



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural Resources
Conservation Service



Helping People Help the Land

Massachusetts Training Guide



January 2008

NRCS MASSACHUSETTS TRAINING GUIDE

This Guide is a dynamic document that will be updated as policies and procedures change. It is designed to supplement, not duplicate, existing department and agency guidance. The primary purpose of this guide is to promote understanding of the training program in Massachusetts. If you have any questions about the concepts or principles in this guide, please feel free to contact the Training Officer or any member of the Training Committee. Committee members are listed in Appendix A.

The Guide is to be used as a reference manual for information about Massachusetts' training processes, roles, and responsibilities. It also includes types of training, needs assessments, training opportunities available to NRCS employees, and accountability processes.

It is intended to help supervisors and employees identify and select training that best meets employee training needs and prepare employees for their career objectives.

The guide is presented in a three-ring binder and on the web, to make updating and amending easy, and it is also available on the NRCS Massachusetts website www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov/.

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NRCS MASSACHUSETTS TRAINING GUIDE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The information that follows is provided to familiarize you with the State's Training Program. This guide will help you identify, request, and follow up on needed training.

The guide is a reference that will be updated as policies and processes change. It is designed to supplement, not duplicate, existing department and agency guidance.

Training authorities and policy references are listed in Appendix B. In addition to this document, please rely on your Training Officer and the Training Committee to provide guidance and advice regarding the NRCS Massachusetts Training Program.

The success of the Training Program relies on the efforts of the Training Committee, the Training Officer and the State Administrative Staff, however, the **primary responsibilities lie with the employee and his or her supervisor.**

2.0 NRCS MASSACHUSETTS TRAINING PROGRAM VISION, MISSION AND GOAL

VISION

A highly skilled NRCS Massachusetts workforce that efficiently and effectively puts conservation on the land.

MISSION

To provide Massachusetts employees with needed, timely, sequential, and competency-based training.

GOAL

Establish and maintain a transparent and structured training needs identification process and training delivery program based on discipline and grade level.

3.0 PLANNING FOR TRAINING

3.1 Ability, Skills and Knowledge (ASK)/Proficiency Level Concept

Employee training needs are determined by what both the organization and the employee need to achieve the NRCS mission. The desired level of ability, skill and knowledge (ASK) is used to help determine training needs. ASK levels are also referred to as proficiency levels. Employees' proficiency levels will be defined by the requirements of the employee's position (requirements found in Position Description and Proficiency Models). Proficiency Models are posted to the State Web site under Training. Proficiency levels, beginning and desired, are documented on the EDP.

(Please Note: We have combined the Proficiency Models and the Employee Development Plans for: Soil Scientists, Administration Assistants, and Office Automation Assistants. In the future, we plan on combined Proficiency Models/EDPs for Soil Conservationists and Soil Conservation Technicians (SCTs). In the meantime, Soil Conservationists, SCTs, and Engineers will continue to utilize separate Proficiency Models and EDPs.)

Numerical ratings used to describe ASK/Proficiency levels of employees are:

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|--|
| 1. | Awareness | Has limited knowledge of task; cannot perform it. |
| 2. | Understanding | Has knowledge of basic principles and procedures but can perform task only if assisted in each step. |
| 3. | Perform with Supervision | Can perform the task but requires close supervision and checking of work. |
| 4. | Apply Independently | Can perform independently unless special problems are encountered; only a general check of work is required. |
| 5. | Proficient | Can perform independently; can train others to do the task. |

3.2 **Employee Development Plans (EDP)**

The EDP is a document that reflects an assessment of both agency requirements and individual employee needs. An EDP is a record of the skills, abilities, and competency levels required by the individual employee to serve the mission and functions of the organization.

A good time to develop and/or review an EDP is during performance work plan review or anytime the duties and responsibilities of the position change significantly. An EDP should be considered a multi-year plan, but must be formally reviewed at least once per year and updated as necessary.

