



# National Association of Conservation Districts

## FY 2022 Appropriations Requests

### Conservation Operations and Conservation Technical Assistance

Conservation Operations (CO), which includes Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA), is administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and helps provide funding for NRCS staff in local offices. Technical assistance helps landowners become better stewards of their natural resources by assisting with resource assessment, practical designs, planning and monitoring of conservation practices. Other programs included in CO are the snow survey, soil survey and plant material centers.

### NACD requests \$1.2 billion for Conservation Operations.

With an increased focus on climate smart agriculture and the opportunities improving soil health can offer toward carbon sequestration, any proposal to address these opportunities will require additional robust technical assistance. However, this additional need for technical assistance should not come at the expense of existing needs. \$1.2 billion for CO is a robust increase necessary to meet Congress’s and USDA’s goals for addressing climate change while continuing to meet the existing demands on CO and technical assistance.

The CTA program:

- Helps landowners become better stewards of their natural resources by assisting them with resource assessment, practical design, planning and monitoring of conservation practices.
- Enables NRCS to use CTA funding, along with farm bill programs, to hire the critical staff in local NRCS offices who work directly with landowners to provide conservation expertise. In partnership with a voluntary conservation network, including employees from conservation districts, throughout the nation, NRCS is able to expand their ability to put conservation on the ground. Without sufficient NRCS staff in place, as is the case today, USDA’s customer service and conservation program implementation are negatively impacted, ultimately hurting our nation’s natural resources, producers and food security.
- Facilitates conservation planning, where landowners can evaluate their specific resource needs and develop a tailored plan to meet their stewardship goals. Conservation plans give landowners the confidence and know-how to implement conservation practices on their land, and in many instances, also help landowners apply for farm bill conservation financial assistance.
- Provides access to technical or scientific experts to evaluate their land’s unique resource needs – such as sediment runoff or wind erosion – and identify and address the landowners’ most pressing resource concerns.

While USDA has provided hiring authority, Congress should continue to encourage USDA to make progress in filling vacancies at the local level to strengthen the ability of local NRCS offices to effectively deliver conservation. In order to continue assisting our nation’s agricultural producers to be the best stewards of their natural resources, continued investments in CTA are required.

### NACD requests Congress fund the Conservation Operations account at \$1.2 billion in FY 2022.

Program	FY 2020 Final	FY 2021 Final	NACD FY 2022 Request
<b>Conservation Operations</b>	\$829.6 million	\$832.7 million	<b>\$1.2 billion</b>



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## Watershed Operations and Small Watershed Rehabilitation

The Watershed Program generates about \$2 billion worth of improved water quality and erosion control benefits annually. These benefits help rural communities strengthen their local economies and restore ailing infrastructure, like dams and water storage facilities. Over decades, conservation districts across the country have stepped up to sponsor these projects, which often require significant financial resources and long-term technical assistance.

**Along with the continued support from the 2018 Farm Bill, NACD requests a total of \$200 million for Watershed Operations and \$75 million for Watershed Rehabilitation for FY 2022.**

## State and Private Forestry Programs

State and Private Forestry (S&PF) programs are administered by the U.S. Forest Service. The agency works with a broad range of forestry organizations, conservation districts and others to address the protection and management of forested lands. The S&PF program helps sustain the nation's forests and prevent harm caused by forest pests, invasive species and wildfires.

**NACD requests a total of \$300 million for S&PF programs, which includes an increase of the incredibly important Forest Stewardship program to \$30 million.**

## 319 Nonpoint Source Grants

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awards grants to states, territories and tribes to support water quality activities that assist in mitigating nonpoint sources of water pollution. These grants increase the utilization of agricultural best management practices, low impact development and stormwater management.

**NACD requests increased funding to \$200 million for this critical program.**

Program	FY 2020 Final	FY 2021 Final	NACD FY 2022 Request
<b>Watershed Operations</b>	\$175 million	\$175 million	<b>\$200 million</b>
<b>Watershed Rehabilitation</b>	\$10 million	\$10 million	<b>\$75 million</b>
<b>State and Private Forestry</b>	\$347 million	\$261.4 million*	<b>\$300 million</b>
<b>319 Nonpoint Source</b>	\$172.3 million	\$177 million	<b>\$200 million</b>

\*The Forest Legacy Program received mandatory funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund and is no longer annually appropriated.