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NRCS Program Updates – April 2024

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TOPICS

- Locally Led- Local Work Groups
- Program Updates
- RCPP Notice of Funding Opportunity

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Locally Led Conservation



FARMSTEAD Statewide

Rank	Category	Highest Ranked Concern
1	Storage and Handling of Pollutants	Nutrients transported to surface water
2	Inefficient Energy Use	Energy efficient equipment and facilities
3	Livestock Production Limitation	Inadequate livestock water quantity, quality, and distribution
4	Field Sediment, Nutrient, and Pathogen	Pathogens and chemicals from manure, biosolids, or compost applications transported to surface water
5	Terrestrial Habitat	Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates

FOREST Statewide

Rank	Category	Highest Ranked Concern
1	Degraded Plant Condition	Plant productivity and health
2	Terrestrial Habitat	Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates
3	Pest Pressure	Plant pest pressure
4	Concentrated Erosion	Bank erosion from streams, shorelines, or water conveyances channels
5	Aquatic Habitat	Aquatic habitat for fish and other organisms



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Locally Led Conservation



CROP Statewide

Rank	Category	Highest Ranked Concern
1	Field Sediment, Nutrient, and Pathogen	Sediment transported to surface water
2	Concentrated Erosion	Classic gully erosion
3	Wind and Water Erosion	Sheet and rill erosion
4	Soil Quality Limitations	Organic matter depletion
5	Weather Resilience	Ponding and flooding

PASTURE Statewide

Rank	Category	Highest Ranked Concern
1	Livestock Production Limitation	Inadequate livestock water quantity, quality, and distribution
1	Livestock Production Limitation	Feed and forage balance
2	Degraded Plant Condition	Plant productivity and health
3	Field Sediment, Nutrient, and Pathogen	Pathogens and chemicals from manure, biosolids, or compost applications transported to surface water
4	Soil Quality Limitations	Compaction
5	Concentrated Erosion	Classic gully erosion

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Local Listening/Input Sessions

Be involved:

