

PART IA392 – Roles and Responsibilities

Subpart A – Roles and Responsibilities for Engineering Technical Assistance to USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Participants

July 2025

IA392.0 Purpose

The USDA RCPP partner often employs or contracts with a non-NRCS engineer. This Iowa Instruction outlines the roles and responsibilities for NRCS staff, partner staff, the non-NRCS engineer, and the producer for RCPP projects.

IA392.1 Definitions

A. Non-NRCS Engineer

1. Engineer employed by a consulting firm, sponsoring local organization, other units of government, or any other entity that is not inherently governmental (within the NRCS Engineering Job Approval Authority (EJAA) umbrella). The non-NRCS engineer must be a licensed Professional Engineer (P.E.) in the state of Iowa.
2. Also referred to as the Engineer of Record (EOR) in this document.

B. USDA Partner

The collaborating organization for the RCPP Project.

IA392.2 USDA Partner Roles and Responsibilities

- A. Participate in a pre-agreement meeting (see Section 392.4 A.1. “NRCS Roles and Responsibilities” of this instruction).
- B. The Environmental Evaluation must be completed prior to the design phase of the project. NRCS will provide the Environmental Evaluation when charged with the responsibility for planning.
- C. USDA RCPP Partner either employs or contracts with the Engineer of Record (EOR) for design, construction inspection, and As-Builts, and pays for the engineering services with Partner Funding, USDA Program funding, or a combination of the two, as provided by program rules.

- D. The EOR must be a licensed PE in the state of Iowa and must have work experience and competency for the practices to be designed. All staff providing engineering services who are not licensed must be under the technical supervision of the EOR.
- E. Notify the Assistant State Conservationist for Partnerships (ASTC-Partnerships) in writing that a licensed non-NRCS engineer will be employed to perform engineering services. Include contact information for the non-NRCS engineer.
- F. Provide the landowner/producer a copy of this Roles and Responsibilities document to communicate to the landowner/producer which parties are involved and their roles and responsibilities.
- G. Provide a copy of this Roles and Responsibilities document to the selected EOR.
- H. Schedule and participate in a pre-design meeting with the EOR participating staff, NRCS engineer, other designated NRCS staff, and any other service provider(s) involved with the project.
- I. Submit the Notification and Authorization to Release Information form to NRCS authorizing the EOR access to case file information for designing or implementing the conservation practice(s).
- J. Provide a copy of the Notification and Authorization to Release Information to the EOR.
- K. Provide NRCS detailed location information where proposed practices are to be designed and implemented. NRCS staff may need to access these sites.
- L. Facilitate and participate in communication between NRCS and the EOR.
- M. Accept full responsibility for payment to the non-NRCS engineer.
- N. Assure, through clear communication and coordination with the landowners/producers and contractors, that construction does not begin until:
 - 1. The EOR approves the final design and construction drawings.
 - 2. The NRCS completes a review and formally accepts the design and construction drawings.
- O. Assist the landowner/producer in obtaining all permits required for implementation, operation and maintenance. The landowner/producer must provide the EOR and NRCS documentation that appropriate permits have been received.
- P. When applicable, hire a construction contractor to install the practice(s) in accordance with the approved construction drawings and specifications.
- Q. Provide anticipated construction dates to the EOR and the NRCS Engineer.
- R. Participate in the pre-construction meeting with the EOR, construction contractor, landowner/producer, and NRCS.
- S. Ensure corrective measures are taken if deficiencies are noted during quality assurance (QA) reviews performed by NRCS.

- T. Provide the landowner/producer a copy of the O&M plan for the practice(s) along with the construction drawings.
- U. Collaborate with landowner/producer, EOR, ASTC-Partnerships, and the NRCS Technical Point of Contact (POC) on construction modifications. The EOR must complete the engineering work for construction modifications. Concurrence of construction modifications must be received from NRCS prior to implementation. Construction modifications must meet programmatic and technical requirements.

