

Brief Look at Opportunities Fact Sheet
Resource Guide for Farmers & Ranchers
A Community Outreach for Producers' Empowerment Project
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The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): NRCS programs to reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, and reduce damages caused by floods and other natural disasters.

USDA does provide specific conservation opportunities for (1) Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers, (2) Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, and (3) Limited Resource Farmers and Ranches.

USDA has set aside a % of Environmental Quality Incentives Programs funds for BF&R and another % for SDF&R. Some of the conservation programs can: provide up to 90% of cost associated with conservation planning and implementing the plan. Some of the payments may be given in advance to purchase materials or contracting expenses.

Who are **Socially Disadvantaged Persons**? Minorities and women.

Beginning Farmers & Ranchers: Applicant has operated a farm or ranch for less than 10 years.

Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher: Applicant has a total household income of approximately \$10,000 for a family of four.

What Is Available?

BEGINNING FARMER/RANCHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (BFRDP)

Competitive grant program that funds education, extension, outreach and technical assistance initiatives directed at helping beginning farmers and ranchers of all types. Anyone interested in working with non-profit organization, tribe or local government can apply.

CONTRACT LAND SALES PROGRAMS

Provides federal loan guarantees to retiring farmers who self-finance the sale of their land to beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. Are you a retiring farmer or rancher who is self-financing to a beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer and rancher?

BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS LOANS

The Farm Service Agency provides direct and guaranteed loans to beginning farmers/ranchers who are unable to obtain financing from commercial credit sources. A Beginning Farmer and Rancher can apply.

THE BEGINNING FARMERS AND RANCHERS DOWN PAYMENT PROGRAM

The Down-Payment Loan Program reflects the dual realities of scarce federal resources and the significant cash flow requirements of most new farm operations. This program combines the resources of the FSA, a beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher, and a commercial lender or private seller to enable beginning, minority and women farmers to make a down payment on a farm/ranch. A Socially Disadvantaged person with a private seller or commercial lender is eligible.

CONSERVATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

CTA is to help NRCS and its partners provide to land users to address opportunities, concerns, and problems related to use of natural resources and to help land users make sound natural resource management decisions on private, tribal, and other non-federal lands. Farmer, ranchers, tribes, or state government are eligible.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

Program offers financial incentives to private landowners to protect cropland from erosion. If you are a landowner, you qualify.

OKLAHOMA PLANT MATERIAL PROGRAM

Program is designed to use plant science technology to help with plant development and management, such as conservation plants for eligible farmers and ranchers.

WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVE PROGRAM (WHIP)

Program offer cost-share incentives to landowners to voluntarily develop and improve wildlife habitat on private lands. You qualify if you are a landowner.

EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROTECTION (EWP)

This program helps protect lives and property threatened by natural disasters. EWP provides funding to project sponsors for such work as clearing debris from clogged waterways, restoring vegetation, and stabilizing riverbanks. You qualify if you are landowner.

THE WATERSHED PROTECTION AND FLOOD PREVENTION PROGRAM

Program cooperates with states, tribes, and local agencies to carry out works for improvement of soil conservation and for other purpose, including flood prevention, development, disposal of water, conservation and proper utilization of land. Locally led programs have project sponsors who provide assistance in installing plans when they are approved by NRCS. The project sponsor provides technical assistance to landowners and operators for planning and application purposes on their individual lands. You qualify if you are a landowner or operator.

GRASSLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (GRP)

This program offers landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grasslands, rangeland, pasture land, shrub land, and certain other lands. It also provides assistance for rehabilitating grasslands. Eligible are landowners.

WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)

This program restores former wetlands, reestablish native wetland wildlife habitat and return land used for agricultural production back to marginal land. You qualify if you own land.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)

EQIP financial and technical assistance is available to eligible growers to support the additional cost of using environmentally sound farming practices on their farm. This conservation program promotes agricultural and environmental quality. Landowners in agricultural production or people who are engaged in livestock or agricultural production are eligible.

OKLAHOMA RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT (RC&D)

This program helps people in rural areas plan and carry out activities that increase conservation of natural resources, support economic development, and enhance the environment and standards of living in local communities. Because RC&D areas are locally organized, sponsored and led, the program provides an ideal way for residents to join together to decide what is best for their community and region. You qualify if you own land.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY LOANS

This agency provides several different types of low-interest loan programs available for those who might otherwise not qualify for a loan from a regular lending institution. An experienced farmer or rancher is eligible.

GUARANTEED LOAN PROGRAM

The FSA guaranteed loans provide lenders with a guarantee of up to 95% of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. Farmers or ranchers apply to an agricultural lender, which then arranges for the guarantee. FSA guaranteed loans are for both Farm Ownership and Operating purposes. A farmer or rancher qualifies.

