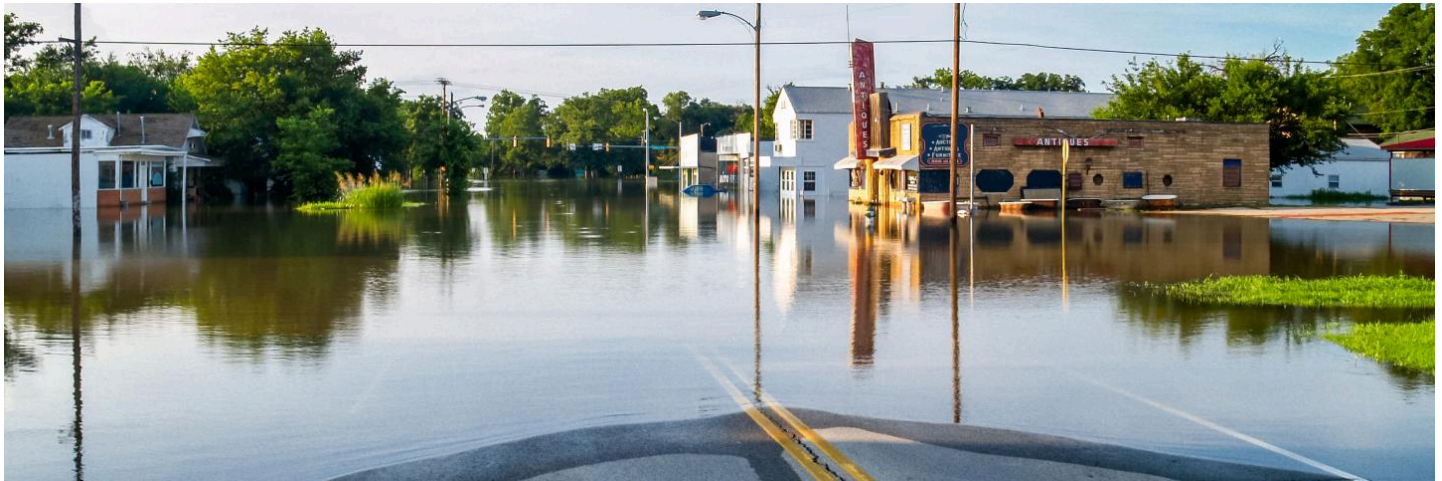




(<https://usda.gov>)



Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP)

[Home](#) [Programs & Initiatives](#) (/programs-initiatives) [Emergency Watershed Protection \(EWP\)](#)

The Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program, a federal emergency recovery program, helps local communities recover after a natural disaster strikes.

Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program

OVERVIEW

The **EWP Program** offers technical and financial assistance to help local communities relieve imminent threats to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms and other natural disasters that impair a watershed. EWP does not require a disaster declaration by federal or state government officials for program assistance to begin. The NRCS State Conservationist can declare a local watershed emergency and initiate EWP program assistance in cooperation with an eligible sponsor (see the Eligibility section below). NRCS will not provide funding for activities undertaken by a sponsor prior to the signing of a cooperative agreement between NRCS and the sponsor.

NRCS offers financial and technical assistance for various activities under the EWP Program, including:

- Remove debris from stream channels, road culverts and bridges;
- reshape and protect eroded streambanks;
- correct damaged or destroyed drainage facilities;
- establish vegetative cover on critically eroding lands;



- repair levees and structures;
- repair certain conservation practices, and
- purchase of EWP Buyouts. (<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/emergency-watershed-protection-ewp-program-buyouts>)



EWP Project Criteria

- provide protection from flooding or soil erosion;
- reduce threats to life and property;
- restore the hydraulic capacity to the natural environment;
- economically and environmentally defensible.

ELIGIBILITY

Recovery Projects

Recovery projects begin with a local sponsor or legal subdivision of state or tribal government. Eligible sponsors include cities, counties, towns, conservation districts, or any federally-recognized Native American tribe or tribal organization. Interested public and private landowners must work through a sponsor.

The EWP Program cannot be used:

- to address the same structural issue or practice 3 times within 10 years;
- for existing operation and maintenance;
- to repair, rebuild, or maintain any transportation facilities, utilities, or similar facilities;
- to restore projects installed by another federal agency;
- to repair nonstructural management practices;
- to repair coastal erosions to beaches, dunes, and shorelines, including those along the Great Lakes;
- if the recovery measures are eligible for the Emergency Conservation Program offered thru the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

EWP Option - Buyout (<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/emergency-watershed-protection-ewp-program-buyouts>)

EWP Recovery Buyouts are used where structural projects to reduce threats from flooding and erosion are not cost-effective and/or beneficial. Once NRCS determines that buying a flood-prone property (for example) would provide the pivotal solution and sustainable course of action for a community, EWP has the authority to provide local sponsors with financial assistance to purchase and preserve the land for the purpose of restoring the natural environment. The land is owned and maintained by the buyout sponsor.

