



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

South Dakota
Fact Sheet

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How to Use a Technical Service Provider

What is a technical service provider?

When you participate in USDA conservation programs, you now have more options for completing your conservation practices. The 2002 Farm Bill included a provision that allows certified professionals from the private sector, non-profit organizations, and public agencies to assist in implementing conservation practices. These certified professionals, called Technical Service Providers (TSPs), are available to you upon request.

What does a technical service provider do?

Both the NRCS and TSPs can plan, design, implement, and certify conservation practices. Before any planning or contracting begins, you will be given the choice to work with either a TSP or NRCS to complete each phase of your conservation plan or program contract.

How do I find a technical service provider?

The NRCS field office will provide you a list of TSPs in the state that explains which practices the TSP is certified to perform. This information is also available on the TechReg website at <http://techreg.usda.gov/>.

How is a technical service provider paid?

If you choose to hire a TSP to do any part of the work for your conservation plan or program contract, NRCS will pay 100 percent of the costs within certain not-to-exceed levels. The cost for work provided by a TSP is written into your program contract. As each function is finished, the TSP will submit forms to NRCS that provide proof of completion. If everything is in order, NRCS will give you the amount of money written into your contract to reimburse the TSP. If the TSP charges more than the allowed not-to-exceed levels, you will be responsible for making up the difference.

Can I change my mind about using a technical service provider?

Your contract can be easily modified to designate NRCS as the service provider rather than a TSP. On the other hand, a contract can only be modified to use a TSP instead of NRCS only if funds are available in the conservation program to pay for TSP services.

Are technical service providers subject to quality checks?

TSPs will be required to follow all NRCS standards and specifications, and quality benchmarks for TSPs are the same as those used by NRCS in the Field Office Technical Guide. Five percent of all program contracts are checked by NRCS annually to be sure they meet quality standards.

Can NRCS also contract with technical service providers?

Through cooperative or contribution agreements, NRCS can work with TSPs to provide services. NRCS may "bundle" practices and contract with a TSP to complete these practices for contracts across the state. For example, NRCS could combine all agricultural waste systems into a bundle of practices to be completed by TSPs.

For More Information:

For information about the TSP process, contact NRCS at your USDA Service Center or visit the TechReg website at <http://techreg.usda.gov/>.