

	Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP)	Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP)
<i>Lead Agency</i>	Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)	Farm Services Agency (FSA)
<i>Overview</i>	<p>Through EQIP, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) supports agricultural producers interested in conserving and improving natural resources on their farms and ranches (note: forestland is considered agricultural). EQIP participants <u>install or implement structural, vegetative, and management practices</u> – like forest stand improvement – on eligible nonindustrial private forestland. In return, through a contractual agreement, NRCS provides financial cost-share assistance and technical assistance.</p>	<p>The purpose of CFIP is to encourage private and public investment in, and improved management of, California forest lands and resources. This <u>focus is to ensure adequate high quality timber supplies, related employment and other economic benefits</u>, and the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of a productive and stable forest resource system for the benefit of present and future generations.</p> <p>The intent of this law is to ensure that investments in timber stand improvement funded by CFIP will yield future marketable forest products and/or improved natural resources.</p> <p>Cost-shared activities include management planning, site preparation, tree purchase and planting, timber stand improvement, fish and wildlife habitat improvement, and land conservation practices.</p>	<p>The FSA EFRP helps the owners of non-industrial private forests <u>restore forest health damaged by natural disasters</u>. The EFRP does this by authorizing payments (reimbursable funds) to owners of private forests to restore disaster damaged forests.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Eligibility</i></p>	<p>Participants are Required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certify as an individual, entity or joint operation. • Produce or sell an annual minimum of \$1,000 of agricultural products. <i>People applying for EQIP forest land assistance are exempt from this requirement.</i> • Have control of the land for the term of the proposed contract. Renting and leasing land is fine, as long as you can document that you have control of the land for the duration of your contract. • Have an average Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) of less than \$900,000. • Be in good standing with the terms of all other active USDA contracts. <p>Requirements for land: Land enrolled in EQIP needs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be used in forest production or be capable of growing trees. • Be privately owned. Publicly owned lands are eligible only if the land is leased or rented to an eligible agricultural producer. 	<p>Property Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land must be zoned for uses compatible with forest resource management. Land in Agricultural Preserve (Williamson Act) or Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) qualifies. • Properties with conservation easements or zoned for residential and/or commercial development may be eligible, if the easements or zoning place no restriction on forest management practices. • If land is not zoned for timber production, the owner must maintain funded practices for at least ten years. • Property must contain 20 to 5,000 acres with at least 10% tree cover (<i>limitation does not apply to erosion control or fish and wildlife habitat improvement projects</i>). 	<p>Non-industrial private forestland must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have existing tree cover (or had tree cover immediately before the natural disaster occurred and is suitable for growing trees); • Be owned by any nonindustrial private individual, group, association, corporation, or other private legal entity; and • Have sustained at least \$1,000 in damage (<i>however, there is no acreage limit</i>).
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not receive other USDA program payments for the same conservation practice. 		
<i>Process for Developing Required Conservation/Management Plan</i>	A Conservation Plan is developed as a partnership between the landowner and NRCS. For forestry projects, a Forest Management Plan (FMP) is developed. EQIP participants can receive financial assistance for preparation of an FMP.	CAL FIRE approved Management Plan for the entire property prepared by RPF	The USFS (via a national MOU with FSA) is responsible for facilitating the provision of technical assistance to FSA and the landowner. Cal Fire and NRCS may work in partnership with the USFS to provide the required technical assistance.
<i>Cost-Share</i>	EQIP pays a fixed rate to landowners for installing a specific conservation practice. Socially disadvantaged, limited-resource, beginning, and veteran producers are eligible for an increase of approximately 10% in the NRCS payment rates.	Qualifying landowners are reimbursed for forest improvement work of <u>75 percent of the cap cost</u> for allowable forest improvement activities, except where forestland has been damaged by a catastrophic event (e.g., wildfire, flood, wind, insects, etc) qualifying landowners will be reimbursed at <u>90 percent of the cap cost</u> on projects.	Up to <u>75 percent</u> of the cost to implement approved restoration practices
<i>Acreages</i>	NRCS implements EQIP in a size-neutral way. The EQIP statute provides a payment limitation, and the regulation further provides for a contract limitation. For forestland projects, a minimum of one acre of forestland is required, and the 100 feet around the home is not eligible for forestry financial assistance.	Timber-related practices must cover five acres or more. There is no minimum acreage limit for land conservation or habitat improvement projects.	There are no acreage constraints.

<i>Payment Limitation</i>	\$450,000 payment limitation over 10 years for persons and legal entities.	\$100,000 maximum project cost. Contracts can provide reimbursement of up to \$50,000. However, the maximum amount you can be reimbursed in one year is \$30,000.	Limited to \$500,000 per person or legal entity per disaster.
<i>Contract Limitation</i>	Maximum contract length is 5 years. New contracts may be entered into upon successful completion of prior contract.	Maximum contract length is 3 years	The term of the contract is decided by the customer and may be established for 10, 30 or 50 years.
<i>Additional Notes</i>	Each year, NRCS re-evaluates the amount of financial assistance available for each practice in each state. These evaluations consider the current costs for material and labor within the state, and also the fair marketplace compensation for opportunity costs that may arise (e.g. conversion of productive land). If necessary, the amount of financial assistance is adjusted to keep pace with actual costs.	All projects using High Speed Rail Authority funding must include calculated estimates of carbon benefits, tabulated as metric tons of CO ₂ (MTCO ₂ e).	The FSA County Committee is able to approve applications up to \$50,000 while \$50,000 to \$100,000 requires state committee approval. Amounts over \$100,000 require the approval of the national FSA office.