Floodplain Easement Projects

In some situations, landowners can directly apply for assistance through a floodplain easement at the local NRCS office when project funding for floodplain easements (<https://www.usda.gov/guidance-documents/conservation/nrcs/emergency-watershed-protection-program-ewp-floodplain-easement-option>) becomes available. States will hold a sign-up period for the impacted communities and the local NRCS offices will publicize that information in the affected communities. Land that is approved to become a floodplain easement is purchased and owned by the federal government.

Locally-Led Solutions

All EWP projects must have a sponsor and demonstrate that they reduce threats to life and property; be economically, environmentally and socially sound; and must be designed to acceptable engineering standards.

NRCS partners with diverse sponsors to complete EWP Program projects. Sponsors include ***cities, counties, towns, conservation districts, or any federally-recognized Native American tribe or tribal organization.***

Sponsors can apply for EWP Program assistance directly to NRCS while public and private landowners can apply for this assistance through a local sponsor.

Check out the [EWP Sponsor Resource page](/resources/guides-and-instructions/ewp-sponsor-resources) (</resources/guides-and-instructions/ewp-sponsor-resources>) for more information.



EWP Assistance for Limited Resource Areas (LRAs)

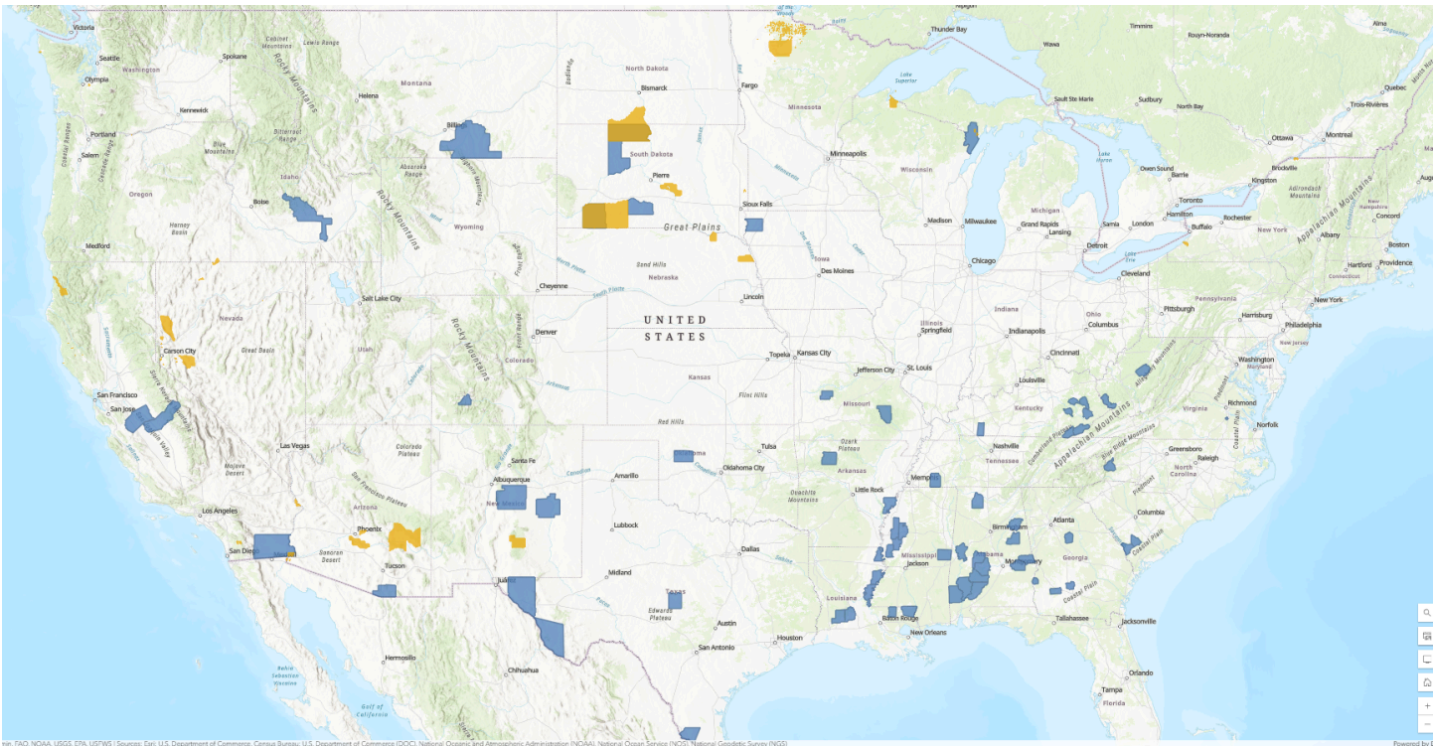
What is an LRA?