Minimally, the EDP should consist of three components:

- **Job requirements** – Skills needed for performance in a particular position and the proficiency level required for satisfactory performance.
- **Competencies** – The employee's present proficiency for identified skills and the steps required to attain the desired proficiency within an estimated time frame.
- **History** – A record of the level of proficiency actually achieved for identified skills.

3.3 **Training Needs Inventory (TNI)**

After reviewing and updating an employees EDP, a TNI is to be completed. The TNI will contain employees top three priority training needs, present and required ASK levels, training method or course, purpose of training and priority order. If course dates and costs are known, that information can also be entered. After entering information on the

TNI form, supervisors and employees are to sign. Supervisors are to send the EDP and TNI to Human Resources.

Training Needs Inventory (TNI) will reflect a maximum of 3 training requests:

- 1 training need ranked as #1: highest priority
- 1 training need ranked as #2: next highest priority
- 1 training need ranked as #3: third highest priority

The MA TNI Form is found in Appendix D.

4.0 TRAINING PHASES

The following is an outline of training phases that occur throughout an individual's career.

Phase	Type of Training	Time Frame	Comments
Introductory	Basic orientation Introductory technical training On-the-job training	Complete within 1 year	Initial EDP provides employee with basic training experiences.
Developmental	Intensive on-the-job training Formal Training	Complete within 4 years	The EDP is updated as new training needs are identified and training is completed.
Advanced	Advanced formal training Specific job assignments	According to needs of employee and current position	The EDP continues to be used in helping the employee improve skills required in his or her current position and to become prepared for positions of greater responsibility.
Specialized	Provide employee with specialized training and experience	According to employee interests and NRCS priorities	As training needs are identified, the EDP is updated to satisfy needs

4.1 Introductory Phase

The introductory training phase includes training objectives that are important early in the employee's career and that will help determine adaptability for a career with NRCS. Productive job assignments commensurate with the knowledge, skills and abilities of the individual are assigned.

Objective of the Introductory Phase – At the end of the Introductory Phase, the employee should fully understand where his or her discipline fits into the total program, and use his or her skills and knowledge productively on the job. The employee should also be able to use technical guides, handbooks, manuals, and bulletins and know the basic requirements of his or her position.

4.2 Developmental Phase

The developmental phase emphasizes current job training, and work assignments that will give the supervisor enough information to indicate confidently the employee's fitness for the work of NRCS. The Developmental Phase should be marked with job assignments that an employee can implement with increased independence. The supervisor evaluates performance and follow-up improvement actions are planned.

Objective of the Developmental Phase - This phase develops greater proficiency in the position for the grade.

4.3 Advanced Phase

In the advanced phase training provide employees with increased competency specific to their particular position.

Objective of the Advanced Phase – This phase develops advanced skills that are regularly required in the employee's position. For example, the EDP for a field employee in a heavy livestock area could include training and experiences in nutrient management, grazing and agricultural waste and nutrient management.

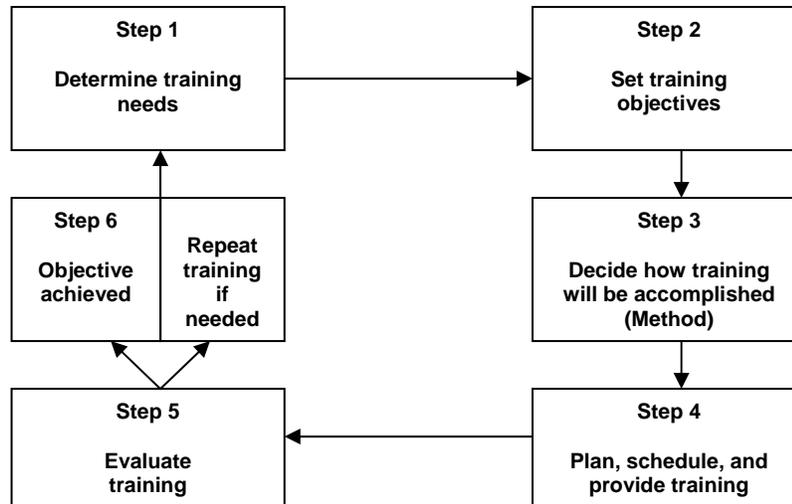
4.4 Specialized Phase

In the specialized phase training and experiences provide the opportunity for employees to develop specialized skills.

