

5

Steps to Assistance

How to Get Assistance from NRCS for Farms, Ranches and Forests

1

PLANNING

Visit your local NRCS field office to discuss your goals and work with staff on a conservation plan.

2

APPLICATION

With the help of NRCS, complete an application for financial assistance programs.

3

ELIGIBILITY

Find out if you're eligible for NRCS' variety of financial assistance programs.

4

RANKING

NRCS ranks applications according to local resource concerns.

5

IMPLEMENTING

Put conservation to work by signing a contract and implementing conservation practices.

Get Started with NRCS

Do you farm or ranch and want to make improvements to the land that you own or lease?

Natural Resources Conservation Service offers technical and financial assistance to help farmers, ranchers and forest landowners.

1

Planning

To get started with NRCS, we recommend you stop by your local NRCS field office.

We'll discuss your vision for your land.

NRCS provides landowners with free technical assistance, or advice, for their land. Common technical assistance includes: resource assessment, practice design and resource monitoring. Your conservation planner will help you determine if financial assistance is right for you.

2

Application

We'll walk you through the application process. To get started on applying for financial assistance, we'll work with you:

- To fill out an AD 1026, which ensures a conservation plan is in place before lands with highly erodible soils are farmed. It also ensures that identified wetland areas are protected.
- To meet other eligibility certifications.

Once complete, we'll work with you on the application, or CPA 1200.

Applications for most programs are accepted on a continuous basis, but they're considered for funding in different ranking periods. Be sure to ask your local NRCS district conservationist about the deadline for the ranking period to ensure you turn in your application in time.

3

Eligibility

As part of the application process, we'll check to see if you are eligible.

To do this, you'll need to bring:

- An official tax ID (Social Security number or an employer ID)
- A property deed or lease agreement to show you have control of the property; and
- A farm tract number.

If you don't have a farm tract number, you can get one from USDA's Farm Service Agency. Typically, the local FSA office is located in the same building as the local NRCS office. You only need a farm tract number if you're interested in financial assistance.

4

Ranking

NRCS will take a look at the applications and rank them according to local resource

concerns, the amount of conservation benefits the work will provide and the needs of applicants.

5

Implementing

If you're selected, you can choose whether to sign the contract for the work to be done.

Once you sign the contract, you'll be provided standards and specifications for completing the practice or practices, and then you will have a specified amount of time to implement. Once the work is implemented and inspected, you'll be paid the rate of compensation for the work if it meets NRCS standards and specifications.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

To find out more, go to: www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

Natural Resources Conservation Service



USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service offers voluntary Farm Bill programs that benefit both agricultural producers and the environment.

Overview

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance wetlands, grasslands, and working farms and ranches through conservation easements.

Under the Agricultural Land Easements component, NRCS helps American Indian tribes, state and local governments, and non-governmental organizations protect working agricultural lands and limit non-agricultural uses of the land.

Under the Wetland Reserve Easements component, NRCS helps to restore, protect, and enhance enrolled wetlands.

Benefits

Agricultural Land Easements protect the long-term viability of the nation's food supply by preventing conversion of productive working lands to non-agricultural uses. Land protected by agricultural land easements provides additional public benefits, including enhanced environmental quality, historic preservation, wildlife habitat, and protection of open space.

Wetland Reserve Easements provide habitat for fish and wildlife (including threatened and endangered species), improve water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals, reduce flooding, recharge groundwater, protect biological diversity, and provide opportunities for educational, scientific, and non-developed recreational activities.

