

14. Please indicate whether you are completing this survey as:	15. Please indicate what NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation District area you are completing this survey from:	16. Please provide comments on how the technical assistance (cost share salary & benefits) rule should be revised.
		Every county should be funded 40 to 50 percent of salary not to exceed \$25,000. Higher paying counties or districts should foot the rest of the bill. This would be fair to rural counties which may not have the revenue to fund more than half but may have the majority of farmland or cropland in the state to deal with. Why fund urban counties more when they don't have the water quality problems stemming from agriculture. We would suggest look at BMP's and soil savings and reduction of nutrients on contracts written as the main parameter in funding districts.
district board (as a whole)	Area 4	
district board (as a whole)	Area 3	
district board (as a whole)	Area 8	
district board (as a whole)	Area 2	
district board (as a whole)	Area 1	
district board (as a whole)	Area 4	
district board (as a whole)	Area 3	
district board (as a whole)	Area 5	cost share salary and benefits should be according to the county strategy plan
district board (as a whole)	Area 4	item#5 - New employees take a while to become technically competent vs. more experienced employee. One FO may require more stringent technical competency for practices while another FO may be less stringent on technical competence.
district board (as a whole)	Area 3	item#16 - Job Approval Authority is handled by each District's FO. Some districts require stringent control over JAA, while other districts are more slack. Some district employees may have JAA when they donot truly have the technical competency to do the job.
district board (as a whole)	Area 5	1 employee per county, equal distribution of funding across counties
district board (as a whole)	Area 1	Meet the local led conservation. Follow the local strategy plan for TA.
district board (as a whole)	Area 2	The Board does not support funding one position per county if the county does not have enough workload to justify that position. However, in the case of new employees, a base salary per county is important, because if funding is based solely on technical capabilities/performance, counties with newer employees or a lot of turnover will always receive less. This could continue the cycle of not being able to pay enough salary to keep well-qualified employees.
district board (as a whole)	Area 8	
district board (as a whole)	Area 4	Proceeding with a tiered approach or tying funding to employee's capabilities would be unfair to Counties that don't have as much ag and therefore as much BMP opportunities. That type of District would be at a disadvantage to those counties with more ag and therefore more BMP cost share opportunities.
district board (as a whole)	Area 8	re: #8 Other - Industry related level of education and local district priorities.
district board (as a whole)	Area 1	Additional Comments: Place stronger consideration on the needs/interests of the local district.
district board (as a whole)	Area 1	number of employees based on workload and result
district board (as a whole)	Area 5	This is a local based program administered by local supervisors. They prioritize the goals and practices in the area. Conservation practices vary across the state and if technical assistance was based on practices, others would set the priorities which would not fit the need for certain areas.
district board (as a whole)	Area 4	Most salaries are determined by the individual county. If the commission decides to reduce the match would the county make up the difference or if the commission pays more will the county forward that amount to the employee or into the county's general fund?
district board (as a whole)	Area 5	We support the system which is currently in place; however the Commission should try to pay the 50% match which in some cases is not doing.
district board (as a whole)	Area 4	
district board (as a whole)	Area 6	If a district has a need for a second technical employee, every effort should be made to help fund that position.
district board (as a whole)	Area 5	We believe that the system currently in place is working with the exception of some technicians are not receiving 50% of their technical assistance allocation funds from the state. Districts with one FTE should receive a 50% technical assistance allocation up to cap. For Districts with additional technicians, the present guidelines are acceptable. This is a problem that needs to be addressed. We also believe that if we are going to base performance on anything it should be the District's Strategy Plan.
district board (as a whole)	Area 7	Workload and crop acerage

