

In This Issue:

- [Disaster Assistance Availability through FSA](#)
- [USDA Names Appointees to the Washington Farm Service Agency State Committee](#)
- [Important ARC/PLC Deadlines](#)
- [Notification of Changes to Farming Operations](#)
- [Bank Account Changes](#)
- [The Inflation Reduction Act Delivers Affordable Clean Energy for Washington](#)
- [Direct and Guaranteed Farm Operating Loans Available](#)
- [Important Dates and Deadlines](#)

Disaster Assistance Availability through FSA

With the recent fires that have swept through Washington State, it is understandable that a number of producers may need assistance to aid in restoration of things such as fencing, tree planting, conservation structures, or even agriculture structures. FSA also provides benefits for livestock or pasture/feed losses that were endured during these catastrophic events. This assistance is provided through FSA's Emergency Loan Program or one of its many disaster programs such as Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), Livestock Forage Program (LFP), Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) or the Tree Assistance Program (TAP).

All producers wishing to obtain federal assistance through FSA should contact their local FSA office as soon as possible as it is important to note that Notice of Losses (NOL) for programs such as ELAP, LIP, NAP, and TAP are required to be filed timely and may be filed by phone, email, or by appointment. NOL deadlines by program are as follows:

- ELAP – 15 days for honeybee losses and 30 days for all livestock losses
- LIP – 30 days for all livestock losses
- NAP – 15 days for all covered crops
- TAP – 90 days for tree losses

Please note that some programs such as ECP, EFRP, Emergency Loans (EM), and TAP require that environmental reviews are complete prior to actions being taken that are associated with the application. It is critical that **no work begins prior to receiving notice of approval from FSA on the required environmental review. Failure to allow the necessary environmental review to be complete prior to actions being taken, may result in disapproval of the application.

USDA Names Appointees to the Washington Farm Service Agency State Committee

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) today announced appointees who will serve on the Washington USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) state committee.

Members of the FSA state committee are appointed by Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and are responsible for the oversight of farm programs and county committee operations, resolving program delivery appeals from the agriculture community, maintaining cooperative relations with industry stakeholders, keeping producers informed about FSA programs and operating in a manner consistent with USDA equal opportunity and civil rights policies.

Each FSA state committee is comprised of three to five members including a designated chairperson. The individuals appointed to serve on this committee for Washington are:

- Committee Bernard “Butch” Ogden – Castle Rock
- Brett Blankenship – Washtucna
- Danielle Garbe Reser – Wall Walla
- Jackie Richter - Omak
- Jose Ramirez – Royal City

“The FSA state committee members play an integral role in the continuity of operations, equitable and inclusive program administration and ensure the overall integrity of services to the nation’s agricultural producers,” said Marcus Graham, FSA Deputy Administrator for Field Operations. “These individuals have proven themselves to be leaders, early adopters and key influencers in the agriculture industry in their respective states – qualities that will serve them well in these key Biden-Harris Administration leadership positions.

The Farm Service Agency serves farmers, ranchers, foresters, and agricultural partners through the effective, efficient, and equitable delivery of federal agricultural programs. The Agency offers producers a strong safety net through the administration of farm commodity and disaster programs. Additionally, through conservation programs, FSA continues to preserve and protect natural resources and provides credit to agricultural producers who are unable to receive private, commercial credit, including targeted loan funds for beginning, underserved, women and military veterans involved in production agriculture.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America’s food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers,

ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [usda.gov](https://www.usda.gov).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

Important ARC/PLC Deadlines

All changes to farming operations for FY 2022 that result in succession of interest ARC/PLC contracts **must be made by September 30, 2022**. Changes that can result in succession of interest contracts include things such as a sale of land, changes to an operator or producer on the contract, or changes to shares that were originally approved on the contract. Failure to notify your local servicing office of changes to your operation may result in delay of payment or a determination of ineligibility for your contract.

Notification of Changes to Farming Operations

Program participants are responsible for ensuring that all eligibility documentation is up to date and correct at all times. This includes the CCC-902 (Farm Operating Plan), AD-1026, and other applicable eligibility documents. Please notify your local FSA office of any changes that have occurred to your operation prior to September 30, 2022. Failure to timely submit changes and eligibility documentation may result in ineligibility, improper payments or delays in issuance of payments.