Objective of the Specialized Phase – In this phase employees develop specialized skills that are consistent with NRCS priorities. If it is in the best interest of NRCS an employee with background aptitude and/or experience in a specialized area (e.g. grazing or nutrient management) may, with the approval of his or her supervisor, attend specialized training and arrange for job experiences that increase his or her skills beyond those normally required by the position.

5.0 TRAINING MODEL

TRAINING MODEL



6.0 DETERMINING AND RECORDING TRAINING OBJECTIVES AND NEEDS

Supervisors will meet with their employees at least once per year to review and update employees' EDP and TNI.

Supervisors and employees will have identified training needs using the EDP keeping in mind:

- Orientation
- Technical training for current job
- Training for keeping up to date
- Training for greater responsibility
- Executive, management, and supervisory training

Consider:

- Required training for all employees
- Required training for discipline.
- Training needed to do current job at required KSA levels
- Training needed to prepare for different job (cross-training)

6.1 Establishing Training Objectives

Clear training objectives will help supervisors and employees select appropriate training methods and evaluate training. Through discussions, the supervisor and employee must reach an agreement about the training objective, which is recorded in the EDP, so that they both know what the training is supposed to accomplish. Proficiency levels, available in EDPs, are used to set the minimum training objectives for the employee. Supervisors may add to these objectives, as appropriate.

6.2 Defining the Training Objective

The training objective is stated as a goal of what the trainee or employee will know, or be able to do after training. The training objective has three basic elements:

- The task
- The condition under which the task is to be performed
- The standard by which the employee's performance is to be evaluated after training is complete.

Tasks will vary widely. It may be the ability to plan, design or carry out a project or it may be exercising judgment in certain environments and situations.

For example, an employee may be required to locate, design and layout conservation practices (the task), common to the employee's service area (the condition), so that the practices meet criteria for desired proposed conditions and follow Section IV of FOTG (the standard).

6.3 Recording the Training Objective

The training objective is recorded on the employees EDP.

When this process is used, the employee knows what is expected of him or her and the basis for performance evaluation. In the above example, the employee may be expected to increase his or her current ASK level from 2 to 4. That is, from requiring close supervision through each phase of practice planning and installation to planning and installing practices independently.

6.4 Determining Training Needs

Training needs are determined by comparing the employee's current KSA levels with the levels required for the position. If available, use the EDP with proficiency levels. To determine the present KSA level, use some of the following techniques:

- General day-to-day observations
- Discussions
- Analysis of deficiencies of employees work
- Onsite observations while work is in progress
- Performance test
- Written or oral assessment to determine knowledge of information, or situations
- Review of personnel documents:
 - Application form of new employee
 - School transcripts
 - Training received
 - Position Description
 - Performance Work Plan

7.0 IDENTIFYING TRAINING METHODS

The completed TNI contains methods of training requested for an employee to achieve the required proficiency level.

Self development and on-the-job training are the primary methods of NRCS employee development. Supervisors are to encourage employees to pursue self-development opportunities.

Formal training will be provided only when the need cannot be met effectively and economically through self development or OJT. When formal training is required, NEDC courses should be considered. When a training need is shown to be a priority for several employees, development of an in-state training course to address the needs will be considered.

