

August 2020



Fire Recovery Assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has multiple agencies that provide financial and/or technical assistance to help farmers, ranchers and rural landowners recover from natural disasters, such as wildfires. Listed below are USDA agencies and an overview of applicable programs. Funding for some programs are contingent on the on the annual enactment of Congressional appropriations legislation.

Farm Service Agency (FSA)

- Emergency Conservation Program (ECP). The Farm Service Agency covers a portion of the cost to replace fence or other conservation practices. This program is contingent on funding available.
- Tree Assistance Program (TAP): Provides financial assistance to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes and vines damaged by natural disasters. Forests are not eligible.
- Emergency Loans – low interest loans to replace farm and ranch buildings and structures, make repairs or replace livestock or feed. Must meet disaster/emergency criteria.
- Livestock Incentives Program (LIP): Compensates producers for livestock death due to natural disasters. Compensation is based on roughly 75% of the national average price of the livestock by type and age. Report losses within 30 days.
- Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP): Compensates producers for a percentage of the pasture or forage loss on private lands due to natural disasters. Payments are subject to a national payment factor. Report losses within 30 days. Complete applications are due by Nov. 1.
- Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP): Compensates producers who suffer pasture or forage loss due to drought or who have federally managed grazing leases but are not allowed to graze the lease because of wildfire. Report losses within 30 days.
- Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP): Provides payments to nonindustrial private forest land owners for emergency measures to restore land damaged by a natural disaster. This program is contingent on funding available.
- Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP): Provides compensation to producers who grow uninsurable crops and have purchased NAP coverage by the crop signup dates.
- For more information, visit <https://www.farmers.gov/recover>
- To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>

Risk Management Agency (RMA)

Risk Management Agency oversees the Federal crop insurance programs. Insureds must have a policy in force with their crop insurance agent to have coverage. This program protects against the loss of their enrolled crops or livestock due to natural disasters such as hail, drought, freezes, floods, fire, insects, disease and wildlife, or may cover the loss of revenue due to a decline in price or other factors for applicable programs.

Insureds must call their crop insurance agent within 72 hours of damage discovery to initiate a claim. The crop insurance company will arrange for a loss adjuster to inspect the crop. Do not destroy evidence that is needed to support the claim without clear direction from the insurance company, preferably in writing.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

- NRCS provides Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) through on-site consultations with rural landowners, farmers, ranchers and non-industrial private forest landowners. The conservation plans that result can be used by the landowner for independent action or can lead to an application for financial assistance programs such as EQIP (see below). NRCS technical assistance also supports Farm Service Agency conservation programs such as ECP (see above).
- Farmers, ranchers and non-industrial private forestland owners can apply for the Catastrophic Fire Recovery EQIP (Environmental Quality Initiative Program) which is to provide immediate resource protection in areas burned by catastrophic fires in the past eighteen months. Priority resource concerns for the Catastrophic Fire Recovery EQIP Initiative on cropland, rangeland and non-industrial private forestland include: immediate soil erosion protection, minimize noxious and invasive plant proliferation, protect water quality, and restore livestock infrastructure necessary for grazing management on Forestland and Rangeland.
- The NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program may be able to provide financial assistance where a fire has created a situation where excessive soil erosion could occur from a rain event creating a threat to life and improved property. General Requirements:
 - Designed to protect what structures are still intact but may be threatened due to soil erosion and barren soil.
 - Eminent threat to life and property.
 - Local sponsor is willing and able to represent the local community.
 - Must be demonstrated that all local financial resources have been utilized.

Rural Development (RD)

- Single Family Housing - Direct low income Home Ownership Loans, Home Ownership Loan Guarantees, and Direct Home Repair loans and grants. Those whose property was destroyed, was severely damaged, or who have been displaced from a rental unit by the fire may receive priority hardship application processing.
- Multi-Family Housing – If a property was destroyed by the fire, Rural Development can issue a priority letter for next available Multi-Family Housing unit to affected residents. This is available only if a disaster is declared.
- Community Facilities – low interest loans for essential community facilities, such as fire equipment, community centers, city vehicles, food banks, day care facilities, etc.
- Water Environmental Programs – low interest loans for water and waste disposal systems and facilities including buildings, equipment, wells and pipe.
- Business & Cooperative Programs - business loans through intermediaries and guaranteed business loans.
- Electric - low interest loans to rural utilities to finance electric infrastructure. Eligible entities would qualify for expedited loan processing.

UC ANR Extension

- In addition to the USDA resources listed above, expertise and assistance on particular subjects (e.g. Re-seeding, Erosion & Flooding, Livestock, Salvage Logging and Reforestation) may be available through local or regional University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) Extension offices. To find contact information for your local county Extension office, or for information on topics of interest, those sites can be accessed at: <https://ucanr.edu/About/Locations/>

USDA Agency Contacts:

Farm Service Agency

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Risk Management Agency - Regional

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Natural Resources Conservation Service

Napa Field Office

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Vacaville Field Office

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Rural Development - State Office

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Or check this link for your local office:

<https://www.farmers.gov/connect>