



**Iowa Bulletin:** 440-23-2

**Date:** October 28, 2022

**Subject:** PGM – Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Conservation Stewardship  
Program (CSP) Implementation Guidance Update

**Action Required By:**

**October 7, 2022 – FY2023-1 CSP Classic Application Batching Date Deadline**

**October 14, 2022 – FY2023 CSP-Grassland Conservation Initiative (CSP-GCI)  
Application Batching Date Deadline**

**March 17, 2023- FY2023-2 CSP Classic Application Batching Date Deadline**

**Purpose.** To provide FY2023 CSP implementation guidance and deadlines.

**Expiration Date.** September 30, 2023

**Explanation.** Iowa will use the information contained in this bulletin and policy contained in 440-Conservation Program Manual (CPM), Part 530, to evaluate and obligate FY2023 CSP applications. Enhancement guide sheets with Iowa supplements will be posted to the CSP page of the Iowa NRCS website along with supporting documentation needed for CSP sign-up.

Additional information is available on the [Iowa SharePoint](#) and [National CSP website](#).

**1. FY2023 CSP Classic Timeline**

| Deadline          | Activity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| October 7, 2022   | 2023-1 CSP Classic application <b>batching</b> cut-off date. To be eligible, applications must be entered in ProTracts that were received by the deadline.                                                                                                                                             |
| February 24, 2023 | 2023-1 CSP Classic complete application assessment and <b>ranking</b> in the Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART). Application selection will occur within one week after the ranking deadline. Unranked, pending, and applications without uploaded costs or estimates will not be considered. |
| March 17, 2023    | 2023-2 CSP Classic application <b>batching</b> cut-off date. This will be the second batching date if needed. To be eligible, applications must be entered in ProTracts by the deadline.                                                                                                               |
| April 14, 2023    | 2023-1 CSP Classic <b>obligation</b> deadline.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| May 5, 2023       | 2023-2 CSP Classic complete application assessment and <b>ranking</b> in the Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART). Application selection will occur within one week after the ranking deadline. Unranked, pending, and applications without uploaded costs or estimates will not be considered. |
| June 30, 2023     | 2023-2 CSP Classic <b>obligation</b> deadline.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

**2. FY2023 CSP Annual Payments**

| Deadline          | Activity                                                                             |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| December 16, 2022 | Approve annual payment requests for calendar year 2022.                              |
| November 30, 2022 | Certify the remaining contract item numbers (CINs) completed in FY 2022 in ProTracts |
| February 24, 2023 | Approve annual payment requests for calendar year 2023.                              |

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### 3. FY2023 CSP-GCI Timeline

| Deadline          | Activity                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| October 14, 2022  | FY2023 CSP-GCI application batching cut-off date. To be eligible, applications must be entered in ProTracts by deadline. Applications are not ranked, and selection will occur shortly after the batching cut-off date. |
| December 30, 2022 | FY2023 CSP-GCI obligation deadline.                                                                                                                                                                                     |

### 4. FY2023 Renewal CSP Timeline

| Deadline          | Activity                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| April 15, 2022    | For reference, FY2023-Renewal CSP application batching cut-off date was April 15, 2022.                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| November 10, 2022 | FY2023-Renewal CSP complete application assessment and ranking in the Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART). Application selection will occur within one week after the ranking deadline. Unranked, pending, and applications without uploaded costs or estimates will not be considered. |
| December 30, 2022 | FY2023 CSP Renewal obligation deadline.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

**Note:** The FY2024 Renewal sign-up batching date will be announced by the National office in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of FY2023.

### 5. CSP Eligibility Documentation

When a program application form NRCS-CPA-1200 is received, the field office will date stamp it, enter it into ProTracts with the date signed by applicant and review it for completeness.

**For Crop and Pasture:** Iowa NRCS acquires the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Producer Farm Data Report from FSA Farm Records System to determine the applicant's agricultural operation. The FSA-578 form is acquired from FSA to verify operator shares. Must receive tenant or sharecropper consent if excluding producer from a contract. Form 156EZ from FSA Farm Records System may be used to provide additional supporting documentation of the applicant's agricultural operation.

For crop history, crop production is required 4 of the 6 years prior to December 20, 2018. When available, use FSA records or other documentation such as historical aerial photography, producer records, etc., to verify compliance with this crop history requirement. Recommend using historical aerial photography from the 2013, 2014, or 2015 year.

Use acres from common land unit (CLU) in Conservation Desktop (CD) as eligible acres for the contract. When attributing fields under create/edit PLU, use the calculated acres and round down to the nearest tenth to determine acres. Note: cannot contract for more tract acres than are listed on producer data report.

