

# Oklahoma's Conservation Cost-Share Program



*Clean Water  
&  
a Healthy Land*



Oklahoma Conservation Commission  
& Conservation Districts



## Clean Water & a Healthy Land

Oklahoma's State-Funded Conservation Cost-Share Program provides financial assistance, through cost-share payments to landowners, to apply soil and water conservation practices. The purpose of the program is to help improve water quality and control soil erosion in the state.

Local **conservation districts** select conservation practices that best meet local needs (see below). Districts also establish cost-share rates, signup periods, and application ranking procedures. They take applications and work with landowners to ensure they receive technical assistance, and help to complete necessary paper work for payment. Technical assistance for these practices is provided to landowners free of charge by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).



*Construction of ponds can help control soil erosion, reduce sediment in runoff and conserve water for periods of drought.*

## Eligibility for Program

There are some restrictions in the program such as size of land tracts eligible.

Funds can not be allocated to land tracts of less than twenty acres with less than \$1,000 of soil-dependent products sold annually.

## How Landowners are Selected for Program

After signup periods, each application is carefully reviewed to ensure eligibility. Applications are ranked according to a system developed by the **conservation district**.

The ranking system ensures fairness to landowners and ensures cost-share funds are used to meet conservation priorities. Landowners approved for the program are notified of the practice(s) approved and the amount of cost-share that will be provided.

## Practices Vary Across the State

Practices often vary among counties. **Conservation districts** seek input from landowners, other agencies and organizations in deciding which practices to recommend for the state list of available practices each year and which practices are most needed locally. **Only approved practices** on the local district list are eligible for cost-share assistance, and landowners must file an application during a specific **signup period** to be eligible for the program. Landowners are also required to have or to request a **conservation plan** on the land where the practice will be applied. NRCS conservationists can assist with development of conservation plans. **The application and the practice must be approved and a performance agreement must be signed by both the district and the applicant before any installation work begins in order to qualify for payment.**

## Conservation Practices Must Meet Standards

Conservation practices must be carried out according to specifications provided by NRCS. This ensures practices such as ponds, terraces, diversions and other structural practices are constructed properly and function as designed. It also means that practices like grass plantings will have the best chance to be successful. It is necessary that landowners work closely with NRCS conservationists in the planning stage to ensure practices are applied correctly.

## Payment for Cost-Share Practices

After landowners complete a conservation practice they must notify the conservation district office. The district's technical representative will inspect and certify that the practice was completed according to specifications. Landowners are responsible for payments to contractors, fertilizer dealers and others who provide equipment, services, or materials for the conservation practice. Receipts for such services and materials are provided to the conservation district upon completion, and the conservation district helps the landowner apply for payment. **Participants will receive payment through the local conservation district** after approval by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission.

## Administration

The Oklahoma Conservation Cost-Share Program was established by the Oklahoma State Legislature in 1998. The Oklahoma Conservation Commission administers the program at the state level and local conservation districts administer local programs. **For addition information about the state cost-share program, contact your local conservation district.**

## Directory of Oklahoma's Conservation Districts:

<http://www.okcc.state.ok.us/Directory/Districts/districts.html>



*Grass planting is another common practice in the program. Conservation districts select practices for local programs that best meet local needs, such as field borders shown above.*