

Partner Planner Qualifications

NRCS planning policy necessitates the following: (1) only a certified planner can approve and sign conservation plans, and (2) job approval authority (JAA) is required for practice design and certification.

Presently, partner planners are not certified planners, nor do they have JAA; however, individuals serving in the capacity as a partner planner will have knowledge and skills that qualify them to complete the initial steps of the conservation planning process (i.e., steps 1-4, with some partner planners will also be able to complete steps 5-6).

At minimum, an individual must have appropriate training and experience in soil, water, or another evaluation or sample collection method. The following skills and knowledge may result in an individual qualify a partner planner to complete tasks under this agreement:

- The individual may be credentialed, such as the American Society of Agronomy Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) or Certified Professional Agronomist (CPAg).
- The individual may be credentialed, such as through past or current certification as: 1) an Agricultural Irrigation Specialist through The Irrigation Association; 2) a Landscape Irrigation Auditor through The Irrigation Association; 3) a Pump Efficiency Evaluator; and/or, 4) a Conservation Practitioner through the American Water Works Association.
- The individual has demonstrated work experience providing technical assistance to landowners and/or farmers and/or ranchers in evaluation of natural resource concerns and/or planning conservation practices.
- The individual has demonstrated work experience carrying out conservation planning through other RCPPs, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and/or Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).
- The individual has provided cover crop planning and implementation technical assistance to farmers and landowners through a NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials grant.
- The individual has planned under current/previous RCPPs.
- Individuals may be recognized through the NRCS Registry as a Technical Service Provider.
- Persons performing sample collection under the guidance of a qualified individual, consultant or retailer could be recognized as qualified.
- Individual has a demonstrated ability to work with landowners and/or farmers and/or ranchers, to make improvements or conduct operations for the prevention or control of soil erosion and water conservation and distribution, agricultural enhancement, wildlife enhancement, and erosion stabilization.
- Individual works under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other agreement with NRCS to provide conservation planning Technical Assistance landowners and/or farmers and/or ranchers.
- Individual has received NRCS Conservation Planning training.
- Individual has received NRCS Conservation Planning Part 1.
- Individual has received NRCS Cultural Resource Technician training.
- Individual has received Carbon Cycle Institute Carbon Farm Plan training and/or training in conservation planning with equivalent or greater rigor than a NRCS Conservation Planning Activities (CPAs), Design and Implementation Activities (DIAs), and/or Conservation Evaluation and Monitoring Activities (CEMAs).
- Individual has received training in drop/micro irrigation system evaluation.