IA392.3 Non-NRCS Engineer (EOR) Roles and Responsibilities

A. Pre-Design

1. Participate in a pre-agreement meeting if selected prior to the pre-agreement meeting (see Section 392.4 A.1. “NRCS Roles and Responsibilities” of this instruction).

B. Design

1. The Environmental Evaluation must be completed prior to the design phase of the project. NRCS will provide the Environmental Evaluation when charged with the responsibility for planning.
2. Attend the pre-design meeting.
3. Conduct surveys according to the appropriate Statement of Work (SOW).
4. Conduct onsite investigations necessary to develop the design and construction drawings.
5. Prepare the design in accordance with NRCS standards and specifications.
6. Submit preliminary design and construction drawings to the Partner for review prior to final design to confirm that design meets the resource concern(s).
7. Provide the designated NRCS POC, the servicing NRCS office, and the Partner a complete copy of the design deliverables required in the SOW(s). This must be the completed design documentation, the construction specifications, and the construction drawings stamped and signed by the EOR according to the Iowa Code.
8. Include the Professional Engineer (PE) signature and seal on the cover sheet of the construction drawings and certify all sheets within the set.
9. Include a list of the Construction Specifications on the cover sheet of the construction drawings.
10. Include the following statement on the cover sheet of construction drawings:
To the best of my professional knowledge, judgment, and belief, this design, construction drawings, and specifications meet applicable NRCS standards and specifications.

Name of EOR, P.E.

Date

11. Develop and sign an engineer's cost estimate based on best available information.
12. Develop an O&M plan for the practice(s) included in the construction packet.
13. Prepare an inspection (quality assurance) plan describing the inspection items, documentation requirements, and the qualifications required of those doing the inspection.
14. Provide technical information needed by the Partner to acquire practice-related permits.
15. Construction may only proceed following formal acceptance of the design and construction drawings and specifications by NRCS, and receipt of applicable permits by the landowner/producer.

C. Construction and Checkout

1. Conduct and document a pre-construction meeting with the landowner/producer, Partner, NRCS, and construction contractor as outlined in the SOW. Content of the pre-construction meeting shall include a review of the following:
 - a. Plans and specifications
 - b. Roles and responsibilities of all parties
 - c. Installation and Check Out deliverables in the SOW
 - d. Construction Scheduling and Inspection (sequence of events, availability of inspector, etc.)
 - e. Construction Safety (Iowa One Call policy and applicable Safety Plans)
2. Perform and document construction inspection (quality assurance) duties including layout survey, maintenance of construction documentation, approval of changes during construction, and check out survey. Work with contractor, landowner/producer and Partner to correct deficiencies.
3. Collaborate with the Partner and NRCS on construction modifications, including completing agreed to changes to the design, drawings, or specifications. Partner, landowner/producer, and NRCS concurrences must be received and documented prior to implementation.
4. Prepare and submit the following to the NRCS Technical POC and Partner:
 - a. Certified "As-Built" drawings
 - b. A copy of the applicable documentation required in the practice SOW
 - c. A copy of the construction documentation required in the inspection (quality assurance) plan

The "As-Built" cover sheet shall retain the original PE stamp and signature. Include the following certification on the cover sheet of the "As-Built" drawings:

To the best of my professional knowledge, judgment, and belief, this practice is installed in accordance with the plans and specifications and meets NRCS standards.

Name of EOR, P.E.

Date

5. Work with the Partner(s) to ensure corrective measures are taken if deficiencies are noted during quality reviews performed by NRCS. Provide the landowner/producer a copy of the Quality Assurance Certification Service Form.