7.1 Training Options

- Self development
- On-the-Job
- Workshop and training conferences
- Formal classroom training courses
- Special training assignments
- On-Line computer based training
- Satellite training
- Self-paced
- Correspondence
- In-State courses developed by Massachusetts NRCS
- University/College courses

7.2 Self-development

Self-development is the primary method of training in NRCS and should be considered and encouraged first.

Self Development means investigating and evaluating one's own knowledge, skills and abilities and taking steps to improve one's own performance.

Training objectives can be achieved through self-development activities like reading, on-line courses, course work at local schools, community work, planned experiences, attending conferences, working with a mentor, and activities related to professional societies.

7.3 On-the-job Training

On-the-job training should be considered if the training objectives cannot be achieved through self-development, the following procedures should be used in carrying out on-the-job training:

- Set clear training objectives.

- Instruct, tell, show, practice, and evaluate. The instruction process requires two-way communication and effort on the part of trainer and trainee. The intensity of instruction should be commensurate with complexity of the job.
- The supervisor and trainer should give the trainee feedback on his or her progress and specifics on how to reach the required level of proficiency.
- Supervisor and employee should evaluate the employee's performance and effectiveness of the instruction by the following questions:
- Was the objective achieved?
- If not, why?
- Repeat training if needed.

7.3.1 The Four Step Training Method for On-The-Job Training (OJT)

Outlined below is a concise, complete, and simple but effective step-by-step guide to instructing the individual employee on the job.

Getting Ready for Instruction

1. Work out a time schedule. Decide how much skill you expect the employee to develop, and how soon.
2. Break down the job. List its principle steps. Pick out the key points.
3. Have everything ready - the right tools, equipment, and materials.
4. Have the work placed properly. Set a good example for the employee.

Step 1 – Preparing the Trainee

1. Put the trainee at ease. Make the trainee as comfortable as possible.
2. Find out what the trainee already knows about the job.
3. Secure interest and attention. The trainee should want to learn the job.
4. Be sure he or she is placed in the best physical position to learn.

Step 2 – Presenting the Job Operation

1. Tell, explain, show, demonstrate, and illustrate.
2. Question carefully and patiently.
3. Be sure the trainee understands each key point.
4. Be sure he or she understands each sub-point and related process.
5. Take up only one point at a time.
6. Follow an orderly sequence.
7. Give the trainee only the amount of instruction that can be mastered. It is unwise to hurry, crowd or confuse the person.
8. Be sure all instruction is clear, concise and complete.
9. Try to make instruction interesting. It makes the learning process easier.
10. Explain how the job fits the overall operation. Show its importance in the scheme of things.

Step 3 – Applying and Trying Out the Instruction

1. Test the trainee by having him or her perform the operation.
2. Have him or her tell you how and why, point, by point.
3. Carefully correct all incorrect or imperfect performance.
4. Be sure they understand what they are doing. Ask questions like, "Why do you do it this way?"

5. Continue until you know they know.
6. Tell them when they are doing well.
7. Tolerate errors during the training period. The trainee will learn from failure.

Step 4 – Following Up on the Training

1. Place the trainee on his or her own resources.
2. Tell the employee to whom they should go for help.
3. Encourage them to ask questions and seek help.
4. Check their performance frequently (let them know how they are doing).
5. Gradually taper off extra coaching.
6. Aim to have the employee work correctly on his or her own.
7. They may still make mistakes. Have the trainee correct them and make sure he or she learns from the errors.
8. Ask them for suggestions on better ways to do the job.

7.4 Group and Other Formal Training

- **Service Center, State or Multi-state Level**

When several employees have similar training objectives, the supervisor, District Conservationist, RC&D Coordinator, Assistant State Conservationist, or State Conservationist may find it advantageous to organize group training. The size of the group may vary widely depending on needs, complexity of the task to be learned, and the geographic location of those needing training. Group training may be given at the service center, state or multi-state level.