district board (as a whole)	Area 6	There are so many variables that are beyond the control of a district. We cannot force people to participate so there is a danger of linking TA allocation to program participation (allocating funds to contracts). Also, once contracted we cannot force cooperators to implement the contracted practices. We are already affected by this with BMP fund allocations. Concerning use of job approval authority there are many situations to consider. New employees will not have job approval authority. Also the way NRCS gives approval authority is that an employee must demonstrate proficiency designing and installing a practice. In order to demonstrate this they must work on many projects of a particular practice. If there is scattered participation with a particular practice an employee may not reach the amount of experience NRCS wants to give them approval. Another issue is that an employee does not have to have approval authority to design BMP's, perform construction checks or develop contracts, they just cannot sign-off on the design or installation. In our office a past employee and a NRCS employee was sued by a river keeper association because of perceived violations of water quality standards. Ultimately the lawsuit was dismissed however this employee would no longer sign-off on any practice or contract, to protect himself. He still worked on all the projects, performed surveys, designed BMP's and performed construction checks however he didn't signed-off on them. This action did not affect his work performance or the districts ability to install practices and serve the public. So, considering this scenerio, job approval authority is not required to do your job or do it affectively. Concerning the technical difficulty of practices, all the BMP's in the various commission programs have been approved by the commission for implimentation throughout the state. It doesn't seem right for the commission to approve a statewide program and then technically punish certain districts or regions because the approved practices they typically install are less difficult than other approved practices. We feel that weight should also be given to other conservation related work that is not "cost share" related work. Examples include Voluntary Agricultural Districts and Enhanced Districts. This is a conservation practice but does not involve expending funds. Also, general technical assistance is provided with an array of conservation related issues such as assistance to confined animal operations (sludge surveys, updating waste plans, POA's), seeding and vegetation plans for erosion control plans for small mining operations, general technical assistance for large erosion problems (coastal) that are beyond the scope of CCAP, general technical assistance for small erosion problems too small to benefit from CCAP, drainage problems/assessments on ag and non-ag lands, etc, etc. Also other cost share programs such as stream debris removal. Respectfully submitted.
district board (as a whole)	Area 1	There are no trainings offered here for employees to recieve many of the same opportunities as other parts of the state. Professional Conservation Employee Certification as one example. Alos Certified Conservation Planner from NRCS is almost impossible to recieve.
district board (as a whole)	Area 7	Who determines Technical Difficulty? No comments until further review.
district board (as a whole)	Area 3	It should not be revised with the exception of number 2 question above. There should be a minimum of Program funding contracted and expended to be eligible for technical reimbursement (minimum of 50% of technical reimbursement). Most of the system we have now works and there is some consistency in what counties can expect from year to year. This is especially important now with the budgetary constraints at the local county level with many counties still struggling to meet obligations.
district board (as a whole)	Area 3	If it ain't broke don't mess with it. The cost share program has worked for 29 years
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 8	
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 5	leave technical program as is currently in place
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 5	
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 5	Program is working well as is, so might need to leave it alone. Don't penalize counties in the east based strictly on dollars spent. Strategy plan should be used to determine funding.
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 5	
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 5	
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 8	none
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 8	
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 8	
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 1	

district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 5	<p>This is a local based program administered by local supervisors. They prioritize the goals and practices in the area. Conservation practices vary across the state and if technical assistance was based on practices, others would set the priorities which would not fit the need for certain areas.</p> <p>Most salaries are determined by the individual county. If the commission decides to reduce the match would the county make up the difference or if the commission pays more will the county forward that amount to the employee or into the county's general fund?</p> <p>We support the system which is currently in place; however the Commission should try to pay the 50% match which in some cases is not doing.</p>
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 5	<p>This is a local based program administered by local supervisors. They prioritize the goals and practices in the area. Conservation practices vary across the state and if technical assistance was based on practices, others would set the priorities which would not fit the need for certain areas.</p> <p>Most salaries are determined by the individual county. If the commission decides to reduce the match would the county make up the difference or if the commission pays more will the county forward that amount to the employee or into the county's general fund?</p> <p>We support the system which is currently in place; however the Commission should try to pay the 50% match which in some cases is not doing.</p>
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 3	after careful thought of surge results these comments and suggestions that may improve and simplify, should be considered and put into practice.
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 3	
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 3	
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 6	If a county needs a second technician, than every effort should be explored to provide the funding providing it doesn't hurt another county.
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 6	Is this a way for the piedmont and the mountains to end up with all the money?
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 6	If a district has a need for a second technical employee, every effort should be made to help fund that position
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 7	workload and crop ac
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 7	base ocounty size, work load and crop acres
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 7	based on workload, county size
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 8	
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 6	Other non-cost share conservation work should factor in. Job approval authority may not be a good item to use to determine TA.
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 6	Other non-cost share BMP's/work should be considered. Job approval authority not needed to perform work on contracts, only to approve.
district supervisor/associate district supervisor	Area 6	Should consider other conservation work completed in district that is not under a cost share program.
district employee (NOT receiving cost-share technical assistance funding)	Area 3	Why are we revising it?? Whats wrong with the current method?? And the real question, whats the real underlying reason to change the method we have used for years??
district employee (NOT receiving cost-share technical assistance funding)	Area 6	do not want to draft revisions, but willing to review drafts from others
district employee (NOT receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 4	Conservation plans and technical service should be first priority of program. Keep one employee per district. You have to have staff to build a program. Go to Legislature with request for additional funding for merit raises based on experience, ability and services provided. Even without Cost Share funding, staff is needed to provide technical and educational services to customers. For technical capability include BMP variety.

