Check your eligibility +

Step 4: Rank your application +

Step 5: Implement your plan +



# Related News and Events

## NEWS

### USDA Offers Funding to Protect Michigan Agricultural Lands

January 07, 2025

## NEWS

## New Hampshire USDA NRCS Announces Third Fiscal Year 2025 Signup Date for Agricultural Conservation Easement Program Applications

January 02, 2025

-- STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

## Vermont Climate Subcommittee

January 10, 2025


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