- **National Employee Development Center (NEDC) courses**

Training that is repetitive in nature, and has broad geographic application is given through NEDC. The training courses will be conducted either at the training center or in the field on a state or multi-state basis. Participants should be carefully selected to ensure that the course will help the employee achieve the training objectives and that the same objectives could not be achieved at a lower level. (NEDC online course catalog is available at <http://www.nedc.nrcs.usda.gov/catalog/index.html>)

- **Non-NRCS courses (USDA, Interagency, and non-Government)**

Individual employees may benefit from outside training that is not provided by OJT, in-state training, NEDC or Aglearn courses.

A list of links to additional websites containing course catalogs is in Appendix E.

7.5 Mandated Training

There is specific training that all employees must receive, as required by the department or the agency, or that is mandated for a particular position.

Discipline Certifications

- Certifications are required for some disciplines, such as: certified conservation planner, certified nutrient management specialist, certified comprehensive nutrient management planner, certified land treatment specialist, and certified pest management specialist.

National Mandates

- National mandated training includes topics such as civil rights and equal employment opportunity training, IT security, and ethics. Mandated training will be added to an employee's individual learning plan in AgLearn.

State-wide Initiatives

- State-wide initiatives have state-wide impact, for example, cultural resources training and farm bill contracting.
- They are mandated by the State Conservationist (administrative prerogative)

8.0 DOCUMENTING TRAINING NEEDS AND TRAINING METHODS

Proficiency levels, beginning and desired, training objectives, date training is to be completed, proposed trainer or training method, and notes are documented on the employee's EDP.

The TNI will contain an employees top three priority training needs, present and required KSA levels, training method or course, purpose of training and priority order. If course dates and costs are known, that information can also be entered.

Historical records of training received can be provided to supervisors and employees through a request to Human Resources. Records can be accessed directly by through AgLearn and ICAMS/EmpowHR: www.aglearn.usda.gov and <https://icams.usda.gov>.

9.0 STATE TRAINING PLAN

The State Training Plan is developed by the Training Committee and is submitted to the State Conservationist for approval. The training plan contains:

- Employee names
- A prioritized list of requested training and methods for the year.
- Training required for certification and licensing.
- State initiatives and mandated training
- In-state training
- A budget proposal to execute the plan

The first draft training plan will include all three priority training needs of employees and the final plan will include those priority needs that can be addressed within the budget provided by the State Conservationist. The plan also addresses training for NRCS partners, Conservation District conservation planners and Massachusetts Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) Accelerated Conservation Planning Program employees.

The Training Committee generates the plan from information provided in each employee's TNI. The State Training Plan is developed annually, consistent with department and agency policies and priorities, and within budgetary constraints. It is monitored by the Training Officer, who provides feedback to the Training Committee and the State Conservationist.

The final State Conservationist-approved State Training Plan will be issued as a component of the State Business Plan and progress in meeting the plan will be reported at least quarterly by the Training Officer to the State Conservationist.

10.0 REQUESTING AND PROCESSING TRAINING

Following approval of the State Training Plan by the State Conservationist and prior to attending training, employees attending NEDC or in state training are to complete a Training Request Worksheet (Appendix F).

The worksheet contains employee information, a pre-assessment (identifies type of training i.e., mandated or satisfies one or more objectives in the EDP), and training request information. Following completion of training, the original completed worksheet should be sent to Human Resources; the employee and supervisor should retain copies for their records. The worksheet also serves as Travel Authorization approval.

The following is a **new** FY 2008 NRCS training requirement for **external, non NEDC courses**. Prior to attending an external training course (or incurring any expense such as registration fees or airline reservations), you must go to AgLearn and:

- Fill out the automated SF 182 located in AgLearn in the Learning tab: web link <https://aglearn.usda.gov/plateau/user/externallearning/viewExternalLearningRequestAction.do>
- After you have prepared the AgLearn SF 182 and receive all the AgLearn required approvals, you must prepare the FNM 35, Travel Authorization request form.