Agricultural Land Easements

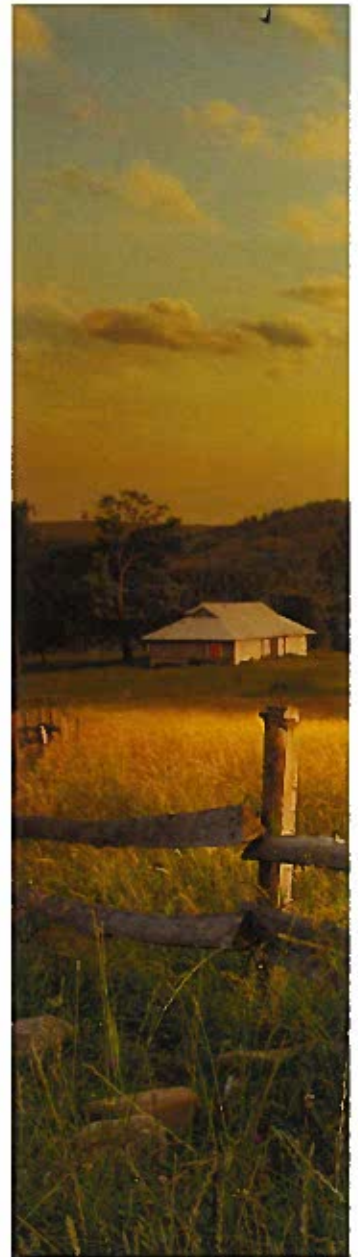
NRCS provides financial assistance to partners for purchasing Agricultural Land Easements that protect the agricultural use and conservation values of land. The program helps farmers and ranchers keep working farms in agriculture. Eligible partners include American Indian tribes, state and local governments, and non-governmental organizations that have farmland or grassland protection programs.

Under the Agricultural Land Easements component, NRCS may contribute up to 50 percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land easement. Where NRCS determines that grasslands of special environmental significance will be protected, NRCS may contribute up to 75 percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land easement.

Wetland Reserve Easements

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance directly to private landowners and American Indian tribes to restore, enhance, and protect wetlands through the purchase of a wetland reserve easement. For acreage owned by an American Indian tribe, there is an additional enrollment option of a 30-year contract.

Continued on next page.



**Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service**

Through the wetland reserve enrollment options, NRCS may enroll eligible land through:

- **Permanent Easements** are conservation easements in perpetuity. NRCS pays 100 percent of the easement value for the purchase of the easement, and 75 to 100 percent of the restoration costs.
- **30-Year Easements** expire after 30 years. Under 30-year easements, NRCS pays 50 to 75 percent of the easement value for the purchase of the easement, and 50 to 75 percent of the restoration costs.
- **Term Easements** are easements that are for the maximum duration allowed under applicable state laws. NRCS pays 50 to 75 percent of the easement value for the purchase of the term easement and between 50 to 75 percent of the restoration costs.
- **30-Year Contracts** are only available to enroll acreage owned by Indian tribes. Program payment rates are commensurate with 30-year easements.

For Wetland Reserve Easements, NRCS pays all costs associated with recording the easement in the local land records office, including recording fees, charges for abstracts, survey and appraisal fees, and title insurance.

Who is Eligible?

Land eligible for Agricultural Land Easements includes cropland, rangeland, grassland, pastureland, and nonindustrial private forest land associated with an agricultural operation. NRCS will prioritize applications that protect agricultural uses and related conservation values of the land and those that maximize the protection of contiguous acres devoted to agricultural use. To enroll land through Agricultural Land Easements, NRCS enters into agreements with eligible partners.

Land eligible for Wetland Reserve Easements includes farmed or converted wetlands that have been previously altered for agricultural production that can be successfully and cost-effectively restored. NRCS will prioritize applications based on the easement's potential for improving water quality and protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife.

To enroll land through Wetland Reserve Easements, NRCS enters into purchase agreements with eligible private landowners or American Indian tribes. NRCS and the landowner work together to develop and implement a wetland reserve plan to guide the restoration easement process. This plan restores, enhances, and protects the wetland's functions and values.

More Information

For more information, visit nrcs.usda.gov/farmland or [farmers.gov](https://nrcs.usda.gov/farmers).

Find your local USDA Service Center at farmers.gov/service-locator.



**Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service**



Conservation Innovation Grants

Natural Resources Conservation Service



Investment in Innovation

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) are competitive grants that drive public and private sector innovation in resource conservation. CIG projects inspire creative problem-solving—boosting production on farms, ranches, and private forests through improvements in water quality, soil health, and wildlife habitat.