- Attend- MN NRCS LWG
- Participate
- Provide feedback

Resource Concerns

Priority Areas

Needs

Opportunities



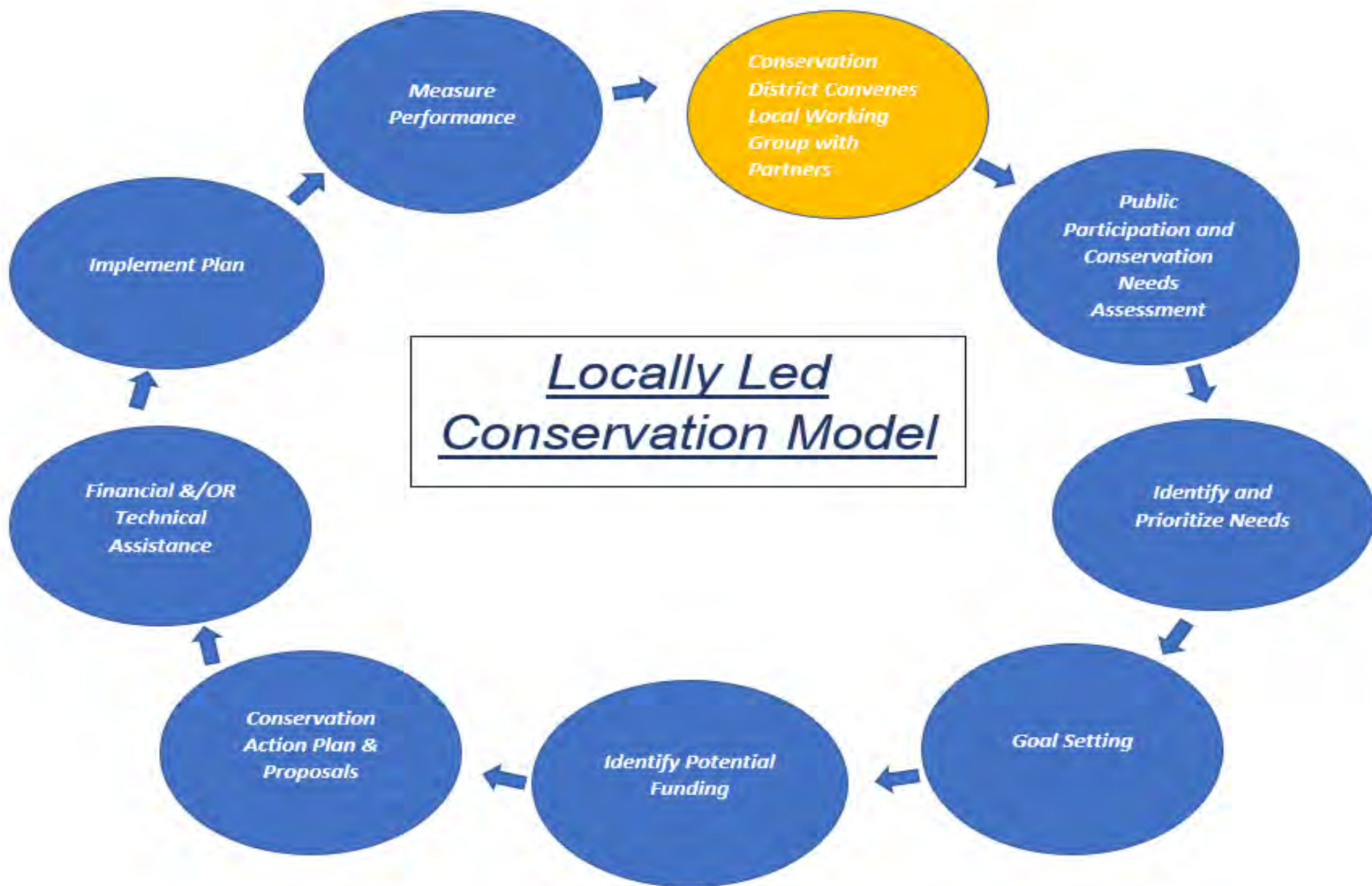
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Locally Led- Continual Process