11.0 NOT ATTENDING SCHEDULED TRAINING

If an employee cannot attend training after requested training has been approved, scheduled and is part of training budget, employees must immediately document, in writing, the reasons for not being able to attend training on the Request for Exception Form (Appendix H). This document is to be provided to the employee's supervisor, the State Conservationist for approval or disapproval, and the State Training Committee.

Human Resources is to be contacted immediately upon the employee's and supervisor's determination that training will not be attended.

12.0 EVALUATING TRAINING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Evaluation of all training is essential in determining if the training was successful in helping employees to attain the training objectives and if improvements are needed in future training efforts.

Training evaluation is the responsibility of the trainee, trainer, supervisor, and Training Committee.

An aid to training evaluation follows:

EVALUATION MODEL

1. REACTION	2. LEARNING
Measure trainee's feelings and opinions about the training. Yields information about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Instruction ▪ Content ▪ Methods ▪ Media ▪ Organization 	Measure principles, facts, skills, and attitudes obtained from training. Involves measuring trainee's achievement of objectives Indicates trainee's competence to perform at end of training.
3. PERFORMANCE	4. RESULTS
Measure individual performance on the job. Entails examining changes in employee's performance as a result of training. Includes evaluating employee's ability to transfer new knowledge/skills to others.	Measures impact of training on organizational goals and objectives. Involves a cost-benefits analysis for determining how the training has increased productivity and improved the quality of service.

Formal training is a worthwhile investment that provides an excellent opportunity to improve program service delivery and to develop the collective and individual skills of employees. After training it is important for supervisors to ascertain whether learning objectives were met and to provide ample opportunity for the employee to reinforce and use the skills and techniques obtained.

Course completion is noted on the employees EDP.

13.0 TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT STEPS & SCHEDULE

Steps

- Supervisors and employees meet.

Deadline

prior to June 1

Review current Position Description and Performance Work Plan.

Discuss current and expected workload priorities with employee.

Discuss employee's future career goals and discuss needed training to prepare for the future.

Review and update Employee Development Plans (EDP) with each employee.

Supervisors complete the Training Needs Inventory (TNI) with Employee.

- Supervisor submits employee EDPs and TNIs to next level Supervisor. June 1
 - Next level Supervisor provides EDPs and TNIs to Human Resources Specialist. June 15
 - Training Officer compiles information in preparation for Training Committee Meeting July 15
 - Training Committee meets. July 30
- Reviews training needs.
- Recommends training to be provided in-state.
- Develops Draft State Training Plan and budget to submit to the STATE CONSERVATIONIST through the Training Officer.
- Training committee develops draft "In-state" Training Catalog. October 1
Upon State Conservationist approval, catalog provided to all employees.
 - Employees register for "In-state" courses.
 - Training Committee works with Instructors to plan and deliver training.

14.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervisors and employees are responsible for seeing that training needs are determined, discussed and recorded.

14.1 **State Conservationist (STC)**

The State Conservationist (STC) has authority over all conservation-oriented activities within the state that are carried out by NRCS.

The STC approves the State Training Plan and budget.

14.2 **Supervisors** are responsible for:

- Identifying training needs and training for their employees.
- Ensuring that every employee is afforded equal opportunity for training without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin or disability.
- Determining the collective and individual needs of their employees consistent with agency and state strategic goals and priorities.
- Developing an Employee Development Plan (EDP) and a Training Needs Inventory (TNI) for each employee they supervise, jointly with the employee.
- Ensuring that their employees are well trained.