Bank Account Changes

FSA program payments are issued electronically by direct deposit into your bank account. In effort to assist FSA in timely issuing payments, you must notify your servicing office of any changes to your banking information. This includes if you close your account, or if your banking information is changed for other reasons, such as a financial institution merge or purchase. Program payments may be delayed if FSA is not timely notified of changes to bank accounts or routing numbers.

The Inflation Reduction Act Delivers Affordable Clean Energy for Washington

Direct and Guaranteed Farm Operating Loans Available

The Inflation Reduction Act is the most significant legislation in U.S. history to tackle the climate crisis and strengthen American energy security. It will lower energy costs for households and businesses, create manufacturing jobs for American workers, and deliver a clean, secure, and healthy future for our children and grandchildren. The savings, jobs, and other benefits provided by this legislation will reach communities across Washington.

President Biden promised to combat the existential threat of climate change and build a clean energy future that creates jobs, advances environmental justice, and lowers costs for families. He's following through on that promise with the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

- **LOWER ENERGY COSTS:** The Inflation Reduction Act will make it more affordable for Washington families to purchase energy efficient appliances when they need to, make repairs around their homes, and save money on their utility bills each month, through:
 - o Rebates covering 50-100% of the cost of installing new electric appliances, including super-efficient heat pumps, water heaters, clothes dryers, stoves, and ovens. In Washington, millions of low- and moderate-income households are eligible for rebates.
 - o Rebates for households to make repairs and improvements in single-family and multi-family homes to increase energy efficiency.
 - o Tax credits covering 30% of the costs to install solar panels and battery storage systems, make home improvements that reduce energy leakage, or upgrade heating and cooling equipment. No income limits apply. For solar, uptake projections estimate that over 160,000 additional Washington households will install rooftop panels as a result.
 - o Tax credits covering 30% of the costs of community solar projects—owned by local businesses that sign up families to save on their electric bills—with additional bonus credits of 20% for projects at affordable housing properties and 10% for projects in low-income communities.
- **GOOD-PAYING JOBS:** In 2021, there were already 76,905 Washington workers employed in clean energy jobs. The Inflation Reduction Act will expand these opportunities, bringing an estimated \$5.3 billion of investment in large-scale clean power generation and storage to Washington between now and 2030. It provides a historic set of tax credits that will create jobs across solar, wind, storage, and other clean energy industries. These credits include bonuses for businesses that pay a prevailing wage, so that Washington workers earn a good paycheck as we build the clean energy future in America..
- **DOMESTIC MANUFACTURING:** Manufacturers employ 259,100 workers in Washington, and the Inflation Reduction Act will help us make the technologies of the future at home—supporting local economies and strengthening supply chains. The Inflation Reduction Act will boost U.S. manufacturing of clean energy and transportation technologies, as well as investments for a new Advanced Industrial Facilities Deployment Program to position America to lead the growing global market for clean steel, aluminum, cement, and more.

