



McMullin Area
Groundwater Sustainability Agency

NRCS EQIP WaterSMART Grant Application Guide

Designed especially for MAGSA landowners



About EQIP WaterSMART Initiative:

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a continuous voluntary conservation program administered by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to implement approved conservation practices on their farms.

In 2011, the NRCS and US Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation collaborated to begin the WaterSMART Initiative based on the shared understanding that adequate water supplies are fundamental to healthy communities and agriculture. The Initiative provides complementary investments in practices to conserve water and increase drought resiliency. **Through the Initiative, the agencies have made a funding pool of \$1 million available every year to MAGSA landowners through Fiscal Year 2026.**

MAGSA strongly encourages growers to take advantage of this unique dedicated funding pool to benefit their own operation's long-term success, in addition to the collective success of the region as we tackle drought and water supply challenges together. MAGSA is here to help every step of the way, and has prepared this guide to support you through the funding application process.

Eligibility Requirements:

To be eligible for NRCS EQIP Water SMART funding, a MAGSA landowner must:

- ⇒ **Be enrolled in the Farm Service Agency (FSA)**
- ⇒ **Control or own eligible land** (*i.e., cropland, rangeland, pastureland, non-industrial private forestland, and associated lands*)
- ⇒ **Make an adjusted gross income (AGI) of less than \$900,000/year**
 - *AGI is calculated by taking the average of the 3 taxable years preceding the most immediately preceding complete taxable year. Click [here](#) for other common questions related to NRCS AGI requirements (<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/payment-eligibility/adjusted-gross-income/index>).*
- ⇒ **Be in compliance with highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements.** *This means landowners agree they will not 1) Produce an agricultural commodity on highly erodible land without an adequate conservation system, 2) plant an agricultural commodity on a converted wetland or, 3) convert a wetland to enable or enhance agricultural production.*

What Projects & Practices Can I Receive Funding For?

The following conservation practices are eligible to receive NRCS EQIP Water SMART funding. **You can include more than one of the practices listed below in your application:**

- Flowmeters*
- Cover Crops
- Irrigation Systems (micro, drip, sprinkler)
- Irrigation Pipelines (flood)
- Irrigation Pumps (booster, SW transport); *Not for well pumps*
- Irrigation Water Management
 - Soil Moisture Monitoring
- ... And others! Contact Mikhael Kazzi with the Fresno NRCS Field Office at the email or phone number listed on the last page of this guide to discuss the full suite of eligible conservation practices.

Including Meter & Telemetry in Your EQIP Application

*** MAGSA strongly encourages you to use this grant opportunity to fund your well meters and telemetry.** MAGSA's [Implementing Rules & Regulations](#) outline requirements for well meters and telemetry by January 31, 2025 to help landowners and the region secure a sustainable groundwater supply. MAGSA understands this can be costly and encourages all eligible landowners to apply for EQIP WaterSMART funding to help cover the cost of well meters and telemetry.

When including well meters and telemetry in your EQIP Application, you can fill out the fields below as follows:

Assistance Requested: *Permanently installed electromagnetic flow meter with microprocessor-based signal converter capable of communicating with remote telemetry and data telemetry transmission system. The meter can be a flange or saddle type meter with a flow sensor and will be appropriately sized for the production rate and discharge piping on the well. This equipment will allow irrigators to access instantaneous rate and flow volume data from a computer or cell phone, allowing for improved irrigation water management through data-backed decision making.*

Program enrollment type, activity type, and/or project name, as applicable:
MAGSA WaterSMART Initiative

NOTE: If your application is selected for funding, you will need to submit a quote to NRCS outlining what your project will cost. Contact MAGSA at (559) 515-3339 or info@mcmullinarea.org for recommendations of meters and telemetry equipment that will meet MAGSA's requirements as outlined in the Rules & Regulations and the market value of this equipment.

Application Steps

STEP 1: Enroll in the Farm Service Agency (FSA) with the US Department of Agriculture

Recommended deadline: September 9, 2022

- Contact Fresno County FSA office at russ.friend@usda.gov or 559-276-7494 ext. 2 to initiate the enrollment process.
- Gather relevant documents based on discussion with FSA. These will likely include:
 - Proof of identity (driver's license, social security card, IRS EIN number)
 - Proof of ownership (copy of recorded deed)
 - Leases
 - Entity Identification Status (articles of incorporation, trust & estate documents, partnership agreement). Contact FSA to receive appropriate eligibility forms for your operation.
- Submit documents to the FSA via email, US Postal Service, fax, or through a one-on-one in-person appointment. (See FSA contact information on last page of this guide).

STEP 2: Contact the NRCS Fresno Field Office for Application Packet

Call the NRCS Fresno Field Office at 559-276-7494.

STEP 3: Complete the Application Packet

Recommended EQIP Application Period: October 1- December 1, 2022 (final deadline TBD)

Estimated time to Complete: Less than 1 hour

- Application (CPA-1200)- *MAGSA recommends landowners include meters and telemetry in their application! See page 2 for details.*
- Adjusted Gross Income (CCC-941)
- Direct Deposit Form (SF-119911)
- Irrigation History (LTP-5)

STEP 4: Submit Your Application

Receive feedback, consultation, and submit your application directly to a NRCS Soil Conservationist at one of our upcoming MAGSA-hosted drop-off events at the Kerman Community Center:

- October 14, 11:30 - 2:30 PM
- October 21, 11:30 - 2:30 PM
- November 4, 11:30 - 2:30 PM
- November 18, 11:30 - 2:30 PM

Alternatively, you can submit your application directly to the NRCS Fresno Field Office at 4625 W Jennifer Ave #125 Fresno, CA during operating hours between 8 AM to 4:30 PM.

NRCS Site Visit: A NRCS Soil Conservationist from the Fresno Field Office will visit your farm site (likely after you submit your EQIP application). They will develop an EQIP plan of operations with you that addresses at least one natural resource concern.

Important Dates & Pathway to Success

Based on consultation with FSA and NRCS, this is a recommended "Pathway to Success" for MAGSA landowners completing the EQIP Water SMART application. Following the recommended timeline below will allow for the most seamless process possible to be considered in this funding cycle. However, landowners are not prevented from submitted their applications at a later date.

Recommended Farm Service Agency (FSA) Enrollment Deadline

⇒ Sep 9, 2022

Recommended EQIP Application Period

⇒ October 1 - December 1, 2022 (final deadline TBD)

MAGSA-hosted EQIP Application Drop Off Dates

Get help finalizing your application and drop it off with a NRCS representative at the Kerman Community Center on any of the following dates from 11:30 AM - 2:30 PM.

⇒ October 14, 2022

⇒ October 21, 2022

⇒ November 4, 2022

⇒ November 18, 2022

Estimated Application Selection Period

⇒ January/February 2023 (final dates TBD)

Estimated Contracting Period

⇒ March/April 2023 (final dates TBD)

Questions?

Contact MAGSA

(559) 515-3339

info@mcmullinarea.org

www.mcmullinarea.org

275 S. Madera Ave. Suite 301 Kerman, CA

Contact the Farm Service Agency (FSA)

(559) 276-7494 Ext. 2

Russ.Friend@usda.gov

Chris.SanNioclas@usda.gov

Contact the NRCS Fresno Field Office

559-276-7494, Ext. 3 OR 559-490-8022

Mikhael.Kazzi@usda.gov

4625 W Jennifer Ave #125 Fresno, CA