district employee (NOT receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 4	I do not have all the answers. But, I do not support adjusting the funding of the NCACS technical position based on "dollars spent" from current NCACS contracts (nor other funding programs). A position should not be held accountable for applicants not carrying out an approved contract. Also, the idea of applying "difficult" or complex bmp's should not be considered either, because most times, "SIMPLE" bmp's are the best "BANG" for your bucks you can install. The criteria should tie in with the local District's annual plan of work.
district employee (NOT receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 2	The most important issue is that whatever system is used be fair. It is also important that we do not get bogged down in paperwork and rules like NRCS. We are known for providing good service to our counties and it is vital that we continue this level of service.
district employee (NOT receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 6	
district employee (NOT receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 3	
district employee (NOT receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 1	Districts may hire a technician that only stays a short time and this does not provide the time to receive job approvals or to gain the technical skills to perform the more difficult BMPS. Districts should not be punished because their technician(s) are not as experienced as others. Each district deserves the same amount of technical assistance money. Perhaps districts with several technicians or more experienced or trained staff could look to their counties for the additional funding. Our county has paid over 50% of the technical budget for years because the state has paid less.
district employee (NOT receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 1	
district employee (NOT receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 7	
district employee (NOT receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 5	Unknown
district employee (NOT receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 4	
district employee (NOT receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 4	Technical Assistance should encompass employee retention, salary increases and personal technical development. Well qualified employees will enhance the overall program and request for funding.
district employee (NOT receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 6	
district employee (NOT receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 5	<p>This is a local based program administered by local supervisors. They prioritize the goals and practices in the area. Conservation practices vary across the state and if technical assistance was based on practices, others would set the priorities which would not fit the need for certain areas.</p> <p>Most salaries are determined by the individual county. If the commission decides to reduce the match would the county make up the difference or if the commission pays more will the county forward that amount to the employee or into the county's general fund?</p> <p>We support the system which is currently in place; however the Commission should try to pay the 50% match which in some cases is not doing.</p>

district employee (NOT receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 6	If the district has a need for a second technical employee, every effort should be made to help fund that position
district employee (NOT receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 7	Richmond County employee salary is tier based already.
district employee (NOT receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 5	other funding programs other than Division funds should be considered for technical assistance ...such as grants, federal funding -EQIP- projects in the county, maybe local funding.
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance funding)	Area 4	Every District should have one funded position on staff. It should be left up to the District on what JA that person has depending on the needs of that county. The District needs to run their local program not a committee or a commission. For a program to run well it needs to be run locally. Every county pays taxes into the state and each county or district needs to be funded equally. If a county or district needs extra funds because of the workload then that county should fund it. A lot of rural counties are already having problems funding positions and programs now why make it harder. If funding is cut many counties will cut positions because the state is not matching the county 50/50 now.
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance funding)	Area 4	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance funding)	Area 8	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance funding)	Area 2	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance funding)	Area 2	Due to the amount of work, time, and voluntary commitment, the CCP certification should take priority over any other employee assessment tool. PCEP is very important also, but not nearly as hard to achieve. Both are very important, and should be used in considering TA funding.
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance funding)	Area 2	High priority for technical capabilities should include years of service and experience whether or not certified conservation planner or tech specialist designation. You may have employees with great deal experience and job approval who are performing well without having tech specialist or cert. planner designation. EXPERIENCE SHOULD COUNT! Job Approval should include NRCS JA, not just Div.
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance funding)	Area 1	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance funding)	Area 1	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance funding)	Area 5	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance funding)	Area 2	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance funding)	Area 3	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance funding)	Area 1	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 7	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 2	High priority for technical capabilities should include years of service and experience whether or not certified conservation planner or technical specialist designation. You may have employees with a great deal of experience and job approval who are performing well with out having technical specialist or certified planner designation. Experience should count! Job Approval should include NRCS JA not just Division
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 2	Cost share salary & benefits should be based on 1/2 of District/County's employee salary/benefits during employment with their District and changed(billed) accordingly. This mean state caps be raised or eliminated if the state feels this program is important. The counties are paying more than their share for employees.
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 2	My concern with tying TA funds to JAA is that the JAA needed for every district is different based on the agricultural operations of that district. Also, linking the TA amount to the capabilities of the staff is not the best option. A new person is still putting in just as many hours toward the program (training, field visits, etc...) as an experienced person and the longer a person is with the district the more their salary will go up and thus the TA match would go up.