Data Viewer Website

RCA Data Viewer- NRCS

**Programs Data: Practices, Obligations,
Producers, Acres, Easements & more**



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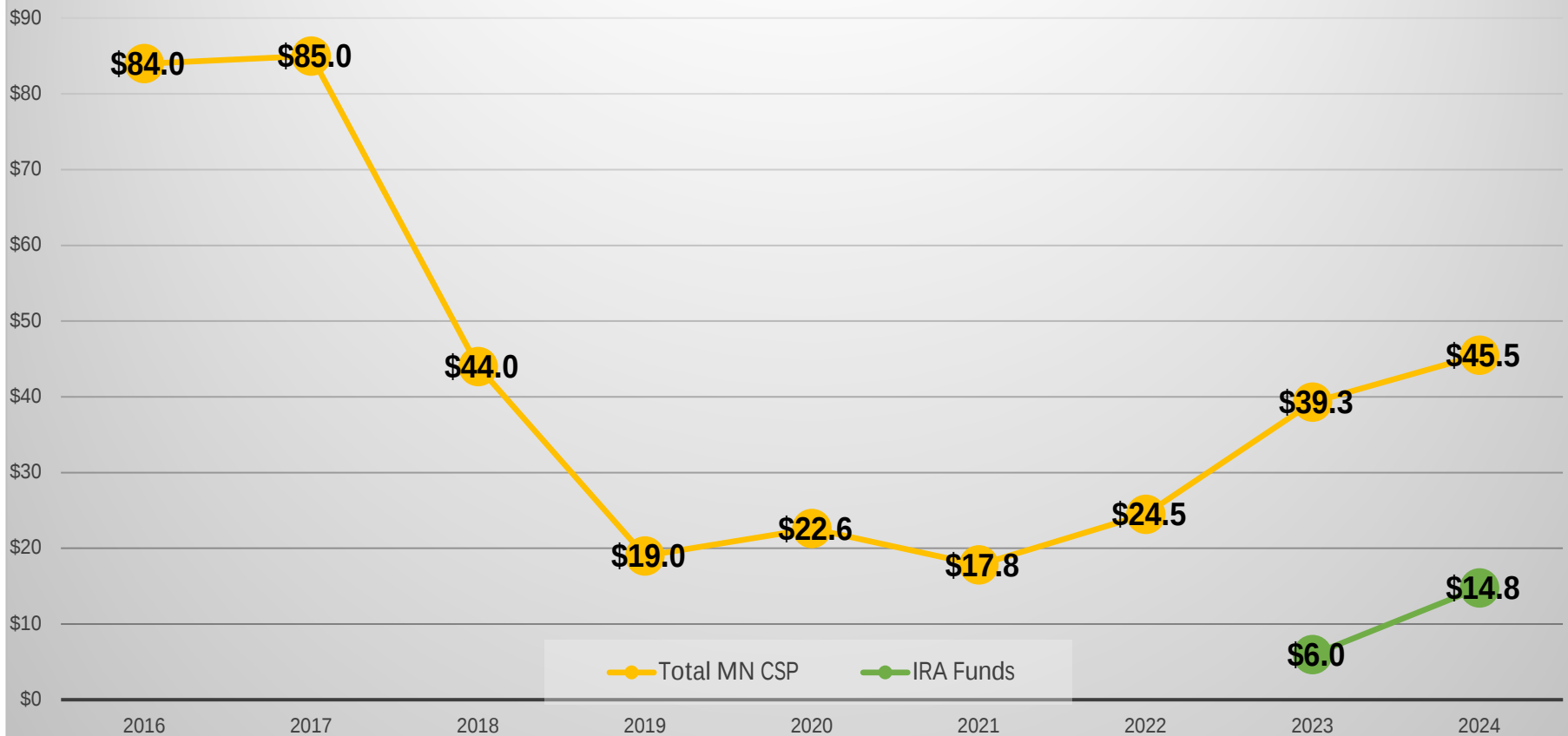


FY24 Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

ProTracts Data Collected 9/2023

CSP Funds & Trends

MN CSP Funds (in Millions)



Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)- 2024

Earlier Sign Up

Large Backlog of applications

Minimum annual payment increase to \$4,000/year (was \$1,500)

Change to existing activity payments

HU (historically underserved) payment rates



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Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)- 2024

Existing Activity Payment = Flat Rate per Land Use + (land use payment rate X land use acre)

Example

Non-HU Participant: $\$1800 + (\$5.93 \times 60.0 \text{ acres}) = \2155.80

HU Participant: $\$3000 + (\$6.26 \times 60.0 \text{ acres}) = \3375.60

Participant Type	Classic	Renewal	# of Resource Concern Categories Met @ application	
Non-Historically Underserved	\$1800	\$3000	Payment Rate Level	
Historically Underserved	\$3000	\$4200	1	2-3
			2	4-6
			3	7+

EAP Cropland, Level 1	Ac	\$5.93
HU-EAP Cropland, Level 1	Ac	\$6.26
EAP Cropland, Level 2	Ac	\$7.80
HU-EAP Cropland, Level 2	Ac	\$8.22
EAP Cropland, Level 3	Ac	\$10.39
HU-EAP Cropland, Level 3	Ac	\$10.96

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Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)- 2024

2024 Renewals- 71 Contracts -\$3.3M on 21,234 acres

Classic: 2867 applications received by January 12th deadline

Workload Prioritization Implemented (Classic)



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FY24 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Program Funds & Trends

MN EQIP Funds (in Millions)





EQIP 2024 Update

- ~3100 of Applications (funded 939 in 2023)
- 5 years of management activities (was 3)
- \$50K/year management practice payment cap
- Payment Rate Increased- 50/75%, 75/90% (most practices)



