

National Bulletin: 440-24-7

Date: 11/01/2023

PGM – Fiscal Year 2024 Easement Programs
Subject: Financial and Technical Assistance Funds
Assessment

Action Required By: July 5, 2024

Purpose: This national bulletin provides state conservationists and area directors guidance for submitting fiscal year (FY) 2024 easement programs financial assistance (FA) and technical assistance (TA) funding requests and returns.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2024.

Background: Each fiscal year, the Easement Programs Division (EPD) assesses state's current program needs to determine whether additional FA and TA funds and returns are needed. These assessments ensure funds are efficiently obligated to support program and agency priorities. Allowance holders are responsible for effective program administration. Additional funds requested through this assessment must be obligated before the established deadlines.

Explanation: EPD will conduct three formal funds assessments in FY 2024. During these assessment periods, states may request additional funds or return excess funds for the following easement programs:

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program
 - Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ALE) General
 - ALE Grasslands of Special Significance (GSS)
 - ALE GSS Sage Grouse
 - ALE General Sage Grouse
 - ALE GSS Gopher Tortoise
 - ALE Migratory Big Game
 - Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) General
 - WRE Stewardship
 - WRE Monarch Butterfly
 - WRE Bog Turtle
 - WRE Sage Grouse
- Grassland Reserve Program
- Healthy Forests Reserve Program
- Wetland Reserve Program

Submit all easement program fund requests through the [FY 2024 Funds Assessment](#) State requests will be available beginning the first of the previous month and must be submitted for each program by close of business on the following dates:

- January 5, 2024

- April 5, 2024
- July 5, 2024

The January and April funds assessment will prioritize funding for tentatively selected applications that have been preapproved in the Select Application Tool (SAT) prioritizing applications from historically underserved landowners and stewardship activities. The July funds assessment will prioritize funding for ACEP-ALE tentatively selected applications that have been preapproved in the SAT, funds to complete final selections, and funds for stewardship activities.

Additional funding needs outside of these priorities may also be submitted. For all requests, please describe the need, project, and priority order of funding to the appropriate national program manager for consideration.

TA funds can be requested with the FA funds but cannot exceed 20 percent of the FA funds for ACEP-WRE, EWPP-FPE, GRP, and HFRP and 10 percent of the FA funds for ACEP-ALE. Funds that will not be used within the current fiscal year must be returned no later than July 26, 2024. When returning FA funds, at least 7 percent of TA must also be returned according to the instructions in the FY 2024 State Advisory Allocation letter.

The EPD director will advise state conservationist and area directors of decisions regarding FA and TA requests.

EPD will manage Inflation Reduction Act funds for ACEP upon selection of projects through the SAT. If landowners decline offers for project funding, the FA funds for the selected projects must be immediately returned.

Email requests for Emergency Watershed Protection Program – Floodplain Easements (EWPP-FPE) to Decunda Bozeman, national EWPP-FPE program manager, at Decunda.Bozeman@usda.gov.

Contact: Direct questions regarding this bulletin to the appropriate national easement program manager, with a copy to Danielle Balduff, chief of the Implementation and Stewardship Branch, at Danielle.Balduff@usda.gov.