IA392.4 NRCS Roles and Responsibilities

A. State Office

1. ASTC – Partnerships to schedule a pre-agreement meeting to be attended by the Partner, the EOR, any staff that may perform engineering work, NRCS staff (ASTC - Partnerships, State Resource Conservationist (if applicable), State Conservation Engineer (if applicable))
2. ASTC – Partnerships is the primary POC for NRCS and all communications initiated by NRCS staff shall be coordinated with the ASTC - Partnerships as directed.
3. Designate an NRCS **Engineer** to be the Technical POC for NRCS with the EOR who will be directly responsible for reviews or responsible for soliciting assistance within NRCS when dictated by workload. Communications from and to NRCS regarding engineering must include the Technical POC.
4. The Technical POC provides the Partner and their designated EOR access to Iowa NRCS standards, specifications, standard drawings, NRCS engineering policy, statements of work, public domain software, and other design aids used by NRCS.
5. The Technical POC provides the Partner and EOR sample design drawings and sample “As-Built” drawings to aid the EOR in developing these deliverables.
6. The Technical POC provides the Partner and EOR blank standard design data sheets when the design is for Edge of Field and Oxbow practices to be incorporated with the construction drawings.
7. The Technical POC provides the content and organization of design reports to the Partner and EOR.
8. The Technical POC performs design reviews until at least two concurrent designs are provided that meet NRCS **Conservation Practice Standards** and **Statements of Work**. Designs may contain a few minor errors requiring no significant changes. Once the EOR has successfully achieved this benchmark, NRCS will complete deliverables reviews with only periodic spot checks of

the designs. Only completed designs and PE stamped construction drawings shall be accepted for review.

9. The Technical POC shall send a copy of the review findings to the District Conservationist.
10. The Technical POC must notify the ASTC-Partnerships and State Conservation Engineer (SCE) if there is a lack of consistency by the EOR of meeting NRCS standards and specifications. Design reviews shall be resumed until the EOR consistently provides designs that meet NRCS standards and SOWs.
11. The Technical POC shall complete a deliverables review of the “As-Built” drawings and construction documents, report deficiencies to the EOR and the Partner for correction, and report deficiencies to ASTC-Partnerships and the SCE.
12. The NRCS does not have a contractual relationship with the EOR and must not direct their activities. Report deficiencies to the EOR but do not direct the activities of the EOR, or their agents. Include the ASTC-Partnerships and SCE in reporting deficiencies.
13. The ASTC-Partnerships and Technical POC collaborate on construction modifications regarding project FA and engineering design, respectively.

B. Field Office

- A. Review this document and place one copy in the landowner/producer file.
 1. Participate in the pre-agreement.
 2. Provide planning assistance, including environmental compliance, unless a Service Provider has been hired for planning assistance. An NRCS certified planner must review the Environmental Evaluation form, concur with the effects evaluation, and sign the form as the lead agency/responsible federal official. In all cases, the Environmental Evaluation must be completed prior to the design phase.
 3. Maintain complete and detailed Assistance Notes or CONS-6 notes through planning, design, construction, and check out. Include and document notes on meetings, project communications, etc.
 4. Maintain a case file copy of the technical service documentation provided by the EOR. Include the EOR file with the cooperator’s file following practice implementation.
 5. Provide the landowner/producer copies of any available case file records relevant to the engineering technical assistance being provided by the EOR.
 6. Refrain from any interference or exclusive involvement with the EOR or agents acting on behalf of the EOR. The NRCS Technical POC will act as the primary liaison for engineering issues between the NRCS and the EOR.

7. Refrain from conducting deliverables or design reviews of EOR designs and construction drawings. The Technical POC, or designated staff, will conduct all engineering reviews.
8. Be advised: The NRCS engineering review must be completed with formal acceptance of the design and construction drawings and specifications before construction may be initiated. The review will be completed by the Technical POC and will provide the DC with a copy per 392.4.A.9.
9. Be advised: The NRCS only has a legal relationship with the USDA Partner. NRCS will not direct the work of the EOR.
10. Provide the Partner(s) interpretative information related to the Conservation Plan, or other document upon which the USDA Program contract was based as requested.
11. Collaborate with the ASTC- Partnerships, Partner, EOR, landowner/producer, and NRCS Technical POC on construction modifications.
12. Following receipt of the installation certification from the NRCS Technical POC, input and certify for program financial assistance. Sign block 25 “Payment Approved” on the **CCC-1245, Practice Approval and Payment Application** form.