Program at a Glance

National and State CIG – Public and private grantees develop the tools, technologies, and strategies to support next-generation conservation efforts on working lands and develop market-based solutions to resource challenges. Grantees must match the CIG investment at least one to one.

On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials – Newly authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill, On-Farm Trials supports more widespread adoption of innovative approaches, practices, and systems on working lands. On-Farm Trials projects feature collaboration between NRCS and partners to implement on-the-ground conservation activities and then evaluate their impact. Incentive payments are provided to producers to offset the risk of implementing innovative approaches. The Soil Health Demo Trial (SHD) component of On-Farm Trials focuses exclusively on implementation of conservation practices and systems that improve soil health. Eligible entities receiving SHD awards agree to follow consistent soil health assessment protocols to evaluate the impacts of practice and system implementation.

Who is Eligible?

CIG applications are accepted from state or local governments, federally-recognized American Indian tribes, non-governmental organizations, and individuals in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Caribbean Area (Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands), and the Pacific Islands Area (Guam, American Samoa, Pacific Islands Area).



CIG funds innovative, on-the-ground conservation projects, including pilot projects and field demonstrations. Proposed projects must conform to the description of innovative conservation projects or activities published in the annual funding notice. With its focus on innovation, CIG does not fund projects supporting technologies and approaches commonly used in the geographic area covered by the application, including those already eligible for funding through EQIP.

The maximum CIG award is set annually by the NRCS Chief and historically has been either \$1 million or \$2 million. An applicant's CIG funding request must be matched at least 1:1 with non-federal funding. Matching funds can be any combination of cash and in-kind contributions. The grantee is also responsible for providing the technical assistance required to successfully complete the project. NRCS will provide technical oversight for each project receiving an award.

CIG History

Conservation Innovation Grants are competitive grants that stimulate the development and adoption of innovative approaches and technologies for conservation on agricultural lands.

First authorized by
2002 Farm Bill

Funding source:
Environmental Quality
Incentives Program

Annual national CIG
funding average:
\$20 million

Total national CIGs
awarded since 2004:
711

Total national CIG
funding since 2004:
\$286.7 million

**Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service**

Historically Underserved Farmers, Ranchers and Forest Landowners

NRCS recognizes the need to provide special consideration to historically-underserved agricultural producers and forest landowners and strives to ensure that they benefit from innovative technologies and approaches. Each year, up to 10 percent of national CIG funds are set aside for applicants who are historically underserved (beginning, limited resource, socially disadvantaged, military veteran farmers and ranchers, or American Indian tribes) or community-based organizations that include or represent these groups.

How to Apply

National CIG: A CIG funding notice is announced each year. Funds for single- or multi-year projects, not to exceed three years, will be awarded through a nationwide competitive grants process. Projects may be watershed-based, regional, multi-state, or nationwide in scope. The natural resource concerns eligible for funding through CIG are identified in the funding announcement and may change annually to focus on new and emerging, high priority natural resource concerns.

Applications are evaluated by a technical peer review panel against criteria identified in the funding notice. The peer panel recommendations are reviewed by an NRCS Grants Review Board that makes funding recommendations to the NRCS Chief. The NRCS Chief makes the final award selections.

State CIG: The CIG state component emphasizes projects that benefit a limited geographical area. Participating states announce their funding availability for CIG competitions through their state NRCS offices.

More Information

Once funds for CIG become available, a funding notice is posted on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), the federal e-Grants portal. The funding notice is also posted on the NRCS website: [nrcs.usda.gov](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov). The funding notice details CIG requirements and the information required from applicants.

Complete applications must be submitted through [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and e-mailed to the NRCS National Office at nrcscig@wdc.usda.gov.

For more information, visit [nrcs.usda.gov/farmbill](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/farmbill) or [farmers.gov](https://www.farmers.gov).

Find your local USDA Service Center at [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://www.farmers.gov/service-locator).



**Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service**



USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

July 2019

[nrcs.usda.gov](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov)

Conservation Stewardship Program

Natural Resources Conservation Service



USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service offers voluntary Farm Bill programs that benefit both agricultural producers and the environment.