An LRA is a geographical area where housing values and individual income are less than 75% of a state's average and unemployment is at least twice the U.S. average. Discover if your county qualifies as an LRA on the interactive map below.

Federal cost share for LRAs

If NRCS determines that an area qualifies as an LRA, the federal cost share for implementing EWP emergency measures may not exceed 90% of the construction costs.

[LRA 2025 Counties and Tribal Areas - Spreadsheet](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2025-08/EWP%20LRA%20FY2025%20Web%20.xlsx) (<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2025-08/EWP%20LRA%20FY2025%20Web%20.xlsx>)



LIMITED RESOURCE AREAS (LRAs)

NRCS has calculated LRAs at the county level (*interactive map link below*), however other areas may also meet the LRA criteria, as determined by NRCS.

LIMITED RESOURCE AREAS 2025 - INTERACTIVE MAP →

Watershed Programs – EWP Resources

(/conservation-basics/watersheds)

Watersheds



Watersheds impact everyone; every community, farm, ranch, and forest. They provide a vital resource for all living things to survive and thrive. All watersheds are interconnected, creating a

(/programs-initiatives/ewp-emergency-watershed-protection/ewp-success-stories)

EWP Success Stories

The Emergency Watershed Protection Program helps communities recover from natural disasters. The following success stories illustrate the agility of EWP to provide recovery assistance.

land-water system that conveys...

Emergency Watershed Program State Contacts

Below, is the list of EWP Program Managers by state; they will guide you thru the process on how best to access assistance thru the EWP program.

(/programs-initiatives/emergency-watershed-protection/emergency-watershed-program-state-contacts)

EWP Success Stories

The Emergency Watershed Protection Program helps communities recover from natural disasters. The following success stories illustrate the agility of EWP to provide recovery assistance.

(/programs-initiatives/ewp-emergency-watershed-protection/ewp-success-stories)

EWP Sponsor Resources

Resources for EWP Program assistance.

(/resources/guides-and-instructions/ewp-sponsor-resources)

Additional Documents

[Emergency Watershed Protection \(EWP\) Program Fact Sheet](https://www.usda.gov/guidance-documents/conservation/nrcs/emergency-watershed-protection-program-ewp) (<https://www.usda.gov/guidance-documents/conservation/nrcs/emergency-watershed-protection-program-ewp>).

Other Disaster Assistance

DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

USDA is ready to help in the aftermath of natural disasters. Find which program best fits your current situation and needs.

USDA along with other agencies offer a wide range of disaster recovery assistance following these unfortunate events. Check out the agencies and their programs below for more information.

[AT A GLANCE](https://www.farmers.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/farmersgov-disaster-assistance-brochure-07-21-2022.pdf) ([HTTPS://WWW.FARMERS.GOV/SITES/DEFAULT/FILES/2022-07/FARMERSGOV-DISASTER-ASSISTANCE-BROCHURE-07-21-2022.PDF](https://www.farmers.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/farmersgov-disaster-assistance-brochure-07-21-2022.pdf)).

EQIP

Farmers, ranchers, and non-industrial private forestland owners can apply for resource assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, and non-industrial private forestland. Recovery assistance includes but is not limited to: immediate soil erosion protection, minimizing noxious and invasive plant proliferation, protecting water quality, restoring livestock infrastructure necessary for grazing management, emergency animal mortality management.

[LEARN MORE](/programs-initiatives/environmental-quality-incentives-program/apply-for-environmental-quality) ([/PROGRAMS-INITIATIVES/ENVIRONMENTAL-QUALITY-INCENTIVES-PROGRAM/APPLY-FOR-ENVIRONMENTAL-QUALITY](/programs-initiatives/environmental-quality-incentives-program/apply-for-environmental-quality)).

EMERGENCY ANIMAL MORTALITY MANAGEMENT

When catastrophic non-disease natural events (ie. flood, fire, weather-related) occur, financial assistance for emergency animal mortality management may be offered.

Producers can contact the local field office at that time for more details.

[CONTACT US](/contact) ([/CONTACT](/contact)).