EQIP 2024- ACT NOW- **NEW**

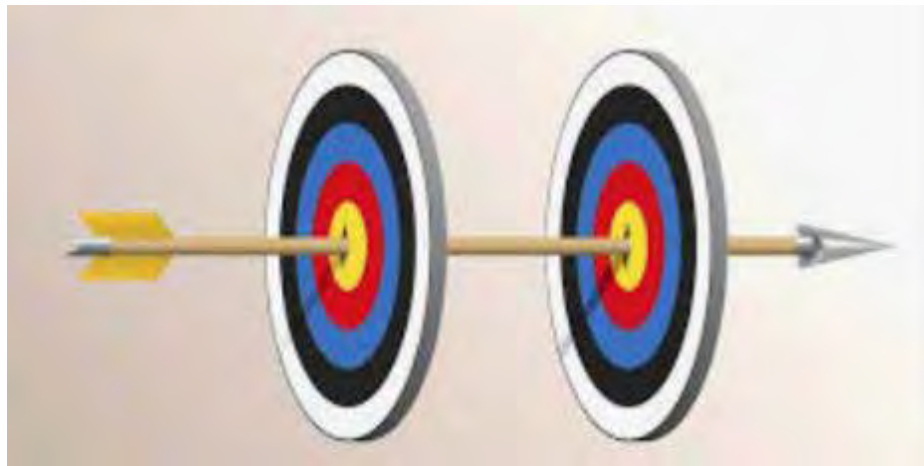
- Expedited process for contracting
- If ranking threshold met, applications moves forward NOW
- Pros and Cons

Ranking Pool	Eligible Practices
ACT NOW - High Tunnel	High Tunnel only
ACT NOW - Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher	All practices
ACT NOW - Energy Efficient Improvement	Lighting, Ag Operation, Combustion System
ACT NOW – Animal Mortality Facility (AMF)	AMF with supporting practices



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EQIP 2024- Targeting Considerations



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EQIP 2024- Targeting Considerations

- **Inflations Reduction Act (IRA) fund limitations**

- Climate Smart Ag and Forestry (CSAF) activities
- Can't be combined with "Farm Bill" \$

- **National Targets**

- 5% Conservation Incentive Contracts (CIC)
- 5% Beginning Farmer
- 5% Socially Disadvantaged Farmer
- 10% Wildlife
- 10% Source Water Protection
- 60% Livestock Operations
- Other Priorities/Initiative: small scale, urban, organic, organic transition initiatives, energy, Monarch, Bobwhite, MRBI, NWQI, Local Work Group Priorities





FY24 Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Staffing

Acting RCPP Coordinator
Teddy Moreno-Santos

NEW - RCPP Coordinator
(in process)



Notice of Funding Opportunity(NFO) 2024

Issued April 3, 2024

\$1.5 B (\$1.2B IRA, \$300M Farm Bill)

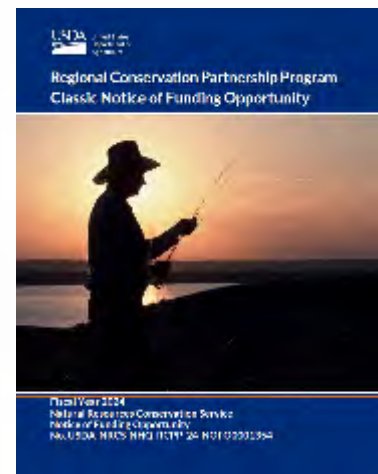
\$25M max, \$250K min

\$100M specifically for Indian Tribes

DEADLINE: 4:59 pm EST – July 2, 2024

Regional Conservation
Partnership Program

RCPP



Notice of Funding Opportunity 2024

- **IRA & Farm Bill Funds**
- **Classic & Alternative Funding Arrangements**
- **State/Multi-State vs Critical Conservation Area(CCA) ~50/50**
- **Partners, Innovation, Contribution, Impacts (Resource Concerns, Social, Economic)**