Overview

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns. CSP pays participants for conservation performance—the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

Benefits

CSP addresses various resource concerns including soil quality, soil erosion, water quality, water quantity, air quality, plant resources, and animal resources as well as energy.

How It Works

CSP provides two possible types of payments through five-year contracts: annual payments for installing new conservation activities and maintaining existing practices; and supplemental payments for adopting a resource-conserving crop rotation.

Who is Eligible?

Applicants may include individuals, legal entities, joint operations, or Indian tribes that meet the stewardship threshold for at least two priority resource concerns when they apply. They must also agree to meet or exceed the stewardship threshold for at least one additional priority resource concern by the end of the contract. Producers must have effective control of the land for the term of the proposed contract.

Eligible lands include private and tribal agricultural lands, cropland, grassland, pastureland, rangeland, and nonindustrial private forest land. CSP is available to all producers, regardless of operation size or type of crops produced, in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Caribbean and Pacific Island areas.

New CSP Grasslands Conservation Initiative

Provides financial assistance to conserve grasslands through a single opportunity to enroll in a 5-year contract. Eligible lands are limited to cropland for which base acres have been maintained under FSA's ARC/PLC and were planted to grass or pasture, including idle or fallow, during a specific period. Enrolled acreage must be managed consistently with a grassland conservation plan.

How to Apply

Apply at your local USDA Service Center, which you can find at farmers.gov/service-locator. Applications are accepted at any time.

Payments are made soon as practical after October 1 of each fiscal year for contract activities installed and maintained in the previous year.

Advance payments available for historically underserved producers (beginning, economically and socially disadvantaged and veterans.)

What's New in the 2018 Farm Bill

Increases payment rates for adoption of cover crop rotations and advanced grazing management activities.

Extends contracts to facilitate renewal under new program authority.

Authorizes specified annual funding levels.

Provides specific support for organic and transitioning to organic production activities.

Adds new CSP Grasslands Conservation Initiative.

More Information

For more information, visit nrms.usda.gov/farmbill or farmers.gov.

Find your local USDA Service Center at farmers.gov/service-locator.

**Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service**



Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Natural Resources Conservation Service



USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service offers voluntary Farm Bill programs that benefit both agricultural producers and the environment.

Overview

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides technical and financial assistance to producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion, and improved or created wildlife habitat.

Benefits

Through EQIP, NRCS provides agricultural producers with one-on-one help and financial assistance to plan and implement improvements, or what NRCS calls conservation practices. Together, NRCS and producers invest in solutions that conserve natural resources for the future while improving agricultural operations.

Program at a Glance

NRCS will help you develop a conservation plan that meets your goals and vision. This plan becomes your roadmap for selecting the right conservation practices for your land. NRCS offers about 200 unique practices designed for working farms, ranches, and forests.

NRCS financial assistance can cover part of the costs of implementing conservation practices.

Who is Eligible?

Farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who own or rent agricultural land are eligible. EQIP assistance can be used on all types of agricultural operations, including:

- Conventional and organic
- Specialty crops and commodity crops
- Forestry and wildlife
- Historically underserved farmers*
- Livestock operations

*Increased and advance payments available for historically underserved producers (beginning, limited resource, socially disadvantaged, and military veterans.)

How to Apply

Apply at your local USDA Service Center, which you can find at farmers.gov/service-locator.

Applications for EQIP financial assistance are accepted throughout the year. Specific state deadlines are set for ranking and funding. If your application is ranked and selected, you will enter into a contract with NRCS to receive financial assistance for the cost of implementing conservation practices. Payment rates for conservation practices are reviewed and set each fiscal year.

More Information

For more information, visit nrcs.usda.gov/farmbill or farmers.gov.

Find your local USDA Service Center at farmers.gov/service-locator.

What's New in the 2018 Farm Bill

Adds potential resource concerns related to beneficial cost-effective operation changes.

Raises cap for organic producers to \$140,000 over four years.

New enrollment option through incentive contracts to address priority resource concerns.

Requires advance payment option be offered to historically underserved producers.

