

Conservation Stewardship Program

Take Conservation to the Next Level



What is CSP?

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is a federal program that offers technical and financial assistance to help agricultural and forest producers take their conservation efforts to the next level. The program is designed to compensate agricultural and forest producers who agree to increase their level of conservation by adopting additional conservation activities and maintaining their baseline level of conservation. CSP is for producers who are passionate about conservation and environmental stewardship.

How CSP Works

CSP is a 5-year program that offers opportunities for producers to expand on existing conservation efforts by applying new conservation practices and enhancements. These new activities will help enhance natural resources and improve the operation. For example, if you have been planting a cover crop, you may decide to try an enhancement for a multi-species cover crop or implement a deep-rooted cover crop to break up soil compaction.

If you decide to apply for CSP, a conservation planner will have a one-on-one consultation with you to evaluate your current management system and the resources on your land. This will calculate your "stewardship threshold" which determines your eligibility. You will then work with the NRCS conservation planner to select new CSP conservation practices and enhancements. If your application is selected for funding, CSP offers annual payments for implementing these practices on your land in addition to operating and maintaining existing conservation efforts.

Land Eligibility

Eligible lands include private agricultural lands, agricultural Indian lands, nonindustrial private forest land, farmstead, associated agricultural lands and public land that is under the control of the applicant and part of their operation. There is no minimum acreage requirement. CSP enrolls your entire operation into the program, not just one specific field or tract. Forest lands require a current Forest Management Plan.



CSP Payments

Annual CSP payments are made once per year for the 5 years of the contract and have 2 components:

- **BASE PAYMENTS:** Payments to maintain the existing level of conservation based on the land uses included in the contract (this is based on the Stewardship Threshold evaluation and acres enrolled)
- **PRACTICE PAYMENTS:** Payments to implement additional conservation practices and enhancements.

MINIMUM PAYMENT: A \$4000 minimum payment applies for each of the 5 years of the contract.



Deadline

Call or stop by your local USDA Service Center for more information or to fill out an application.

Maryland

Natural Resources Conservation Service

nrcs.usda.gov/

