

# Budget Unit Brief

## FY 2017



## Conservation Reserve Program

### Purpose

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a voluntary program administered by the federal government for agricultural landowners. The CRP provides landowners with annual rental payments and cost-share assistance for removing agricultural land from production and establishing conservation practices. The CRP is administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and is a major federal conservation program. Land enrolled in the CRP increases wildlife habitat, reduces soil erosion, and improves water quality. Although the CRP is a federal program, the General Assembly makes an annual appropriation to support the CRP enrollment in Iowa.

The General Assembly makes an annual appropriation from the Environment First Fund (EFF) to the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (DALSS) for the CRP. State resources appropriated for the CRP are used to encourage and assist farmers in enrolling in and implementation of the program. Up to 10.0% of the funds appropriated may be used for the cost of administration and implementation practices. State assistance is used in the following ways:

- Supports the hiring of Soil and Water Conservation District Technicians that provide planning and implementation assistance to landowners.
- Provides one-time payments to landowners that establish continuous conservation practices such as contour buffer strips.
- Coordinates tree planting on CRP land.

Participants enrolled in the CRP receive annual rental payments based on the agriculture rental value of the land. The CRP contracts are typically for 10 to 15 years. The FSA provides up to 50.0% cost-share assistance for the cost of establishing approved conservation practices. Examples of conservation practices include small wetland restoration, prairie restoration, buffers, and waterways. The CRP offers are ranked based on data collected for environmental impact. Offers with the most environmental benefit receive priority. The FSA considers the following benefits when evaluating CRP offers:

- Increased wildlife habitat.
- Water quality improvement from reduced soil erosion, runoff, and leaching.
- Farmland improvement from reduced soil erosion.
- Air quality improvement from reduced wind erosion.

### Funding History

The CRP receives an EFF appropriation between \$1.0 million and \$2.0 million each year.

### Related Statutes

Iowa Code section [466.4](#)

Revised August 31, 2016

### More Information

Conservation Reserve Program: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/index>

Iowa General Assembly: <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/index.aspx>

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