

10 Minute Supervisor Trainings



February 2023

State Cost Share Scoring Criteria

As the Kentucky State Cost Share Program (KSCS) was being redesigned approximately 5-6 years ago, the primary objectives were to make the program easier to navigate and to make transparency a priority. This was especially the focus regarding the scoring and approval of the applications submitted.

In [416 KAR 1:010 Section 7](#), there is a basic outline of how to prioritize applications during the scoring/approval process. During the above referenced redesign phase, this basic prioritization was considered, and a new scoring system was adopted by the Soil & Water Conservation Commission based on recommendations from DOC.

The basis of this new scoring system is relatively simple. Taking into consideration the criteria for scoring in the regulation, each individual practice was given a point assignment based on the impact on resource conservation. The application score is determined by averaging between the practices and is calculated by our online system. This is the overwhelming majority of the point total for each application.

2022 State Cost Share Ranking Priority List

2022 Ranking Priority of Conservation Practice Components in the Kentucky State Cost Share Program

Practice priority is based on resource conservation criteria that is outlined in 416 KAR 1:010

High Priority Practices:

316 Animal Mortality Facility
317 Composting Facility
102 Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP)
382 Fence (To remove livestock from stream, sinkhole, or pond)
393 Filter Strip
512 Forage and Biomass Planting (converting cropland to hay/pasture)
410 Grade Stabilization Structure
412 Grassed Waterway
561 Heavy Use Area (livestock feeding pads)
391 Riparian Forest Buffer
390 Riparian Herbaceous Cover
558 Roof Runoff Structure
367 Roofs and Covers
578 Stream Crossing (Livestock)
575 Trails and Walkways
612 Tree and Shrub Establishment
635 Vegetative Treatment Area
313 Waste Storage Facility
634 Waste Transfer
359 Waste Treatment Lagoon
614 Water Facility (remove livestock from stream)

Medium Priority Practices:

342 Critical Area
340 Cover Crop
362 Diversion
386 Field Border
516 Livestock Pipeline
484 Mulching
104 Nutrient Management Plan (fertilizer only)
590 Nutrient Management- Manure Application
329 Residue and Tillage Management
574 Spring Development
578 Stream Crossing (Equipment)
600 Terrace
638 Water and Sediment Control Basin

Low Priority Practices:

382 Fence (cross fencing pasture or to protect forestland)
561 Heavy Use Area (gate openings, waterway crossings)
590 Nutrient Management (Fertilizer Application)
378 Pond
606 Subsurface Drain
620 Underground Outlet
614 Water Facility (Ramp in Pond)
512 Forage and Biomass Planting (Pasture Renovation)
642 Water Well



Additionally, when reviewing the regulation, there are other items listed for consideration. With the new online application system in eForms, the application reflects if an applicant is part of an Agricultural District, and the GPS coordinates entered indicate if they are located within a state Priority Watershed, both of which receive additional points toward the application total. For livestock practices, there is also a minor point adjustment for the number of livestock being addressed so that we properly address the most urgent resource concerns. This consideration does have a cap so that those really large operations do not automatically outcompete smaller ones. **All applications are in competition for approval on a statewide basis**, i.e., there is one list for the state, and the scoring is done from that one list. There is no consideration on the number of approvals or funding per county, etc. The Practice Ranking Priority List on the previous page will assist field staff determine the likelihood of approval, and possibility of advising the local producers to apply for higher priority practices in conjunction with others.

After the application deadline has passed, DOC staff pulls the list from eForms, and begins the process of approvals. First, the list is cleaned up (i.e., removal of duplicates, missing information, etc.). Then, the cutoff score for approval is calculated. *This is a moving target from year to year.* There are two primary factors that affect that score cutoff: the amount of funding allocated for that funding year and how many other applications there are in the state/what practice distribution applied for on those applications consists of. After this list is completed by DOC staff, the final list is sent to the Commission for consideration and final approval.

From the description above, this may answer some common questions on approvals from year to year. For example, a practice widely approved in one year may not be approved the next because one of the factors above changed. Maybe there is less funding available, and the cutoff score is simply higher. Or maybe more people across the state apply for higher priority practices from one year to the next, again raising that average overall cutoff score.





In conclusion, from the previous information provided, one example that occurred in recent years that really made some question the scoring process. The below example will use a common practice, the scores and actual practice are made up for ease of explanation.

Example: Predominantly in West Kentucky with large scale row cropping, many applications are for a single practice with no other variables. In this example, we will use Cover Crop (340). Let's say that a county has 30 applications and 24 are solely for Cover Crop. All of those applications will have the same score. We will assign a score of 50 for this example for the Cover Crop practice. In the previous funding year, the cutoff score for the state was 49. So, with all being the same, at least 80% of the applications for this county were approved last year. But in the following year, we have less funding available to distribute. In addition, more applicants apply for livestock waste management practices across the state. So, when matching the amount of funding with the score cutoff on the list, that approval score jumps up a few points to 52. Now, just a year later, this same county that had 80% of their applications approved the previous year, may drop to having 20% the following year. This had nothing to do with county allocations, how much they received previously, etc. It was simply a slight change in the overall score required during that year to get approval, and the application pattern in that county.