Authorizes direct program assistance to irrigation districts, including acequias and other entities, for purposes of improving water use efficiencies.





Natural Resources Conservation Service - Michigan

State Office

3001 Coolidge Road, Suite 250
East Lansing, Michigan 48823
Phone: 517-324-5270

Area Offices

Area 1 - Upper Peninsula

780 Commerce Drive, Ste. D
Marquette, MI 49855
Phone: 906/226-8871

Area 3- Southwest Lower Peninsula

3260 Eagle Park Drive NE, Ste. 108
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
Phone: 616/942-4111

Area 2 - Northern Lower Peninsula

810 S. Otsego Road
Gaylord, MI 49735
Phone: 989/732-6526

Area 4 - Southeast Lower Peninsula

1525 N. Elms Road
Flint, MI 48532
Phone: 810/230-8766

Field Offices

Adrian (Lenawee County)

1100 Sutton Road
Adrian, MI 49221

Phone: 517/263-7400

Alpena (Alpena & Montmorency counties)

1900 M-32 West
Alpena, MI 49707

Phone: 989/356-3596

Bad Axe (Huron County)

1460 S. Van Dyke
Bad Axe, MI 48413

Phone: 989/269-9549

Bay City (Bay County)

4044 South 3 Mile
Bay City, MI 48706

Phone: 989/686-0430

Bellaire (Antrim & Kalkaska counties)

106 Depot Street, Complex 2
Bellaire, MI 49615

Phone: 231/533-6450

Big Rapids (Mecosta County)

18260 Northland Drive
Big Rapids, MI 49307

Phone: 231/796-2659

Caro (Tuscola County)

1075 Cleaver Road
Caro, MI 48723

Phone: 989/673-8173

Allegan (Allegan County)

1668 Lincoln Road (M-40)
Allegan, MI 49010

Phone: 269/673-6940

Ann Arbor (Washtenaw and Wayne counties)

7203 Jackson Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Phone: 734/761-8789

Baraga (Baraga, Houghton, Keweenaw & Ontonagon counties)

16403 Ojibwa Industrial Park Road
Baraga, MI 49908

Phone: 906/353-8225

Bear Lake (Benzie & Manistee counties)

8840 Chippewa Highway (US-31)
Bear Lake, MI 49614

Phone: 231/889-9666

Berrien Springs (Berrien County)

3334 Edgewood Drive
Berrien Springs, MI 49103

Phone: 269/471-9111

Cadillac (Missaukee & Wexford counties)

7192 E. 34 Road
Cadillac, MI 49601

Phone: 231/775-7681

Cassopolis (Cass County)

1127 E. State Street
Cassopolis, MI 49031

Phone: 269/445-8641



Centreville (St. Joseph County)

693 East Main Street
Centreville, MI 49032
Phone: 269/467-6336

Coldwater (Branch County)

387 N. Willowbrook Road, Suite F
Coldwater, MI 49036
Phone: 517/278-2725

Fremont (Muskegon & Newaygo counties)

940 West Rex Street
Fremont, MI 49412
Phone: 231/924-2060

Gladstone (Delta & Schoolcraft counties)

2003 Minneapolis Avenue
Gladstone, MI 49837
Phone: 906/428-1060

Grand Haven (Ottawa County)

16731 Ferris Street
Grand Haven, MI 49417
Phone: 616/842-5852

Hastings (Barry County)

1611 S. Hanover (M-37), Ste. 105
Hastings, MI 49058
Phone: 269/948-8037

Ithaca (Gratiot County)

301 Commerce Road
Ithaca, MI 48847
Phone: 989/875-3900

Jonesville (Hillsdale County)

588 Olds Street, Bldg. 2
Jonesville, MI 49250
Phone: 517/849-9890

Kingsford (Dickinson, Gogebic & Iron counties)

420 N. Hooper Street
Kingsford, MI 49802
Phone: 906/774-2392

Marquette (Alger & Marquette counties)

780 Commerce Drive
Marquette, MI 49855
Phone: 906/226-8871

Mason (Ingham & Livingston counties)

