

**Environmental Quality Incentives Program - Conservation Incentive Contract (EQIP-CIC)  
Ranking Guidance**

A. Ranking Pools

1. States must create ranking pools based on the EQIP-CIC National Ranking Template within this National Instruction, and guidance found in 440-CPM, Part 530, “Working Lands Conservation Program Manual”, Subpart D, “Application Processing”, and Subpart R, “Environmental Quality Incentives Program”.
2. Each High Priority Area (HPA) must have its own ranking pool.
3. To ensure the practices selected correspond to the appropriate land use in CART, States should set up a separate ranking pool for each land use within a High Priority Area (HPA).

Note: As an alternative to separate ranking pools, States may consider utilizing one ranking pool if the PRC’s are the same across the land uses within the HPA, and the use of categories to separate the land uses in ranking.

In certain cases, States may combine different land uses with different Priority Resource Concerns (PRCs); however, States should use extreme caution with this approach due to the potential for CART to fund practices that do not address a PRC on the land use.

B. Weighting of Resource Concern Categories

1. Only PRC categories will be evaluated.
2. States will adjust weighting of the resource concern categories to address the PRCs for each associated HPA and fund pool.
3. If only one PRC is selected for an HPA, the weighting of that PRC category will be 100%. If a State selects more than one PRC, then the state will add the weighting of each PRC category until 100% is reached.

C. Applicability and Ranking

1. Applicability Question –
  - a. States must use the following question to determine applicability for the EQIP-CIC ranking pool:
    - i) Land Unit Qualification = ANY
    - ii) Does the assessed practice schedule intersect the boundary of a State High Priority Area (HPA) = (Yes/No)
    - iii) States will use a State-developed HPA geodata layer for the applicability question to use separate funding pools for each HPA.
2. Ranking Questions –
  - a. States must include the following ranking question under the “program questions” for all