RCPP NFO 2024

- Engage MN RCPP Staff
- Don't delay
- MN Priority-Partner Capacity & Delivery



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RCPP NFO 2024

Applicant Webinars- National

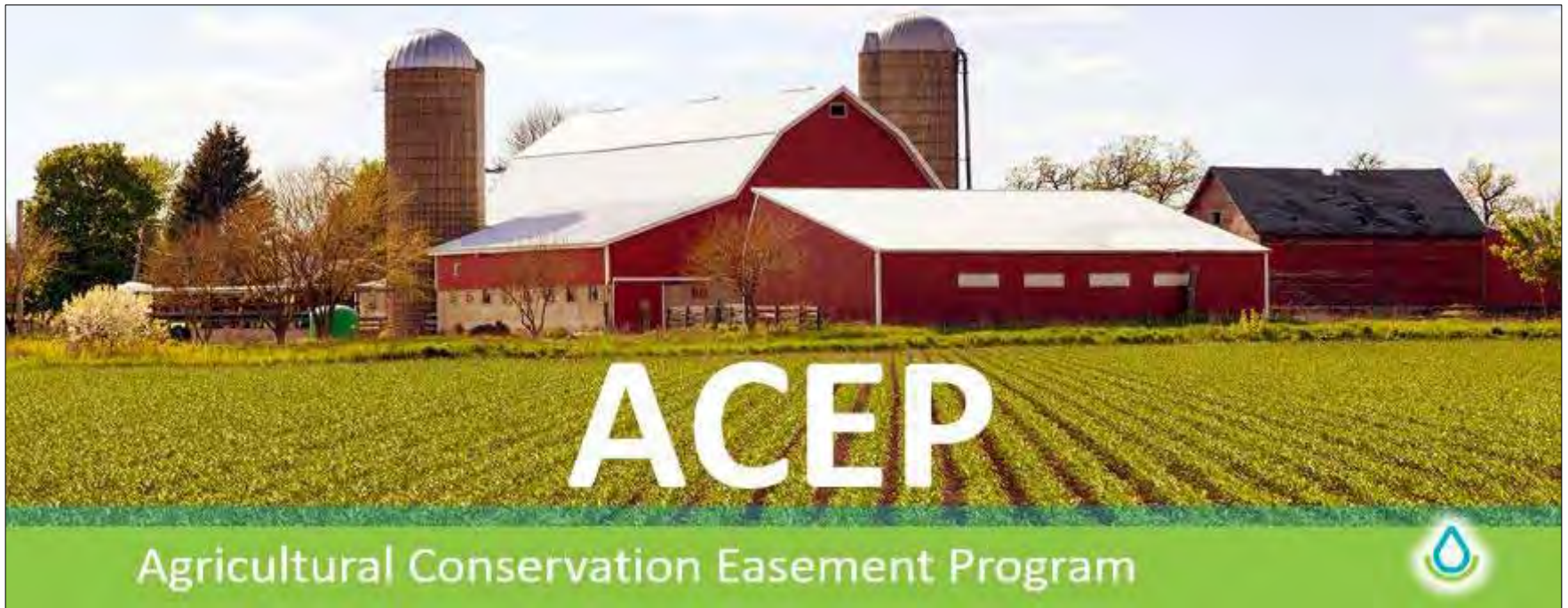
- 2024 RCPP Applicant Outreach Webinars

April 23rd & May 30th- 2pm to 4pm EDT

This webinar will provide general information for applicants submitting proposals. The same material will be covered at both webinars followed by a question-and-answer section.

- 2024 RCPP Easement Webinar: Date and Time TBD

NRCS will host an outreach webinar on RCPP easements.



FY24 Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

ACEP FY24 Updates

WRE Allocation

- **General Allocation: \$1,035,825**
- **Stewardship Allocation: \$464,826**

7 Eligible Applications (\$2.47M) in requests

2 moving forward ~230 acres

Discussion/Questions

*USDA is an equal opportunity
provider, employer, and lender.*



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