- Evaluating employees' performance, identifying areas that need improvement, and areas for career enhancement and growth.
- Encouraging employees to pursue self-development.
- Scheduling work efficiently in order to allow employees the opportunity to complete necessary training.
- Determining the most effective means for employees to demonstrate that learning objectives have been met.
- Helping employees who have been selected for training to understand the training objectives and what is expected of them before, during, and after training. This is to be done through pre-training counseling and post-training discussions in person, by telephone, or, if necessary, in writing.
- Evaluating training.
- Providing a signed copy of each Training Request Worksheet and Pre and Post Training Evaluation/Accountability Worksheet to Human Resources.
- Ensuring the needs of our partners are addressed during the training needs assessment process. Ex: District Conservationist sees that MACD ACPP staff is included in the training needs assessment process.
- Periodically identifying employees to serve on the Training Committee.

It is also a supervisor's responsibility to counsel their employees about:

- Developing their potential for performing official duties.
- Identifying proficiency levels needed by each employee to perform effectively in his/her current position preparing employees for greater responsibility.

14.3 Employees

Employees must have an EDP developed jointly with their supervisor.

Employees are responsible for:

- Developing their abilities by using their own effort and resources as well as the opportunities provided by NRCS.
- Attending training that is scheduled for them.
- Completing any prerequisites prior to scheduled training.
- Informing their supervisor in a timely manner and requesting approval from the STC through the Training Officer if they cannot attend scheduled training.
- Maintaining a historical records of training received (access information from Human Resources Assistant)
- Evaluating training received.
- Seeing that their original signed Employee Development Request Worksheet, that includes post training verification, is retained in their records.

Employees are held accountable for:

- Demonstrating that the learning objectives were met.
- Using their new skills to benefit the government.

Supervisors are to evaluate employees' performance and help them identify areas needing improvement. NRCS encourages employees to participate actively in professional organizations and to write articles for publication. To help employees and supervisors with determining if participation in professional organizations is relevant to the job refer to:

USDA Ethics Guidance 00-1 Participation in Non Federal Organizations

"To assist USDA employees with their efforts to participate officially in non-Federal organizations, USDA offices and component agencies may make available official time and may provide travel funds to: attend subject matter/technical (not administrative) meetings of non-Federal organizations if in the interest of the Department; make presentations at such meetings; partake in training programs related to official duties; and participate in similar activities if in the interest of the Department. Upon a determination that employee participation is in the best interest of the Department, management may approve the use of official time and equipment to author articles for publication in professional journals and/or to prepare for training programs and presentations; "

NRCS General Manual 360-415, Leave

"Volunteer activities: An employee may be granted excused absences for short periods of time to participate in volunteer activities that are:

- Directly related to the Agency's mission
- Officially sponsored or sanctioned by the Agency, e.g., Toys for Tots, Gifts for Senior Citizens, Partnership in Education (Federal) Executive Board projects
- Enhancing to the professional development and/or skills of the employee in his or her current position."

And the following:

"Participation in non-Federal organizations: An employee may be excused from work to participate in non-Federal organizations in cases when the employee's leadership role in an organization reflects well on the Department as a resource of professional expertise and talent. Administrative leave in excess of one (1) hour must be approved by the Deputy Chief for Management or the employee's Regional Conservationist. The Regional Conservationist may not re-delegate this authority. The Regional Conservationist should consult with the Deputy Chief for Management prior to approving more than 24 hours of administrative leave per leave year for any employee except in

instances in which the employee is in a scientific discipline for which a leadership role in such professional organizations is a prerequisite to one's professional advancement."

It is the joint responsibility of the supervisor and employee to assure the employee requests and receives formal training when the need cannot be met effectively and economically through self-development.

NRCS has a policy of granting leave or adjusting tours of duty for employees who want to take special training or to attend colleges or universities for study that will benefit NRCS. Terms must be in writing and approval must be received in writing from the State Conservationist.

14.4 Training Officer

The State Administrative Officer (SAO) is the Massachusetts is the Training Officer. The Training Officer and Human Resources staff provide assistance to line officers and supervisors in planning and carrying out training.

