



## **Improving Customer Experience with Federal Services**

**High Impact Service Provider Annual CX Action Plan**

**Natural Resources Conservation Service**

*June 26, 2019*



## HISP Annual Maturity Self-Assessment Summary

### Measurement: 3 / 6

Please give a 2-3 sentence summary of your efforts (add FSA Paragraph):

NRCS is working with our FPAC Customer Experience (CX) partners to deploy a nation-wide representative producer survey as required by A-11; and an Internal Customer Survey, which will also have information from our field staff related to CX. In addition, FPAC is implementing qualitative means and channels to inform measurement such as an enterprise-wide CX Steering Committee, a Voice of the Customer (VOC) tool, and as funds allow, limited qualitative field research.

What are you most proud of?

NRCS has focused on rapid maturation of CX in the way it does business, and has been able to make significant strides to date because of supportive senior leadership.

What nascent / ongoing activities do you hope to grow?

Our activities currently in place will be shared with other agencies within FPAC and in turn we learn from the efforts of other FPAC and USDA agencies.

What's blocking you from initiating / making / fully implementing changes?

Competing priorities which include implementing the Farm Bill in a timely manner, while at the same time making sure we update or design our programs to have better means to measure the customer experience.

What else would you like to share?

### Governance: 4 / 6

Please give a 2-3 sentence summary of your efforts:

NRCS has utilized it's NRCS of the Future Initiative to provide a prioritization framework to proactively evaluate improvement. The Governance Board meets periodically to approve project plans and report. All FPAC agencies are coming together with a governance structure that includes biweekly committees, regular touchpoint discussions and approval processes while also retaining agency independence of prioritization and implementation. In addition, as we improve efficiencies of administrative staff functions we are ensuring that these roles and responsibilities are being defined and filled.

What are you most proud of?

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What else would you like to share?





## Organization & Culture: 3 / 6

Please give a 2-3 sentence summary of your efforts:

NRCS is assessing the individual needs of those we serve. NRCS will expand our strategic partnerships with both core conservation partners and FPAC agencies to maximize opportunities for our nation's farmers, ranchers, and private foresters.

What are you most proud of?

NRCS has worked diligently to ensure the successful implementation and integration of NRCS of the Future (NOTF) projects into daily operations. In an effort to expand the employee engagement for NRCS of the Future, the Agency has completed user testing for the adoption of new tools and processes that will improve the program delivery for the 2018 Farm Bill.

What nascent / ongoing activities do you hope to grow?

Development of a customer satisfaction response process to provide a way for customers to submit feedback about their experience. Increased engagement with staff by leadership through digital communications and in person meetings.

What's blocking you from initiating / making / fully implementing changes?

Competing priorities which include implementing the Farm Bill in a timely manner, while at the same time making sure we update or design our programs to have better means to measure the customer experience.

What else would you like to share?

## Customer Research: 3 / 6

Please give a 2-3 sentence summary of your efforts:

NRCS has completed interviews, employee/customer surveys and eight listening sessions where over 1,035 farmers, ranchers, foresters, conservation partners and employees alike participated. The information has been used as the foundation to address the customers needs for faster, friendlier and more effective assistance.

What are you most proud of?

The Agency continues to capture and assess the customers needs through the locally led process. As a result of the feedback received for expansion of tools, the SoilWebb 2.0 app is slated for release in June 2019, with the internal tools deployed in October 2019.

What nascent / ongoing activities do you hope to grow?

NRCS is working to expand technology and tools that will engage our customers (internal and external alike) and provide for real time feedback, engagement and support. Additionally, NRCS hosts in person stakeholder meetings to solicit feedback from external stakeholders.

What's blocking you from initiating / making / fully implementing changes?

Competing priorities which include implementing the Farm Bill in a timely manner, while at the same time making sure we update or design our programs to have better means to measure the customer experience.

What else would you like to share?





## Service Design: 3 / 6

Please give a 2-3 sentence summary of your efforts:

NRCS is working towards the deployment of the new tools that have been developed to improve the internal processes for the programmatic constraints captured within the internal surveys, listening sessions and general feedback received from customers. In addition, NRCS will develop tools, techniques, and processes used by our field conservationists as they work with clients to develop and implement conservation plans that address natural resource concerns.

What are you most proud of?

NRCS has developed an innovations VTC series to share State developed tools and technology to determine if the tool should be made available on a national level. The first success was a virtual VTC 2 day review and analysis of 13 similar tools that resulted in one improved Highly Erodible Land (HEL) Determination Tool for field employees. The tool was developed in six months rather than the typical 10 years. The tool results in greater product consistency and will save 2.5 hours per determination and up to 53 staff years (60,000 HEL determinations) annually. It improves customer service by improving response time and quality for customers.

What nascent / ongoing activities do you hope to grow?

The intent is to expand the Data library on tools developed and post the information on an internal NRCS site.

What's blocking you from initiating / making / fully implementing changes?

What else would you like to share?

## Areas of Focus

Reflecting upon our 2019 CX Maturity Self-Assessment, our HISP has decided to focus on raising our maturity in the following areas in FY19/FY20:

- Measurement
- Governance
- Organization & Culture
- Customer Research
- Service Design





## FY 2019 / 2020 CX Improvement Actions

Describe a use case where a typical customer of your program faced challenge(s) during a service experience. This case should relate to one of your organization's Focus Areas for the remainder of FY19 and through FY20.

### Example HISP Customer Profile

Our primary customers are farmers, ranchers, foresters, Tribes and internal employees. Customers' goals are to optimize their resources by improving land productivity through implementation of prescribed conservation practices on the landscape. A typical customer is a landowner or farmer with conservation resource concerns; these concerns could range from runoff and erosion issues, irrigation needs, to seeking assistance with developing livestock management practices to improve soil health. Customers range from new and beginning farmers to experienced producers seeking assistance with resource concerns. A typical customer is seeking both technical assistance and financial assistance with implementing or installing a practice.

### Customer Needs + Frustrations

Many NRCS activities including environmental or Highly Erodible Land and Wetland determinations. There is a substantial workload involved in the determination process, and in periods of peak workload, determinations are delayed, preventing producers from performing needed field maintenance. Producers do not always understand the process and actions involved in the determination process, which adds frustration when determinations are not immediate. The major challenge is the amount of paperwork involved within the application and planning process for NRCS programs. This has created challenges with the producers understanding the purpose and intent for the required documentation. Additionally, producers do not always understand the ranking system that is used to evaluate their applications. It can be difficult for both the customer and the employee to understand the competing challenges.

### HISP Implementation Challenge(s)

The remainder of FY19 and FY20 will be busy with implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill. Agency staff, budget, and time resources will have to be shared among competing priorities.

### Stats

The data was compiled from the Agency Listening sessions where over 1,035 farmers, ranchers, foresters, conservation partners and employees alike participated and provided feedback.

## Action 1

### Focus Area: Service Design

#### Goal to be accomplished by September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021:

Creation of a suite of materials that provides documentation and materials outlining the scope and work of the NRCS of the Future Initiative including timelines, project impacts, decision processes and lessons learned.

#### Critical Activities and Milestones:

- Adoption of NRCS Plan – June 30, 2019
- Approval of 11 projects by the NRCS Governance Board July 2019
- Monthly meetings with NRCS and OXIP for the Journey Mapping – August 2019
- Completion of Documentation/Educational Materials– January 2020

#### Other Notes:

NRCS will work with the OXIP for this request.