When an acre discrepancy exists, line through the effective DCP acres and write in the actual eligible acres and show ineligible amount with reason for ineligibility. Required designations are:

- COL = Applicant has control of land for the life of the contract.
- No COL = Applicant does not have control of land for the life of the contract.
- NE-CRP = Not eligible because acres were entered into Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Use only when the CRP acres are included in the effective DCP acres.
- NE-NA = Not eligible because the land was newly acquired, and the applicant has not demonstrated their management system yet.
- NE-SB = Not eligible because acres were sodbusted after December 20, 2018.
- NE-CSP18 = Not eligible because land is already in CSP18 CSP contract.

**For Forestry and Associated Ag Land:** When available, use FSA records such as the FSA-578 and Producer Farm Data Report. If FSA records are not available, a lease, deed, tax parcel data or written notice of control from a landowner may be used.

Associated Agricultural Land (AAL) must be included in the agricultural operation and evaluated if controlled by the applicant. AAL must be associated with an agricultural or Non-Industrial Private Forestland (NIPF) operation and cannot be enrolled on its own.

**For Farmstead:** Farmsteads can be enrolled on their own, if they are the only land use making up the entire operation (ie., no cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forestry and/or AAL is also associated).

## **6. Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART) Instructions**

The CART Users Guide is posted on the USDA CART Employee SharePoint site at [CART Help](#). The CART Users Guide explains policy on how CART must be used. The guide is useful as a reference when completing assessments, making decisions during eligibility determinations and field verifications. On the right side of the CART Employee SharePoint, click on [CART Guide Sheets](#) to access fact sheets of specific interest.

## **7. Waiver to Start Prior to Obligation**

The process for requesting and approval of early start waivers will follow the process in Title 440 – Conservation Programs Manual 530.23 B. The State conservationist has granted permission for the Assistant State Conservationists for Field Operations (ASTC-FO) to approve waivers for the applicant to start application of activities prior to contract obligation. The early start waiver is to be used in situations where the applicant has activities scheduled in year one of the contract and the contract will not be obligated by the time the activities need to be applied. A copy of the approved waiver must be kept in the case file. Here is a list of requirements when requesting an early start waiver:

- Must be in writing from the applicant and must be dated. An email is acceptable.
- Must contain the name of program the waiver is requested for.
- Must list the activities the applicant is requesting the waiver for.
- Must state the reason the waiver is being requested.
- Must have a signed NRCS-CPA-1200 application form.
- Must have a completed Environmental Evaluation (NRCS-CPA-52).
- Application must be assessed in CART with a Record of Decision and Plan Map attached.
- Must have documentation on 6-Notes of the conversation with applicant explaining that an early start waiver is not a guarantee of funding.

**NOTE:** CSP Renewal applications are not eligible for an Early Start Waiver.

## **8. Special Documentation Requirements for Contracting**

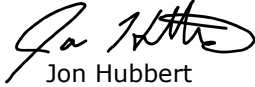
The following documentation is required:

- The participant signatures on all forms must be consistent. Example: if an applicant signs as an individual on the NRCS-CPA-1200, the contract must be written with them as an individual.
- The CART summary reports used for eligibility determinations, including CART revisions during contract modifications, are kept in the contract folder.
- The field verification findings are to be documented on Conservation Assistance Notes- NRCS-CPA-6.
- NRCS-CPA-1155, "Conservation Plan or Schedule of Operations" and NRCS-CPA-1156, "Revision of Plan/Schedule of Operations or Modification of a Contract" requires electronic DC signature certifying technical adequacy prior to participant signatures. The approving official's electronic signature must be printed and placed in the contract file for form NRCS-CPA-1202s, "Conservation Program Contract," NRCS-CPA-1155, "Conservation Plan or Schedule of Operations, and all NRCS-CPA-1156s forms, "Revision of Plan/Schedule of Operations or Modification of a Contract."

- Conservation Assistance Notes, NRCS-CPA-6, entry is required documenting that participant received obligated contract documents and implementation requirements (IRs).
- All applications prior to obligation must have a signed 1200 version October 2022 with updated information if previous version is on file.

**Contact.** If you have questions, please contact Rubyana Neely, CSP coordinator, at (515) 323-2224 or at [rubyana.neely@usda.gov](mailto:rubyana.neely@usda.gov).

I look forward to another great year of assisting our customers with timely implementation of the Conservation Stewardship Program.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Hubbert", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jon Hubbert  
State Conservationist