521 N. Okemos Street
Mason, MI 48854
Phone: 517/676-4644

Charlotte (Eaton County)

551 Courthouse Drive, Suite 3
Charlotte, MI 48813
Phone: 517/543-1512

Flint (Genesee County)

1525 North Elms Road
Flint, MI 48532
Phone: 810/230-8766

Gaylord (Crawford, Otsego & Roscommon counties)

810 S. Otsego Road
Gaylord, MI 49735
Phone: 989/732-6526

Gladwin (Clare & Gladwin counties)

1501 N. State Street
Gladwin, MI 48624
Phone: 989/426-9461

Grand Rapids (Kent County)

3260 Eagle Park Drive, Ste. 103
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
Phone: 616/942-4111

Ionia (Ionia County)

431 Swartz Court, Suite 300
Ionia, MI 48846
Phone: 616/527-2098

Jackson (Jackson County)

211 W. Ganson Street
Jackson, MI 49201
Phone: 517/789-7716

Kimball (Macomb & St. Clair counties)

2830 Wadhams Road, P.O. Box 7870
Kimball, MI 48074
Phone: 810/984-3865

Lapeer (Lapeer & Oakland counties)

700 South Main Street, Suite 120C
Lapeer, MI 48446
Phone: 810/664-0895

Marshall (Calhoun County)

13464 Preston Drive
Marshall, MI 49068
Phone: 269/781-4263

Midland (Midland County)

954 Isabella Road
Midland, MI 48640
Phone: 989/832-3651



Monroe (Monroe County)

1137 S. Telegraph Road
Monroe, MI 48161
Phone: 734/241-8540

Onaway (Cheboygan & Presque Isle counties)

21090 M-68 Suite B
Onaway, MI 49765
Phone: 989/733-2694

Paw Paw (Van Buren County)

1035 E. Michigan Avenue, Ste. A
Paw Paw, MI 49079
Phone: 269/657-7055

Portage (Kalamazoo County)

5950 Portage Rd, Suite B
Portage, MI 49002
Phone: 269/382-5121

Saginaw (Saginaw County)

178 N. Graham Road
Saginaw, MI 48609
Phone: 989/781-1720

Sault Ste. Marie (Chippewa, Luce & Mackinac counties)

2847 Ashmun Street, M-129
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783
Phone: 906/632-9611

Shelby (Oceana County)

1064 Industrial Park Drive
Shelby, MI 49455
Phone: 231/861-5600

Standish (Arenac County)

4490 W. M-61
Standish, MI 48658
Phone: 989/846-4565

Stephenson (Menominee County)

E. 106 South Drive, P.O. Box 574
Stephenson, MI 49887
Phone: 906/753-6921

Traverse City (Grand Traverse & Leelanau counties)

1501 Cass Street, Ste. A
Traverse City, MI 49684
Phone: 231/941-0951

Mt. Pleasant (Isabella County)

5979 E. Broadway
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858
Phone: 989/772-9152

Owosso (Shiawassee County)

1900 S. Morrice Road
Owosso, MI 48867
Phone: 989/723-8263

Petoskey (Charlevoix & Emmet counties)

2235 E. Mitchell Road
Petoskey, MI 49770
Phone: 231/347-2133

Reed City (Osceola County & eastern half of Lake County)

138 W. Upton, Ste. 2
Reed City, MI 49677
Phone: 231/832-5341

Sandusky (Sanilac County)

50 E. Miller Road
Sandusky, MI 48471
Phone: 810/648-2998

Scottville (Mason County & western half of Lake County)

655 N. Scottville Road
Scottville, MI 49454
Phone: 231/757-3707

St. Johns (Clinton County)

2343 N. Highway US-27
St. Johns, MI 48879
Phone: 989/224-3720

Stanton (Montcalm County)

77 S. State Road
Stanton, MI 48888
Phone: 989/831-4212

Tawas City (Alcona & Iosco counties)

190 W. M-55
Tawas City, MI 48763
Phone: 989/362-3842

West Branch (Ogemaw & Oscoda counties)

240 W. Wright
West Branch, MI 48661
Phone: 989/345-5470