Related News and Events

NEWS

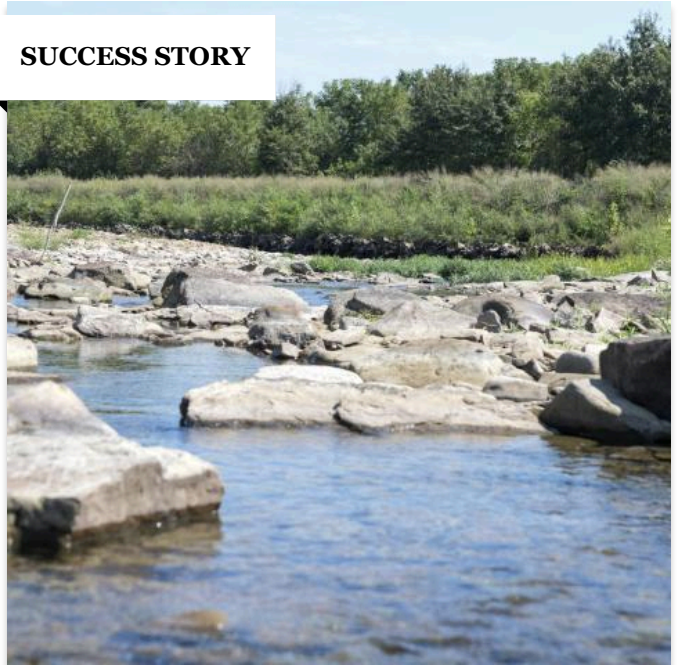


USDA Offers Disaster Assistance to Agricultural Producers in Hawaii Impacted by Recent Flooding

April 14, 2026

(/state-offices/pacific-islands-area/news/usda-offers-disaster-assistance-to-agricultural-producers)

SUCCESS STORY

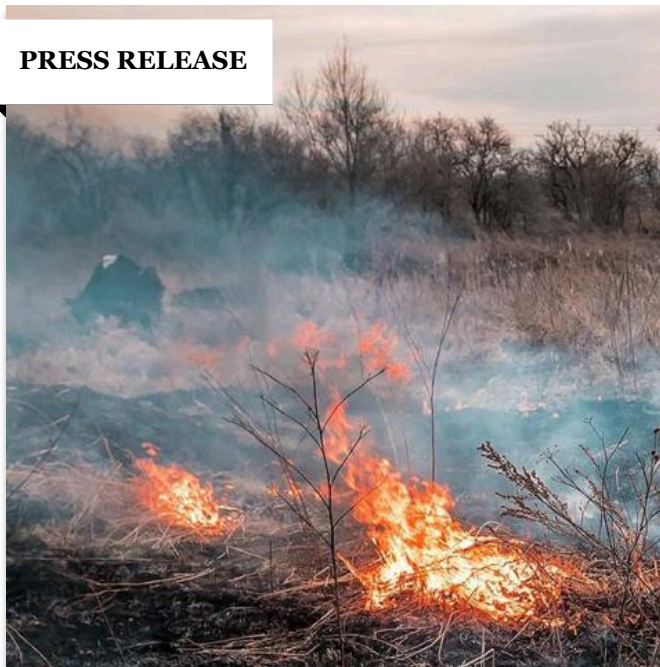


NRCS works with Arkansas partner to restore riverbanks and improve water quality

March 30, 2026

(/state-offices/arkansas/news/nrcs-works-with-arkansas-partner-to-restore-riverbanks-and-improve)

PRESS RELEASE



USDA Offers Disaster Assistance to Agricultural

Producers in Nebraska Impacted by Wildfire

March 23, 2026

(/state-offices/nebraska/news/usda-offers-disaster-assistance-to-agricultural-producers-in-nebraska)

[VIEW MORE NEWS \(/NEWS?FIELD_PROGRAMS=24\)](#)

[VIEW MORE EVENTS \(/EVENTS?FIELD_PROGRAMS=24\)](#)



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Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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[FOIA \(/foia\)](#)

[Information Quality \(/information-quality\)](#)

[Our Performance \(/performace\)](#)

[Privacy Policy \(/privacy\)](#)

[Accessibility Statement \(https://www.usda.gov/accessibility-statement\)](https://www.usda.gov/accessibility-statement)

[Non-Discrimination Statement \(/non-discrimination\)](#)

Resources

[OneFPAC -Employee Links \(https://intranet.usda.gov/FPAC/nrcs-resources\)](#)

[eDirectives \(/edirectives\)](#)

[Glossary \(https://www.usda.gov/glossary\)](https://www.usda.gov/glossary)

[No Fear Act Data \(/no-fear-act\)](#)

[Open Government \(https://www.usda.gov/open\)](https://www.usda.gov/open)

[Plain Writing \(https://www.usda.gov/plain-writing\)](https://www.usda.gov/plain-writing)

[Report Fraud on USDA Contract \(https://usdaoig.oversight.gov/\)](https://usdaoig.oversight.gov/)

[Sitemap \(/sitemap.xml\)](#)

Related Sites

[USDA.gov \(https://usda.gov\)](https://usda.gov)

[Office of the Inspector General \(https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/general-information/staff-offices/office-inspector-general\)](https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/general-information/staff-offices/office-inspector-general)

[USA.gov \(https://usa.gov\)](https://usa.gov)

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