The Training Officer is responsible for:

- Chairing the State Training Committee.
- Implementing the State Training Plan, recommended by the Training Committee and approved by the State Conservationist.
- Reviewing and monitoring the State Training Plan and budget and providing feedback to the in accordance with the Business Plan update schedule.
- Serving as a liaison between the State Conservationist , State Training Committee and the National Employee Development Center (NEDC).
- Providing training and guidance to supervisors and employees in the determination of training needs and ensuring that all employees receive equal opportunity to receive appropriate training.
- Reviewing and incorporating national policies and priorities into the State Training Program.
- Coordinating the annual state training needs assessment process.
- Receiving all employees EDPs and TNIs from employee's supervisors.
- Processing requests for training and applications for special training programs.
- Compiling and preparing lists of all Training Needs by employee and discipline for presentation to the Training Committee.
- Developing and implementing a tracking system for all forms of accomplished training.
- Providing leadership in the formulation of state training plans.
- Providing overall leadership for in-state training programs (scheduling, coordinating and evaluating).
- Notifying employees and supervisors of approved training.

- Providing quality assurance for training processes and assuring that employees receive the mandated minimum training as established through policy.
- Conducting and documenting spot checks of training program . Making recommendations for process improvements to the State Conservationist and Training Committee.
- Providing National Headquarters with requested training reporting data.
- Informing State Conservationist and staff about courses and development programs.

14.5 Training Committee

The State Conservationist appoints Training Committee members. The Training Committee is chaired by the Training Officer. The Assistant State Conservationist for Operations will be a permanent member of the Training Committee.

The committee will include a diversity of employees representing a cross-section of disciplines, grade levels, and geographic locations and include at a minimum a District Conservationist, RC&D Coordinator, Engineer, Soil Scientist, Soil Conservationist or Natural Resource Specialist, women and minorities. Members represent the needs of their discipline and/or employees in their geographic region.

The Massachusetts Association of Conservation Districts' (MACD) Accelerated Conservation Planning Program (ACPP) and Massachusetts conservation district with conservation planning technical staff may each provide a liaison to the Training Committee. Liaison's may provide input into their program staff training needs and provide ideas and assistance with planning and implementing in-state training.

The appropriate Human Resources staff will be designated to provide support to the committee and administer specific training functions.

The Training Committee is responsible for:

- Serving at the behest of the State Conservationist.
- Providing leadership in the development of a proposed State Training Plan and budget and the implementation of the State Training Plan upon approval by the State Conservationist.
- Conducting the annual training needs assessment process.
- Providing guidance and assistance to supervisors and employees during the annual needs assessment process and at other times as requested.
- **Conducting a first meeting** no later than July 15 of each year.
 - Reviews TNI data from supervisors (listings provided to the Committee by the Training Officer) in order to establish the training budget for the upcoming Fiscal Year.
 - Analyzes annual training requests.
 - Analyzes special issues concerning training and making recommendations to the State Conservationist.

- Identifies subject areas of high priority, that have been identified by several employees/supervisors as needed, and that can be addressed through in-state training for the upcoming fiscal year.
- Develops the Draft Annual State Training Plan and associated budget.
Plan A: Includes all 3 training requests and methods of training with associated budget. The plan reflects to total annual training needs in the state and budget needed to address requests.

Plan B: Reflects the Training requests that can be addressed with State Conservationist's Training budget. If the State Conservationist training budget is lower than what is needed to address all training requests, the #3 priority training requests are eliminated. If the budget is still not achieved, the #2 priority requests are eliminated. The goal is to address all #1 priority requests for training at a minimum.
- Compiles instate course catalog. Providing to Training Officer and State Conservationist
- Works with Training Officer and Public Affairs Specialist to deliver catalog to employees no later than October 1 of each Fiscal Year.
- Assists Training Officer with course delivery and follow-up.
- **Meeting a second time**, no later than February of each year, to evaluate the effectiveness of the training process and the implementation of the State Training Plan.
 - Training Committee prepares findings and recommendations and provides them to the State Conservationist through the Training Officer.