

QUICK GUIDANCE – COST SHARE FOR DISTRICT BOARD SUPERVISORS

Local soil and water conservation district supervisors are ultimately responsible for cost share program administration and implementation at the district level. This places liability (individually and collectively) on district board members.

According to G.S. 139-8.2, districts have responsibility to protect information provided by farm owners, animal owners, and agricultural producers related to “the agricultural operation, farming or conservation practices, or the land itself”. Closed session should be called to discuss conservation practice details. The following language should be used to call closed session:

“We have a motion and a second to go into closed session to prevent disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential. The information to be reviewed is protected by Section 1619 of the 2008 Farm Bill and NC General Statute 139-8.2.”

Board members should be making appropriate inquiries of their staff regarding applications and contracts so that good decisions can be made. Some questions that might be asked during closed session:

- What is the resource concern?
Are cost share policies being followed (state and local)?
Water quality should be addressed through ACSP and CCAP; water quantity through AgWRAP
- Were any higher-ranked applications denied?
And are we following our ranking process?
To reduce liability, have a ranking process and follow it consistently, funding higher ranking applications first
- Is this project eligible? Does it fall under the new and expanded operations policy?
Has the land been cropland or pasture (with animals on site) for at least 3 years (ACSP)?
Has the land been in production for at least 1 year (AgWRAP)?
Is there another practice that prohibits the contract (e.g. cropland conversion contract site cannot also be contracted for livestock exclusion)?
- Has staff reviewed the BMP Policy?
Are there items to highlight with the district board
- Is the proposed practice(s) feasible?
Does the participant have the capacity to complete the contract in the required time-frame
- Is the proposed practice(s) cost effective?
Are there other less expensive conservation options
- Is all communication documented in contract files (e.g. CPA-6 notes)?
Documentation is critical for defense and can be helpful to new staff
- Does district staff have appropriate JAA to design and install the practice?
If internal capacity is not available, how will the project be addressed; encourage staff development opportunities when appropriate

NC Cost Share Programs Contracting Process

COST SHARE APPLICATION

Verify cooperator is interested in cost share program (Review program policies and requirements)

Verify Cooperator eligibility

Complete an application form (NC-CSPs-1) for the appropriate program

Obtain Applicant signature on application forms. (NC-CSPs-1)

Evaluate factors and parameters necessary to rank application

Rank application using District ranking forms

Present the application to the board for approval.

If approved, obtain District Chair signature on application forms. (NC-CSPs-1)

CS CONTRACT CREATION

Create contract in CS2

Review BMP and contract documentation with cooperator

Obtain signatures from Cooperator, Technical representative and JAA on BMP and Contract Forms

Present the contract to the board for approval.

If approved, obtain District Chair signature on contract forms.

Upload signed NC-CSPs-11 form and required documentation/reference materials to CS2

Notify Cost Share Specialist that the contract has been submitted for review.

CS CONTRACT REVIEW

Division staff review the contract and provide notification of contract status- APPROVED or PENDED

If the contract is PENDED, make the necessary corrections, re-submit the contract for review and notify Cost share Specialist.

If the contract is APPROVED, notify the cooperator that they may begin work installing BMPs

BMP INSTALLATION

Provide guidance and oversight to assist the cooperator with installing BMPs in accordance with plans and designs.

The cooperator must complete at least 1/3 of the required work within 12 months of DIVISION APPROVAL

The cooperator must complete BMP installation within three program years.

BMP CHECKOUT & PAYMENT

Staff, with appropriate JAA, certify BMP installation is complete and meets standards and specifications

Upload required check out documentation and receipts to the Reference Materials in CS2.

Create Request for Payment (RFP) and submit for review in CS2

Obtain signatures from cooperator and technical staff with appropriate JAA on NC-CSP-3.

Present the RFP to the board for approval.

Obtain District Chair signature on RFP forms. (NC-CSPs-3)

Submit hard copy of RFP (on yellow paper), W9 and Direct Deposit to Division for approval.

Division staff review the RFP to ensure it is completed and accurate

Staff forward approved RFPs to the NCDA&CS Controller's Office for payment to be issued to the Cooperator