

10 Minute Supervisor Trainings



February 2025

Annual Planning

Updating Annual Plan of Work and Budgets for Conservation Districts

Purpose:

The Annual Plan of Work and the Annual Budget work together to help conservation districts stay on track with solving natural resource problems from their Long-Range Plan. The plan sets goals and priorities, while the budget shows how money will be used to meet those goals. Districts must submit their plans and budgets to their fiscal court. Most fiscal courts want them by April 1, but some have requested earlier dates. Connecting the plan and budget helps districts stay focused, use resources wisely, and meet state rules.

Steps to Create or Update the Annual Plan of Work:

Form a Workgroup:

- ✓ Include people with different skills and ideas. This can include board members, district staff, conservationists, teachers, farmers, and community leaders. A diverse team can help identify current needs, suggest new programs, and build partnerships.
- ✓ Choose a Format:
- ✓ Committee Format: Assign tasks to specific people or groups.
- ✓ Monthly Format: Assign tasks to dates, matching monthly board meetings.

Match District Needs:

- Assign tasks to a month or a group to solve problems identified in the Long-Range Plan.
- Updating the Plan:
- Update the plan every year to:
- Remove projects that didn't work or aren't needed.
- Add new partnerships or programs.
- Plan more time for bigger projects.
- Adjust for changes in local needs.
- Review and Submit the Plan:

Reviewing:

- Monthly plans should be reviewed every month.
- Committee plans need regular check-ins.

Submitting:

Submit the plan to the Division of Conservation by June 30th, as required by law (KRS 262.097).

Annual Planning (continued)

Quarterly Checks:

Check every three months to ensure tasks are getting done and that they match the Long-Range Plan's goals.

Key Points:

- Updates don't need to be sent to the Division of Conservation—they are for internal use.
- A flexible plan allows the district to add new ideas and stay on track with priorities.
- Keeping the plan and budget in sync helps Conservation Districts achieve their goals effectively.

Why the Plan is Important:

The plan and budget are connected. You need a completed plan to secure funding. Starting with the budget first won't work.

How to Create or Update an Annual Budget

1. Gather Important Information:
 - A. Estimate how much money will be left in all accounts by July 1.
 - B. Review last year's Annual Financial Report, the current budget, and the Annual Plan of Work.
 - C. Note changes in income or expenses.
1. Form a Budget Committee:
 - * Include the treasurer, board members, and maybe a field representative.
 - * Work with the administrative secretary to gather data like account balances and expenses.
6. Use the Standard Budget Form:
 - * Follow the Division of Conservation's form, using the required codes to categorize income and expenses.
 - * Align the budget with district programs and goals.
7. Review Programs:
 - * Cut programs that don't work and focus on local conservation needs.
 - * Improve outreach and education to serve urban and rural communities.

Submitting and Amending the Budget:

- Most fiscal courts want budgets to be submitted by April 1, but some may have an earlier deadline. The board must approve the budget before filing it with the fiscal court. If the court rejects it, they must explain why so it can be fixed and submitted by July 1.
- The budget is due to the Division of Conservation by June 30.
- If a budget is late, districts face a 25% penalty on Direct Aid.
- Budgets should be reviewed every three months and updated as needed. All updates must be approved in board meetings. Spending money not listed in the approved budget is against the law.

Helpful Tips:

- Explain the budget to judges and magistrates, especially if asking for more funds or a tax increase.
- Districts can create budgets for all accounts but only need to submit one. Avoid showing a \$0 balance every year, as this can drain funds over time.

Staying Transparent:

- Districts don't need to publish budgets in newspapers but must post them on the Department for Local Government (DLG) website by **July 15**. Public access to financial records must be provided.
- Failing to submit or update budgets on time can result in a 25% Direct Aid penalty. Regular reviews and updates help districts stay compliant.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you feel it is necessary to complete the annual plan of work before you complete the budget?
1. What key components make up a good working budget?
2. Why does the district need to continually review their budget?
3. What could be the importance of presenting your district's budget to the fiscal court? What issues could you foresee the fiscal court having with your budget?

