

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Question: Does the district need to set a completion date for each signed Performance Agreement?

Answer: Yes, the Commission suggests 90-120 days.

Question: Can an extension of time be given to participants to complete construction of their approved practice?

Answer: Yes. This requires district board action and recording in district board meeting minutes. All time extensions must be requested in writing.

Question: Are conservation districts required to participate in the Conservation Cost-Share Program?

Answer: No. The Program is voluntary.

Question: Who can sign documents associated with the Cost-Share Program?

Answer: The authorized district representative. The authorized district representative must be a district board member. Any board member making application in the program cannot serve as the authorized district representative. It cannot be a district employee. Board action is required to designate the authorized district representative.

Question: Can an applicant apply for more than one practice in the same program year?

Answer: Yes. The applicant cannot receive a combined amount that exceeds the districts established maximum cost-share amount allowed for each participant.

Question: Can district directors participate in the Conservation Cost-Share Program?

Answer: Yes. Effective November 1, 1999 conservation district directors are eligible to participate in the Program. Any board member making application must immediately remove himself from any and all discussions and votes on Program items and the following guidelines must be followed.

- Only two conservation district board members in any single conservation district shall participate in the Program in any single program year.
- Individual district board members applying cannot discuss any element of the Program including but not limited to practices, rates, average costs, selection criteria, application approval/disapprovals, cost-share payments, and extensions.
- Individual district board members applying for the Program must abstain from voting on all elements of the Program.
- Individual district board members cannot use their position as a conservation district board member to improve or elevate their individual chances of becoming a successful applicant.

Question: When is the monthly report due in the Commission office?

Answer: The 5th of each month.

Question: What cost-share related actions does the district board need to take action on in a district board meeting?

Answer: Making and recording in the board meeting minutes the decision to:

- Schedule and conduct a locally led meeting.
- Participate in the current program year.
- Send suggested conservation practices to OCC.
- Are local board members allowed to make application in the Program?
- Designate the authorized district representative.
- Designate the technical representative.
- Request a conservation practice special request, in writing, from the OCC.
- Select local program year conservation practices from the OCC approved Program year guidelines.
- Set local cost-share average costs for selected practices from the OCC approved program year guidelines.
- Set cost-share rate from the OCC approved program year guidelines.
- Setting minimum and maximum cost-share payment amount from the OCC approved program year guidelines.
- Request a cost-share average cost variance, in writing, from the OCC.
- Establishing specific eligibility and selection criteria/priority system that will be used by the district to select successful applicants.
- Set the application period.
- Select the specific dates and places your district will advertise the program locally.
- Selecting successful applications using the eligibility and selection criteria/priority system approved by the district board.
- Establish a completion date for each performance agreement.
- Establish a cost-share rate for each performance agreement.
- Establish a maximum cost-share payment for each performance agreement.
- Establish a policy for amending a performance agreement.
- Establish an appeals process policy. Review and act on appeals filed.
- Establish a policy for cancellation of performance agreements.

Question: Can district employees participate in the Conservation Cost-Share Program?

Answer: No. By Oklahoma Conservation Commission policy Conservation Commissioners, Conservation Commission staff, conservation district employees or the spouses of any of these people shall not be eligible to participate in the Conservation Cost-Share Program?

Question: Can the district board request additional cost-share funds, which exceed their initial allocation?

Answer: Yes. The request must be in writing and must be made prior to the end of the allocation period. Additional cost-share funds will be given according to a process established by the Commission only if funds are available.

Question: When is the performance agreement effective?

Answer: On the date of the last signature.

Question: What documentation must be attached to the district's cost-share claim?

Answer: For each agreement listed on the claim the following back-up documentation must be attached:

- Invoices (contractor or in-kind from participant) **must** contain the following information: vendor name, date of purchase, purchaser's name (the purchaser should be the cost-share participant), and materials or services purchased
- Certification of Completion
- copy of participant's Performance Agreement
- calculation sheet that indicates how the cost-share payment was calculated

Question: Are applicants required to have an email address?

Answer: No.

Question: Can an applicant start work prior to an effective performance agreement being in place?

Answer: No

Question: When can a performance agreement be canceled?

Answer: A Performance Agreement can be canceled in the following ways.

- By notification in writing from the participant with board action following.
- By the district board if the conservation practice is not completed as required by the Performance Agreement.
- By the district board if it is discovered that information provided by the participant in the application and/or Performance Agreement is false.

Question: What needs to be in the case file?

Answer: The following items should be in each participant's case file.

- approved application for allocated funds
- copy of estimated cost sheet
- a reference to the approved conservation plan
- performance agreement
- amendments to performance agreement
- maintenance agreement
- amendments to maintenance agreement
- certifications of conservation practice quantities and cost
- vouchers, bills, or receipts
- copies of any approved cost-share payment claims
- any receipts of payment
- consent form (if applicable)
- release of warrant
- any correspondence to and from the participant (successful applicant letter, cancellation letter, payment transmittal letter, etc.)
- any notes of relevant conversations with the participant (phone calls made to remind them of upcoming completion date, scheduling site visits with technical representative, etc.)

Question: Can monthly reports be faxed or emailed to the Commission?

Answer: Yes

Question: Can districts sell grass seed to a cost-share participant to be used on an approved practice?

Answer: Yes. As long as the participant has a choice of where he purchases his grass seed. Purchasing the grass seed from the district cannot be a condition for getting approved for cost-share.

Question: Are associate directors eligible to participate in the cost-share program?

Answer: Yes, however the district board does have the option of making associate directors in their district ineligible.

Question: Can a participant use in-kind contributions as part of his share of the cost of constructing a practice?

Answer: Yes. Documentation is required with the claim. Statements of in-kind service and materials for cost-share work **must** contain the following information:

- date of purchase (under no circumstances should dates be altered)
- purchaser's name (**The purchaser must be the cost-share participant.**)
- materials or services purchased

Question: By what date must the district obligate all cost-share funds?

Answer: All district cost-share funds must be allocated by the end of the allocation period set forth in the guidance provide by the Commission.

Question: What are the eligibility requirements to participate in the Conservation Cost-Share Program?

Answer: The following are the eligibility requirements as stated in the Rules

- Be a district cooperator.
- Provide a social security number or federal employee identification number.
- Have an approved conservation plan.

Question: Can the district establish additional eligibility requirements to participate in the Conservation Cost-Share Program in their district?

Answer: Yes

Question: How long do we retain case files?

Answer: Unsuccessful applicant files should be retained until the end of the program year. Successful applicant case files should be retained for 3 years after the end of the program year.

Question: Do I need to send every cost share participant I paid with a district check a 1099-MISC form?

Answer: You are only required to prepare a 1099-MISC form for cost share participants that your district paid \$600 or more during the calendar year.

Question: When are the 1099-MISC forms due to the recipient?

Answer: 1099-MISC forms are due to the recipient by January 31st each year.

Question: When are the 1096 forms due to the IRS?

Answer: 1096 forms are due to the IRS by February 28th each year.