

Conservation Reserve Program - Transition Incentives Program



Passing land on to the next generation of farmers and ranchers can be critical to the success of an operation. As the average age of landowners and operators continues to rise, transition planning becomes increasingly important. One mechanism to assist with this transfer is the Conservation Reserve Program-Transition Incentives Program (CRP-TIP).

What is CRP-TIP?

Administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA), CRP-TIP assists landowners with expiring CRP contracts by incentivizing land transfer to an underserved or beginning farmer who will return the land to sustainable agricultural production.

Land is enrolled in CRP with conservation benefits—such as wildlife habitat, soil health, and water quality—in mind. CRP-TIP emphasizes the continuation of conservation through sustainable grazing practices and farming methods by the new operator. In the last two years of a CRP contract, the landowner will establish an approved conservation plan. The new operator will commit to conservation and land improvements according to the plan.

The landowner must agree to sell, have a contract to sell, or agree to long-term lease (at least five years) the land enrolled in an expiring CRP contract to the new operator. The incentive for participating in CRP-TIP is two additional years of CRP rental payments after the contract expires.

Eligibility

A CRP contract-holding landowner must work with a beginning, veteran, or historically underserved (also known as socially disadvantaged) farmer or rancher to be eligible for CRP-TIP. These producers are defined as:



Beginning farmer or rancher: a person who has not been a farm or ranch operator for more than 10 years; or an entity with at least 50% ownership by a beginning farmer or rancher.



Socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher: a person who is American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; or Hispanic; or an entity with at least 50% ownership by a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher.



Veteran farmer or rancher: a U.S. military veteran who obtained status as a veteran within the past 10 years and has no more than 10 years of experience operating a farm or ranch.

Gender is not a qualifying criterion for socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers. Selling or leasing land to an immediate family member of the contract holder does not qualify the landowner for CRP-TIP payments.



How it works



Landowners nearing the end of CRP contracts check the first box of eligibility for CRP-TIP. Applications may be submitted at any time of the year. The landowner must submit an application for the CRP-TIP contract at their local FSA office within two years before their CRP contract expires. For example, if a CRP contract is scheduled to expire on Sept. 30, 2026, the period for potential CRP-TIP enrollment spans from Oct. 1, 2024, to Sept. 30, 2026.



Once approved, the landowner will receive rental payments for up to two additional years following the expired contract. To make the exchange in land ownership or management official, an agreement between the current landowner and the new operator may be signed at any point during the same two-year period for CRP-TIP.



The new operator may modify the land, if necessary, following contract approval. Allowable activities include preparing land for organic food production, laying out contours for buffer strips, and surveying and site preparation for contour farming. They may also install filter strips, fencing, livestock watering facilities, pipelines, ponds, terraces, water wells, and waterways at this time.



Providing program eligibility requirements are met, the land may also be enrolled in other USDA programs, including the Conservation Stewardship Program, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

Next steps

For more information, interested individuals should reach out to their local FSA staff. To find a USDA Service Center, visit farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator.

Please note that FSA does not have the ability to match landowners with underserved or beginning farmers; however nonprofit organizations, including the Center for Rural Affairs, may be able to help. **Contact Cynthia Farmer at cynthiaf@cfra.org for assistance.**



In 2024, nearly 75,000 acres of CRP in Iowa will expire, with roughly 155,000 acres set to follow in 2025.

As landowners elect what to do with these acres, CRP-TIP may be a fitting option.

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