district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 2	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 8	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 8	I am extremely leery to recommend that proficiency be compared statewide as needs vary from District to District and also to base allocations on expenditure of cost share funds as employees may suffer (job or salary loss) based on goals of supervisors in their respective Districts.
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 2	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 3	On average how much work goes on the ground vs contracts written should count for something. Not dollar amount for the BMP, but work.
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 1	Anyone can encumber funds but getting practices on the ground and installed should count for more. Also practices are different in each area and that should be considered if difficulty of practice is considered.
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 8	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 2	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 1	Something fair to all.
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 6	There is one way in which I think the current system should be revised. There is a separate pot for S/B and Operating funds. Our District always ends up using up the S/B funds we've been allocated but we don't usually come close to using up the Operating funds we've been allocated. I think most Districts don't get enough to cover the 50% or 25% of their S/B but get way too much in Operating funds. I think that Districts should be able to tap into the full potential of what they've been allocated so that when S/B Technical Assistance has been tapped out the Operating funds can be used. They should be part of the same pot for each position.
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 4	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 4	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 5	Meet the local led conservation. Follow the local strategy plan for TA.
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 8	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 1	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 2	A base technical assistance funding is needed to make sure that counties with new employees still receive adequate funding for their positions. However, a supplemental allocation for technical assistance based on employee performance/technical capabilities and cost share program performance would be motivational for employees to receive certifications and additional job approval authority. The PCEP technical proficiency model should not be used as a basis for this supplemental funding, because not every county has a technical supervisor that can adequately evaluate the parameters on the form or determine the level of the technical staff's capabilities. Most counties only have 1 technical district employee, and NRCS employees don't have extra time to perform this evaluation on a regular basis either. It is a good guide for a training plan, but it is too subjective and not practical to use as a basis for funding.

district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 5	<p>This is a local based program administered by local supervisors. They prioritize the goals and practices in the area. Conservation practices vary across the state and if technical assistance was based on practices, others would set the priorities which would not fit the need for certain areas.</p> <p>Most salaries are determined by the individual county. If the commission decides to reduce the match would the county make up the difference or if the commission pays more will the county forward that amount to the employee or into the county's general fund?</p> <p>We support the system which is currently in place; however the Commission should try to pay the 50% match which in some cases is not doing.</p>
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 4	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 5	Follow the District Strategy Plan and the State matching their 50% of Salay and benefits.
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 6	I feel like that in a county where ag cost share specifically is not a very big program because of a lack of numbers of farmers there is still a lot of technical assistance provided to other landowners that is a valuable resource that justifies the position.
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 2	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 5	<p>this is a local based program administered by local supervisors. They prioritize the goals and practices in the area. Conservation practices vary across the state and if technical assistance was based on practices, others would set the priorities which would not fit the need for certain areas.</p> <p>Most salaries are determined by the individual County. If the commission decides to reduce the match would the County make up the difference or if the Commission pays more will the county forward that amount to the employee or into the county's general fund?</p> <p>I support the system which is currently in place: however the Commission should try to pay the 50% match which in some cases is not doing.</p>
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 8	I think the idea of providing salary at a base rate, and adding supplemental based on performance is a good idea. Too often employees can become complacent in the work they do, and having something to strive for will increase productivity of the employee and District alike.
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 6	I'm not sure why is this being considered. The current procedure seems to be working okay. Unless the commission is looking at how to take from one(mountains and coast) and give to another (piedmont).
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 6	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 4	<p>This survey is very divisive and bias. The Commission should be working on funding their commitment to the Districts to fund a technician position but instead they have decided to pit Districts against Distrcts for funding. These positions should be treated as fixed cost and not variable one. Basicly it cost the same for a technician wheather you are spending \$1 or \$1 million. Basic expenses. The Commission hides behind "if funds are available", but allowed funding of an assistant director with funds that should have been used to match the 50% to the county funding for technicains. Bureaucracy at its best. This survey is only a means of screwing someone over and will cause counties to start eliminating districts which I guess it the Commission's objective. Hey, that eliminates expenses does it not.</p>
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 7	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 7	base on county size, work load and crop acres
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 1	<p>A lot of the criteria mentioned in this survey leaves a lot of questions. Who determines technical difficulty of practices etc.</p> <p>Also Certified Conservation Planner is impossible to get. Employees here have been trying for 5 or more years to become certified.</p> <p>Also the Professional Conservation Employees Program never offers any training in our area.</p>

district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 1	
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 2	Question 14 was completed by two technical staff and director. Only one of these three receive cost share salary and benefits. A base dollar amount for TA is too complex to answer yes or no, other considerations must be addressed. The amount of \$\$ spent is more important than the % spent
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 7	I like the way they are done currently. Atleast right now 1 person per district is funded. I do believe that any more positions per district should be based on how the funds are tied up in the district. NRCS Job Approval Obtained
district employee (receiving cost-share technical assistance/salary & benefits funding)	Area 6	8. Years of experience of the employee could be considered. Providing employees a chance to design example scenarios if they are not available in their county could also prove technical ability. 9. A way to demonstrate technical ability other than installing practices should be in place for employees that have the knowledge but do not have the opportunity to install practices based on the demographics in their county. Mainly urban counties technical staff have the knowledge but have no control over the lack of area to install Ag BMPs. 11. Cost of living is not the same in every county. Average salary of technical counterparts in other county department and the cost of living should be a factor. The cost of living in Greene County and Durham County are far different. A greater burden would be placed on Districts where the cost of living is higher.