

Part 530 – Working Lands Conservation Programs Manual

Subpart O – Exhibits

530.140 Exhibit Uses

A. Exhibits Information.—This subpart contains exhibits that support subparts A–J of this manual including letter templates, checklists, charts, references, and forms. Refer to the specific program subparts for additional program-specific exhibits.

B. Letter Templates.—Use applicable templates according to the preceding subparts.

- (1) Editing Letter Templates.—Each template includes information in brackets to indicate where States must include specific information to complete the letter, so it clearly communicates the intended message. Certain letters may require additional editing in order to ensure the message is clear and concise. States should not substantially revise the standard language in template letters to the extent it changes the purpose intended in policy. However, States may adjust the response period when needed to accommodate short deadlines. Standard language for appeal rights, when provided, should only be edited to include the applicable contact information. Refer to Title 120, General Manual (GM), Part 402, Subpart A, Section 402.7, “Writing,” for additional information on writing correspondence.
- (2) Certified Mail.—States must send letter templates where “Via Certified Mail: Return-Receipt Requested” is indicated in the header through certified, return-receipt U.S. Postal Service mail or through another comparable service that provides tracking to document the date the applicant or participant receives the correspondence. This is critical when communicating in writing to applicants or participants that a response is required by a certain date or when NRCS makes an adverse decision and provides appeal rights.

Note: If the certified mail is returned because the participant refused to sign or did not accept the certified letter, NRCS should follow up by resending the letter through standard mail and document other attempts to contact the participant about the decision.

- (3) Appeal Rights.—NRCS must include appeal rights with any adverse decision sent to a participant using exhibit 530.143M “Appeal Rights,” below.
- (4) Official Correspondence Through Electronic Means.—It is generally acceptable to send general correspondence to participants through electronic means such as email or through customer portals through NRCS business tools if the participant has provided an email address or created a USDA account. Correspondence requiring action from the participant and adverse decisions should still be sent through mail. An electronic message may also be sent as a courtesy copy.

C. Checklists.—Checklists are provided to facilitate communication and ensure certain steps are taken when completing the checklist for purpose. States may edit checklists for local use (e.g., making a fillable form, additional items to verify, etc.) but should not remove any items from the exhibit checklist.

D. Charts and References.—Charts and references are provided as supplemental information to the preceding subparts and referenced in the applicable section. Charts and references are generally large diagrams or lists of information that do not otherwise fit within the formatting of the manual text.

E. Forms.—Forms are developed per guidelines in the 120-GM, Part 403, “Directives and Forms.” States must not edit or develop alternative forms for the exhibits referenced in this manual.

530.141 Letter Templates

- A. Application Deferral Letter
- B. Ineligibility Determination for Conservation Program Contract Letter
- C. Intent to Proceed Letter
- D. Early Start Waiver Approval Letter
- E. Early Start Waiver Disapproval Letter
- F. Application Approval Letter
- G. Annual Schedule of Operations Letter
- H. Debt Collection Letter
- I. Administrative Review Control of Land Letter
- J. Administrative Review Beginning Farmer or Rancher Letter
- K. Administrative Review Veteran Farmer or Rancher Letter
- L. Administrative Review Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher Letter
- M. Cancellation without Cost Recovery Letter
- N. Cancellation with Cost Recovery Letter
- O. Termination with Cost Recovery Letter
- P. General Waiver Letter
- Q. Deceased Participant Notification Letter
- R. Unfunded Notification for Partially Funded Application Letter

530.142 Checklists

- A. Checklist to Address NRCS Customer Eligibility Issues
- B. Conservation Program Contract File Checklist
- C. Payment Review Checklist
- D. AGI Waiver Worksheet
- E. Conservation Program Application Checklist

530.143 Charts and References

- A. Transfer of Land Conditions
- B. Indicators of Erroneous Payment
- C. Program Eligibility Matrices for Individuals, Entities, and Joint Operations
- D. Schedule of Operations Review
- E. Annual Administrative Reviews
- F. Diagram for Deceased or Incapacitated Participants
- G. Crosswalk of Terminology

- H. Assignment of Payment to FSA
- I. Food Security Act of 1985, as Amended
- J. Noncompliance Flowchart
- K. Business Tools Quick Reference
- L. Table for Deceased or Incapacitated Participants
- M. Appeal Rights
- N. Delegation of Authority
- O. Veteran Farmer or Rancher Determination Matrix for Historically Underserved Payment Rate and Veteran Preference

530.144 Forms

- A. Summary of Forms Used
- B. CCC-CPA-36, “Assignment of Payment”
- C. NRCS-CPA-125, “Application for Payment to Deceased or Incapacitated Participant”
- D. NRCS-CPA-1257, “Landowner Concurrence Form to Install Structural or Vegetative Conservation Activities”
- E. NRCS-CPA-1270, “Consent to Release or Receive Information for NRCS Program Participation”