

Certified Technical Service Provider (TSP) Myth Busters



MYTH 1: TSPs are hard to find.

✓ **TRUTH:** As of January 2026, over 1,300 certified TSPs are available on our Find a TSP website for over 190 different practices and activities. Our state, regional and national staff are working every day to add new certified TSPs that have the technical expertise to help farmers, ranchers and forest landowners implement conservation on their land. We encourage staff and producers to recruit TSPs.

MYTH 2: I can't use a certified TSP.

✓ **TRUTH:** Producers can choose to use NRCS Certified Technical Service Providers (TSPs) to assist with conservation planning activities and designing conservation practices to address resource concerns on their land. Farmers, ranchers and forest landowners benefit from financial and technical assistance addressing site specific resource concerns and a variety of conservation objectives, including nutrient and pest management, water management, forest management and other regenerative goals. Producers should work with their local NRCS office if they want to use a TSP.

MYTH 3: TSPs make decisions for producers.

✓ **TRUTH:** TSPs are hired by NRCS Program Participants to provide technical assistance in reaching their conservation goals. To make any decisions for the producer, an individual or entity would need Power of Attorney or another legally binding document. An information release request (CPA-1270 form) is required to authorize release from NRCS of any information to a third-party, including TSPs.

MYTH 4: I don't know anyone who could be a TSP.

✓ **TRUTH:** A Certified TSP can be an individual, entity, Indian Tribe, or public agency who is certified by NRCS and placed on the approved list to provide technical services to NRCS assistance program participant. To apply for TSP certification, applicants must have all required documentation and training and then submit an application through the online NRCS Registry system. More about how to find a TSP or register as a TSP is available at www.nrcs.usda.gov/tsp.

Background

By law, NRCS delivers technical assistance to eligible participants for the implementation of assistance programs either directly by agency staff, through an agreement with a third-party provider, or at the option of the producer through payment to the producer for an approved third-party provider.

This fact sheet does not replace policy. It is intended to help planners and customers to better understand certified TSPs and offer clarity on common myths about NRCS certified TSPs.



Guidance documents lack the force and effect of law, unless expressly authorized by statute or incorporated into a contract. USDA may not cite, use, or rely on any guidance that is not available through their guidance portal, except to establish historical facts.



MYTH 5: All TSPs are certified in all states.

✓ **TRUTH:** TSPs must apply and be certified for each state they want certification, meeting both national and state level requirements.

MYTH 6: TSPs can be certified for every NRCS activity.

✓ **TRUTH:** Although TSPs can be certified for most NRCS practices and activities in most states, TSPs may not be certified for NRCS Conservation, Evaluation and Monitoring Activities (CEMAs), which require the producer contract with a Qualified Individual (QI). A QI may, or may not, also hold TSP certification, which may help them meet the QI requirements.

MYTH 7: TSPs can't change their certification.

✓ **TRUTH:** A certified TSP can modify their agreement at any time to add, remove or change services and/or locations simply through NRCS TSP Registry. Modification changes to their agreement are reviewed and processed to ensure they meet the certification criteria. Link to the NRCS TSP Registry at www.nrcs.usda.gov/tsp.

Learn more about the NRCS Certified Technical Service Providers Program: www.nrcs.usda.gov/tsp

MYTH 8: TSPs stay certified forever.

✓ **TRUTH:** Certified TSPs have a 3-year certification period, and may renew easily through NRCS TSP Registry. NRCS may decertify a TSP if the TSP fails to meet NRCS standards and specifications in the provision of technical services, violates the terms of the Certification Agreement, engages in a scheme or device; or commits any other action of a serious or compelling nature as determined by NRCS that demonstrates the TSP's inability to fulfill the terms of the Certification Agreement or provide technical services. NRCS field offices work with their NRCS State TSP Coordinator on collecting supporting documentation (such as warning letters and training attempts) to submit with decertification requests that are sent to the National TSP Program Manager.

MYTH 9: TSPs wait too long for NRCS to pay them.

✓ **TRUTH:** NRCS is required to issue payment within 30 days of receiving the participant's submitted invoice, supporting documentation (including deliverables), and payment request. NRCS program participants—not NRCS—are responsible for paying the TSP for the services provided.

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