- **SMALL BUSINESSES:** Washington is home to 647,639 small businesses, representing 99.5% of all businesses in the state, and the Inflation Reduction Act will help them save money. Commercial building owners can receive a tax credit up to \$5 per square foot to support energy efficiency improvements that deliver lower utility bills. Other programs that will benefit small businesses include tax credits covering 30% of the costs of installing low-cost solar power and of purchasing clean trucks and vans for commercial fleets.
- **ELECTRIC VEHICLES:** The Inflation Reduction Act will make it easier and cheaper to purchase an electric vehicle, with upfront discounts up to \$7,500 for new EVs and \$4,000 for used EVs, helping middle-class Americans skip the gas pump and save on fuel costs. In Washington, millions of people will be eligible for these discounts. Washington recently submitted a state plan for using funds from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to build out EV charging stations along highways.
- **CLEANER AIR:** The Inflation Reduction Act will significantly reduce pollution, resulting in 100,000 fewer asthma attacks in America in 2030, and position the U.S. to achieve President Biden's climate goals. Lowering greenhouse gas emissions will not only avoid costly climate impacts from more extreme weather, but also improve local air quality—preventing premature deaths and reducing air pollution. In addition to reducing pollution across the economy, the Act will benefit communities most in need of cleaner air, with investments in environmental justice block grants, investments for cleaner buses and trucks, and a Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator that will prioritize emissions-reducing projects in disadvantaged communities.
- **RURAL OPPORTUNITIES:** The Inflation Reduction Act supports climate-smart agriculture practices, which will help Washington's 35,300 farms lead on climate solutions and reward their stewardship. Electric cooperatives, which serve about 175,000 homes, businesses, and other customers in Washington, will for the first time be eligible for direct-pay clean energy tax credits. And this legislation dedicates investments for rural electric cooperatives to boost resiliency, reliability, and affordability, including through clean energy and energy efficiency upgrades.
- **RESILIENT COMMUNITIES:** The Inflation Reduction Act will upgrade affordable housing, including projects that boost resilience in the face of intensifying extreme weather. In Washington, tens of thousands of people live in affordable housing units that are eligible for upgrades like flood-proofing and storm resistance, as well as clean energy and electrification. A new Neighborhood Access and Equity Grant Program includes support for transportation projects and planning to protect against flooding, extreme heat, and more. The Inflation Reduction Act also invests in strengthening America's forests, including programs focused on preventing wildfires and for tree planting projects that help protect communities from extreme heat.

FSA's Direct Loan Program is designed to help farmers start, purchase, or expand their farming operation. From beginning farmers who have limited financial history to qualify for commercial credit to farmers who have suffered financial setbacks from natural disasters, FSA offers a variety of loans to provide additional resources farmers need to establish and

maintain profitable farming operations. Farmers may apply for direct loans at their local FSA offices.

FSA guaranteed loans are available to farmers who may not meet loan qualifications from a commercial lender. Guaranteed loans are made and serviced by commercial lenders, such as banks, Farm Credit System institutions, or credit unions. Under a guaranteed loan, a commercial lender makes and services the loan, and FSA guarantees it against loss up to a maximum of 90 percent in most cases or 95 percent in limited circumstances. FSA approves eligible loan guarantees and provides oversight of lenders' activities. Contact a local FSA office for a list of participating lenders.

Farm Operating Loans may be used for normal operating expenses, machinery and equipment, minor real estate repairs or improvements, and refinancing debt. The direct loans are available up to a maximum of \$400,000. Microloans are also available for amounts of \$50,000 or less. FSA will guarantee farm operating loans through a commercial lender up to \$1,825,000. The repayment term may vary, but it cannot exceed seven years. Annual operating loans are generally repaid within 12 months or when the commodities produced are sold. Direct operating loans require applicants to have sufficient education, training, or at least one year's experience in managing or operating a farm or ranch within the last five years.

Important Dates and Deadlines

September 5, 2022 – Labor Day. USDA service centers will be closed.

September 30, 2022 – Deadline to obtain 2022 crop year NAP coverage for aquaculture; beets (for stecklings); Christmas trees; floriculture; garlic; mint; mushrooms; turf grass sod; biennial/perennial forages and mixed forages for hay, seed, or grazing (full list of Washington State NAP dates posted here).

September 30, 2022 – Deadline for late-filed and succession-in-interest ARCPLC contracts.

October 10, 2022 – Columbus Day. USDA service centers will be closed.

October 31, 2022 – Deadline to apply for the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP). Cost share funds available for organic certification expenses paid from October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022.

November 1, 2022 – County Committee election ballots mailed to eligible voters.

November 11, 2022 – Veterans Day. USDA service centers will be closed.

November 20, 2022 – Deadline to obtain 2022 crop year NAP coverage for asparagus,

berries, grapes, honey, hops, tree fruits, nuts, and other perennial crops not listed under the 9/30 category.

November 24, 2022 – Thanksgiving Day. USDA service centers will be closed.

Washington State FSA Office

11707 E. Sprague Ave
Suite 303
Spokane Valley, WA 99206

Phone: 509-323-3000
Fax: 855-843-1172

Jon Wyss
State Executive Director

State Committee

Bernard "Butch" Ogden, Chair
Danielle Garbe Reser, Member
Jackie Richter, Member
Jose Ramirez, Member
Brett Blankenship, Member

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