

## Additional Resources

### NRCS' eDIRECTIVES:

Manuals, Title 210 Engineering  
[directives.sc.egov.usda.gov](http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov)

### NRCS' MINNESOTA SUPPLEMENT NATIONAL ENGINEERING MANUAL POLICY:

[nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mn/technical/engineering/nrcs142p2\\_023723/](http://nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mn/technical/engineering/nrcs142p2_023723/)

### BWSR'S JAA POLICIES, FAQ'S:

[bwsr.state.mn.us/JAA](http://bwsr.state.mn.us/JAA)

## NRCS Area Boundaries



## The Collaborators

The Technical Training and Certification Program is a collaboration among the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts, the Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. It's designed to efficiently provide training to develop and maintain a highly trained, technically skilled workforce of natural resource professionals capable of meeting Minnesota's conservation delivery needs.

The collaboration establishes a renewed commitment and partnership for technical training in Minnesota. The program is committed to providing resources and leadership to achieve:

- A streamlined, coordinated approach to assessing needs and delivering training
- More opportunities to obtain Job Approval Authority for conservation practices

### DETAILS, CONTACTS:

Visit [bwsr.state.mn.us](http://bwsr.state.mn.us), click on "Operational Resources," find the Technical Training and Certification Program under the Training tab.



# JAA



# Job Approval Authority

What is it?  
How do I get it?  
Why do I need it?

# JAA: What & Why

The Job Approval Authority (JAA) process aims to ensure the competency of NRCS and SWCD employees who plan, design and oversee installation of some of the 180 conservation practices outlined in the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG).

## JAA IS ESSENTIAL TO:

- Provide quality control and assurance
- Establish accountability
- Ensure competent, functional conservation practice planning, design and installation
- Maintain credibility

**JOB CLASSES, STAGES:** JAA is based on individual training, experience and demonstrated competence for specific job classes and stages of conservation practices. Those include investigation/planning, design and construction/application.

**ASSIGNED LIMITS:** Each practice is assigned one or more controlling factors, typically a measure of complexity and size. Job classes installed at the county level have controlling factors on a scale of 1-5. JAA assigns limits to the job classes a person is authorized to approve. JAA is not allowed for practices so complex they are considered professional engineering. NRCS coordinates with the Minnesota Board of Engineering, Architecture, Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture, Geoscience and Interior Design regarding the JAA system.

## SOME REQUIRE JAA & PROFESSIONAL LICENSE:

BWSR adopted the NRCS Job Approval Authority system and Professional Engineer licensure as part of its Technical Quality Assurance system for the state programs it administers. Some NRCS projects require both Professional Engineer licensure and JAA.

# How Do I Get JAA?

## GAINING INITIAL TRAINING

- Work with a supervisor to prioritize resource concerns, skills and practices.
- Complete training in those skills and practices.

## INITIAL TRAINING'S DONE; NOW WHAT?

- Under direct supervision of someone with JAA, work on inventory and evaluation, design and installation of practices.
- Gain the ability to function independently and demonstrate technical competence. The supervisor then asks the NRCS Area Engineer/Area Resource Conservationist to establish or update JAA status.
- Receive assigned Job Approval Authority. It's based on the JAA review, and factors in consultation with the employee's supervisor, mentor(s), and staff familiar with the employee's work.
- Review and agree with the JAA ethics statement.
- Make sure the supervisor concurs with the JAA assignment.

## THREE-YEAR REVIEW

- At least once every three years, undergo a JAA Quality Assurance Review by NRCS. A review may result in an increase, modification or decrease in Job Approval Authority.



# Required Components

Job Approval Authority for engineering and ecological sciences JAA have the same key components and associated ethics requirement.

## TRAINING

Formal or informal, training can be a combination of online and/or classroom sessions, informal one-on-one work, or on-the-job training. While practice-specific, it also may require broader knowledge, skills and abilities such as conservation planning, agronomy, hydrology, hydraulics, soils, soil mechanics, water quality and vegetation.

## EXPERIENCE

Much like an apprenticeship, this phase involves working under the **direct** technical supervision of someone with the applicable JAA. Experience includes direct technical assistance in any combination of inventory and evaluation, practice design and practice application. The trainer can provide technical assistance, review, and sign-off for the applicable practice(s). Sometimes referred to as OJT (on-the-job training), it includes mentoring.

## DEMONSTRATED COMPETENCE

The employee must demonstrate the ability to work independently on the applicable practice(s). The process involves a review of project documents and case files; documented training; and a general examination of resource and reference materials, tools and procedural knowledge. The outcome of the review is based on how independently the employee can work and how many corrections are required. The JAA level assigned is based on the review, plus consultation with the employee, the employee's supervisor, mentor(s), and others as applicable.