

27—10.74(161A) Financial incentive application and processing procedures.**10.74(1) Application for financial incentives.**

a. Application submitted by landowner and applicant. Applicants for financial incentives for soil and water conservation practices shall complete and submit a request for assistance to the district office where the practice will be implemented.

b. Denial of application by district. Applications which are denied by the district shall be retained in the district until the end of the fiscal year. Application denial as used in this part refers to those applications which cannot be approved for reasons other than lack of available financial incentive funds.

c. Obligation of funds. Following approval of an application, the district may obligate funds for the project or, as appropriate, secure obligation of funds from the division for the amount of the project cost estimate identified on the application. In those cases where funds are not available, the application will be held by the district until funding becomes available or until the end of the fiscal year. Upon obligation of funds, the district shall notify the applicant.

d. Application withdrawn by applicant. An application may be withdrawn by the applicant at any time prior to receipt of payment by notifying the district in writing that withdrawal is desired. Applications withdrawn by the applicant shall be retained in the records of the district until the end of the fiscal year.

10.74(2) Project design by district.

a. District personnel responsible for design. The technician of the district shall design and lay out proposed soil and water conservation practices for which financial incentive funds have been obligated. The certifying technician of the district shall be responsible for determining compliance with applicable design standards and specifications.

b. Cost estimate adjustments.

(1) Application amendment. In the event that adjustment to the project cost estimate is necessitated by the final design, the applicant shall either agree to assume the additional cost or complete and submit an amendment request to the district for approval by the commissioners.

(2) Adjustment to obligated funds. The district may adjust the amount of incentive funds obligated for the project or may secure an adjusted obligation from the division for funds obligated by the division. In the event that additional funds are not available, the project may be redesigned, if possible, to a level commensurate with available funds, or the applicant can agree to assume full financial responsibility for the portion of the project cost in excess of the amount obligated.

10.74(3) Practice construction and certification.

a. Construction contracts. The landowner and applicant shall be responsible for securing any contractors needed and for all contractual or other agreements necessary to construct or perform the approved practices.

b. Certification of practice. The certifying technician or the technician of the district will determine that the completed practice is in compliance with applicable standards and specifications and that costs incurred are reasonable and proper. The certifying technician shall make such determination by completing and signing the certification of practice form. A copy of the certification will be retained in the district's case file.

10.74(4) Payment of financial incentives.

a. Submittal of bills and claim or certification of practice form to district. The applicant shall submit to the district a signed claim or certification of practice form and all bills relative to the project. Any materials and labor provided by the applicant must be itemized, and the itemization of any materials and labor provided by the applicant shall accompany the claim.

b. Approval for payment. The commissioners shall verify the technician's certification prior to approving the certification of practice form for submittal to the division for payment.

c. Claim submitted to the division by district. The signed claim or certification of practice form shall be submitted to the division. All original signed documents including itemized bills, claim agreements, maintenance/performance agreements and amendments shall be retained at the district office in the cooperator's case file.

d. Payment. Payment for the reimbursable cost of the project will be returned by the division to the district or directly to the landowner or applicant.

10.74(5) Maintenance/performance agreements.

a. Maintenance/performance agreement required. As a condition for receipt of any financial incentive funds for permanent soil and water conservation practices, the owner of the land on which the practices have been installed shall agree to maintain those practices for a minimum term as required by the division.

b. Maintenance/performance agreement form. An agreement to maintain practices for which financial incentives are being paid shall be made by completing and signing a maintenance/performance agreement form. Specific conditions of the maintenance/performance agreement are detailed on the form. Completion of the form and signature of the landowner are required prior to transfer of the incentive payment from the district to the recipient(s).

c. Filing of agreements.

(1) Establishment of a file for maintenance/performance agreements. The district shall establish and maintain a separate permanent file containing any documentation related to the maintenance/performance agreement form. The maintenance/performance agreements file shall be accessible for review by the public.

(2) Statement of compliance or noncompliance. A seller of agricultural land with respect to which a maintenance/performance agreement is in effect may request the district to inspect the practices. If the practices have not been removed, altered, or modified, the district shall issue a written statement that the seller has satisfactorily maintained the permanent practice as of the date of the statement.

The buyer of lands covered by a maintenance/performance agreement, where buyer means someone who has completed a contract for sale or deed, may also request that the district inspect the lands to determine whether any practice has been removed, altered, or modified as of the date of the inspection. If a practice has been removed, altered, or modified, the district will provide the buyer with a statement specifying the extent of noncompliance as of the date of the statement.

The seller and the buyer, if known, shall be given notice of the time of inspection so that they may be present during the inspection to express their views as to compliance.

10.74(6) Case files. A case file shall be assembled and maintained for each application approved. The file will contain all documents and correspondence that require signatures from either the district, district cooperator or technician. The case file shall also include all bills and invoices related to an approved application.