



Soil Health Implementation Program (SHIP) Training Takeaways

June 2025

This training resource is designed to help conservation district directors and employees stay informed of key points discussed in recent web-based training. The document should be listed on the district's meeting agenda for discussion and review.

Soil Health Implementation Program (SHIP) Goals

- Deliver a conservation program focused on soil health that provides for more substantial producer engagement
- Expand opportunities to livestock operations and deliver services to urban/small farm ag operations
- Represent all five conservation district areas plus urban/small farm as a "sixth"
- Develop a framework and process for conservation planning that can be completed by OCC and conservation districts

SHIP Timeline

- Initial program allocation was \$1,300,000 with the first allocation period occurring January 1 – March 1, 2024.
 - Participants are eligible for up to \$40,000 in a 3-year program engagement period.
 - At least 6 applications from every area were funded; a total of 51 producers across the state have been engaged in the program
 - A planning tool and process were developed and are in use for the program.
- As of June 2025, OCC's Soil Health Team is conducting consultations and developing plans, producers are implementing practices, and some practices have been certified for payments.
- Second allocation period is tentatively planned for January 1 – February 27, 2026; additional information will be shared once allocation amount and dates are finalized.

Eligible Practices

- Practices selected have a strong soil health focus and are implemented according to NRCS standards and specs with some limited exceptions.
- Reimbursements for practice costs are based on current Oklahoma NRCS EQIP payment rates with some exceptions. The OCC Soil Health team reviews these at least annually and maintains flexibility to amend/adopt rates for select practices for which OK NRCS does not post a rate, or the rate is determined to be ineffectual to incentivize priority conservation.
- OCC Soil Health team members are responsible for certifying practices for payment and providing necessary documentation to the district.

Responsibilities of Each Party

- Districts
 - Advertise and take applications; forward received applications to OCC Soil Health Team
 - Enter into agreements with OCC and producers, as necessary
 - File claims, make payments, and complete tax reporting for payments made
 - Assist in planning a possible field day featuring the participating producer

- OCC Soil Health Team
 - Serve as the district's technical representative, providing technical assistance to guide implementation of the plan
 - Receive and rank applications; notify districts of approved and funded applications
 - Schedule consultations and develop SHIP conservation plans
 - Certify completions and assist districts in approving claims for payment processing
- Applicant
 - Have an approved cooperator agreement with the district
 - Implement through an approved plan a system of conservation focused on soil health principles over a 3-year period
 - Agree to consultation, soil health testing and become a producer mentor, hosting no more than one field day per year throughout the active plan period.
 - Complete practice implementation as outlined in their SHIP conservation plan.

SHIP Plan Development and Finalization

- OCC planners construct plans and obtain the signature of the producer
- District board reviews and signs off on the plan to acknowledge they have seen the document.
 - **Important note:** SHIP plans must be reviewed in Open Session during a regular board meeting. They do not qualify for executive session.
- District returns the fully signed plan to the OCC planner after making a copy for the district files.
- Producers begin work on their plan implementation. Any work completed prior to finalization of the plan is not eligible for reimbursement.

SHIP Plan Implementation, Certification, and Payment

- Planners will certify completion of practices and provide documentation to the district. Documentation will include the signed Conservation Plan Implementation Worksheet. The worksheet will indicate the amount for reimbursement and will include the signatures of the planner and the producer.
- The district will submit a claim for the practice payment. Claim must include a completed OSF-3 form with "SHIP" and the producer's name in the article description and the amount being requested. A copy of the Conservation Plan Implementation Worksheet and any relevant receipts must be attached to the claim form as backup.
- The district will receive the claim payment, and cut a check to the producer
 - The district must obtain a W-9 form from all participants and issue 1099 forms when required.

Additional Resources

- OCC Soil Health Team members
- Training Resources section of the OCC website