

# CONSERVATION EXCELLENCE GRANT PROGRAM



## SUMMARY

The Conservation Excellence Grant (CEG) program provides grants, loans and tax credits to help plan for and implement agricultural best management practices (BMPs) on farms in high priority locations in Pennsylvania.

- Created by the PA Farm Bill of 2019
- Administered by PA State Conservation Commission; implemented through county conservation districts
- Annual program funding (2021): \$2 million
- Total program funding since inception: \$10.3 million
- Funding Source: State Budget and federal Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant managed by PA DEP

## ELIGIBILITY

### Who is Eligible?

Farm operators in Tiers 1 -3 PA DEP Chesapeake Bay Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan counties are high priority areas. Other counties in the Bay watershed are eligible.

### Eligible Costs

Farm plans (erosion control, conservation, manure management, nutrient management)

Project engineering/design & associated planning & permits (up to 10% of construction costs); project construction

Post construction inspections

In Lancaster and York counties, cost share is available for up to \$75,000 of estimated construction costs.

## FEATURES

Primary tool is a grant. Single grants may not exceed \$250,000 per applicant; single grants can fund small projects under \$25,000.

Encourages “bundling” of grants, low-interest loans and REAP tax credits.

Focuses on minimizing long term debt incurred for a project.

Grant applicants receive fairly quick decisions — within 60 days of application.

Includes public-private partnership with Lancaster Farmland Trust

## HELPFUL TIPS

Be open to accepting a mix of grants, loans and tax credits or to supply matching funds.

Upfront preparation can pay off. Do you have the right conservation or nutrient management plan in place? The proper permits?

Any costs not covered by CEG grant funds may be eligible for REAP tax credits.

## HOW TO APPLY

Apply through County Conservation District.

Deadline: Rolling basis

[Program Website](#)

Link to application: [CEG Grant Application](#)