RURAL YOUTH LOANS

These loans are available for rural youths age 10 through 20 to finance income-producing, agricultural-related projects. The project must be of a modest size, educational initiated, developed and carried out by rural youths participating in 4-H clubs, FFA, or a similar organization. Any youth 10-20 years old who reside in a rural area, city or town with a population no larger than 50,000 is eligible.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE RESEARCH & EDUCATION (SARE)

This program will help advance farming systems that are profitable, environmentally sound and good for communities through a nationwide research and education program. This program has RESEARCH AND EDUCATION GRANTS, PRODUCER GRANTS, GRADUATE STUDENT GRANTS, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY INNOVATION GRANTS, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, ON-FARM RESEARCH GRANTS. See resource guide for eligibility. Check out the SARE Oklahoma Advisory Council that meets annually to review all programs offered in the state and makes suggestions based on input from the farmers, agriculture educators, and researchers who serve on the Council. See resource guide for the council membership.

VALUE-ADDED PRODUCER GRANT (VAPG)

This program enables eligible agricultural producers to develop businesses that produce and market value-added agricultural products. Eligibility includes: independent producers, farmer and rancher cooperatives, agricultural producer groups and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures.

OKLAHOMA AGRITOURISM PROGRAM

The Oklahoma Agritourism Association is a professional organization formed for the purpose of enhancing the agritourism in Oklahoma. The development of the association is one more way for producers to network, market themselves and address issues at legislative level.

OKLAHOMA AGRICULTURE ENHANCEMENT & DIVERSIFICATION PROGRAM (AEDP)

Promotes and facilitate uses for agricultural products, expand the state's production of value-added products and encourage diversified farming. Farmers and ranchers qualify.

FARM DIVERSIFICATION GRANT

This grant is designed to help farmers diversify their family farm. This may cover changes to include non-traditional crops or livestock, on farm value-added processing of agricultural commodities or starting an agritourism venture. You qualify if you are a farmer or rancher.

MARKETING AND UTILIZATION LOAN

A marketing loan is to be used for product development and/or implementation of a sound marketing plan for Oklahoma agricultural products and by-products. You qualify if you are producer, farmer, or rancher.

COOPERATIVE MARKETING LOAN

Monies from this loan may be used by a group of individuals or an individual on behalf of a group to organize a cooperative for the purpose of marketing a product or to formulate or implement a marketing plan if the cooperative is already in place. Qualify: producers, farmers, ranchers.

BASIC AND APPLIED RESEARCH LOAN/GRANT

The Oklahoma Agriculture Enhancement and Diversification Program offers the opportunity to apply for a basic or applied research loan/grant. Applicants should focus research efforts on use and processing of agricultural products and by-products. Students, farmers, and ranchers qualify.

OKLAHOMA FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

In 2006, the state legislation passed an act titled "Oklahoma Farm to School Program Act." Under the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, this program provides program development, leadership, technical assistance and workshops for farmers, food service directors, processors and distributors, emphasizing the purchase of locally and regionally produced foods in Oklahoma. See resource guide for additional information.

NATIONAL ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST SHARE

This program will allocate funds in proportion to the number of organic producers and handlers within each state. The states will reimburse each eligible producer or handler up to 75% of its organic certification costs, not to exceed \$750. Any production or handling operation or specified portion of a production or handling operation that produces or handles crops, livestock, products, or other agricultural products that are intended to be sold, labeled, or represented as 100% organic. See resource guide for additional information.

USDA MINORITY FARM REGISTER

Tool to promote equal access to USDS farm programs and services for minority farmland owners, farmers, ranchers, tenants, and other individuals with an agricultural interest. Participation in the Register is voluntary. If you are involved with farming and ranching and wish to be included in the Minority Farm Register, you can complete a form of the FSA or contact the USDA or FSA. See resource guide for information.

OKMULGEE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT (OCCD)

The OCCD works closely with the USDA NRCS to carry out conservation work in the county. Because their main focus is to maintain the health of the land, program funding is sought to specifically meet the current needs of land within the Okmulgee County area. Four cost-share practices are available within Okmulgee County: Pond construction pest management, brush management, and pasture planting. Also, LOCALLY LED COST SHARE PROGRAM offers funding for cost-share assistance on selected conservation practices benefiting soil and water conservation. You qualify if you are a landowner. REHABILITATION OF ABANDONED OIL WELL SITES is another program available in Okmulgee County. Landowner with an abandoned oil well site is eligible.