

Illinois Extension | Urban Farms

NRCS Cost Share Practices in Illinois



USDA's [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS) [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP) and other programs and services provide technical and financial assistance to farmers. If you own or rent land to produce agricultural products, you may be eligible to receive money for implementing practices that have environmental benefits.

NRCS is making a push to better meet the needs of both urban, small-scale, and historically underserved (HU) farmers. New programs and services are also under development. Contact Illinois NRCS Urban Conservationist, Joseph Bridges at joseph.bridges@usda.gov to find out what other practices and programs may apply to your situation.

Practices identified as applicable for urban and peri-urban farms include:

- Alley Cropping
- Composting Facility (Small Farm Pad + Bins)
- Conservation Cover, Pollinator Mix
- Conservation Crop Rotation
- Conservation Plan
- Cover Crop
- Fence (for 1 acre or less)
- Field Border
- Herbaceous Weed Treatment
- Herbaceous Wind Barriers
- High Tunnel System
- Irrigation Pipeline
- Irrigation System (micro)
- Irrigation Water Management (livestock)
- Low Tunnel Systems
- Mulching Soil Health Management Plan
- Nutrient Management
- Pasture and Hay Planting
- Pest Management Conservation System
- Prescribed Burning, 10 acres or less
- Residue and Tillage Management, No Till
- Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till
- Raised Beds
- Roof Runoff Structure (for high tunnels)
- Soil Carbon Amendment (compost/biochar)
- Soil Health Management System Design
- Soil and Source Testing for Nutrient Management
- Sprinkler System
- Stormwater Runoff Control (rain garden)
- Trails and Walkways (woodchips)
- Tree/Shrub Site Preparation
- Tree/Shrub Establishment
- Tree-Shrub Pruning
- Wildlife Habitat Planting (seed/seedlings)
- Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation

Additional practices identified as potentially relevant for urban farms include:

- Soil Health Testing, Basic Soil Health Suite
- PFAS Testing in Water or Soil
- Anaerobic Digester

Note: Many practices are also designated HU for historically underserved. HU farmers include Limited Resource Farmer, Beginning Farmer, Socially Disadvantaged (minority) Farmer, and Veteran Farmer. You may certify in more than one category. If you are a historically underserved farmer, you receive a higher ranking for service, a higher rate of reimbursement for some practices, and the option to receive 50% of the cost share as an upfront payment rather than after purchase and installation or implementation.

As you prepare to apply for NRCS funding, if you'd like assistance in putting together a whole farm plan or receive ongoing farm business coaching, contact [Kathryn Pereira](#), Extension Educator, Local Food Systems and Small Farms, kpereira@illinois.edu.

FY 2023 EQIP SMALL SCALE PAYMENT SCHEDULE*

The schedule below applies to select cover crop, pest management conservation system, irrigation, soil carbon amendments, raised beds, high tunnels, and storm water runoff practices.

Note: The chart shows samples of covered practices; not all components for each practice are listed. Cost share amounts are for fiscal year 2023 only and are subject to change annually. Speak with a NRCS Conservationist for the most up-to-date information.

Practice	Component	Unit	Unit Cost
Cover Crop	Cover Crop - 1 acre or less	Ac	\$428.81
	HU-Cover Crop - 1 acre or less	Ac	\$514.57
	Mechanical Termination of Cover Crop per 1000 square feet	kSqFt	\$20.70
	HU-Mechanical Termination of Cover Crop per 1000 square feet	kSqFt	\$24.84
Pest Management Conservation System	Plant Health PAMS (Small Farm - each) labor and mitigation	No	\$1,654.45
	HU-Plant Health PAMS (Small Farm - each) labor and mitigation	No	\$1,985.34
	Plant Health PAMS activities (Small Farm - each) labor, materials, and mitigation	No	\$6,818.92
	HU-Plant Health PAMS activities (Small Farm - each) labor, materials, and mitigation	No	\$8,182.70
Irrigation System, Microirrigation	Small Micro-irrigation System	SqFt	\$0.80
	HU-Small Micro-irrigation System	SqFt	\$0.95
Soil Carbon Amendment	Compost - Small Areas	Cu-Ft	\$24.42
	HU-Compost - Small Areas	Cu-Ft	\$29.31
Raised Beds	Framed Raised Bed Small Lot Contamination or Debris Sites only	SqFt	\$11.90
	HU-Framed Raised Bed Small Lot Contamination or Debris Sites only	SqFt	\$14.28
High Tunnel System	Small Gothic HT with Gutter	SqFt	\$9.92
	HU-Small Gothic HT with Gutter	SqFt	\$11.90
Stormwater Runoff Control	Rain Garden, small scale	SqFt	\$1.32
	HU-Rain Garden, small scale	SqFt	\$1.58

Key

Ac=acre kSqFt=1000ft² HU=historically underserved farmer No=number (total amount per farm or piece of equipment)

* A list of all Conservation Practice Standards and Support Documents is available through the USDA's NRCS [Illinois Field Office Technical Guide](#).

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