



United States Department of Agriculture



Using Aglearn to track Conservation Planning Certification



Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

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Required by policy



Departmental Regulation (DR 3620-001): [USDA AgLearn Services, Courseware, and Content](#)

- **6. POLICY**

- a. AgLearn is the official system of record for training and contains training history of USDA employees, contractors, partners, political appointees, volunteers, affiliates, students, and customers.

General Manual Title 180 part 409

- **409.9 Criteria to Achieve an NRCS Conservation Planner Role Designation**

- E. Maintaining Conservation Planner Role Designations
 - (8) Recordkeeping
 - (i) Planners are responsible for maintaining their own records and for providing documentation that contact-hour requirements needed for re-designation are met during the 3-year designation period. In addition, planners should record the details of the training in NRCS's official learning management system (AgLearn). Please see the employee guide for additional information.
 - (ii) Planners should consult their supervisor or training officer for additional information and assistance.





Training records in Aglearn

- **The Conservation Planner Core Competencies and Course Requirements for Level I, III and IV Conservation Planner Designations as outlined in GM 180 409.15 Exhibit 3 are listed and tracked in Aglearn**
 - Aglearn automatically adds and tracks lower-level requirements that are needed at the higher level (i.e., when Level III is requested, the required courses for Level I are included).





Instructions for adding the planner program and launching courses

Note that the Conservation Planner Certifications are found as Programs:

AgLearn

The screenshot shows the AgLearn website interface. At the top, a dark navigation bar contains the following items: Home, Dashboard, Record of Learning, My IDP – FY2021, Team, Reports, Find Learning (highlighted in green), and Ask AgLearn Now (Help). A dropdown menu is open under 'Find Learning', listing 'Courses', 'Programs' (highlighted in yellow), and 'Certifications'. Below the navigation bar, the page is divided into sections. On the left, a 'QUICK LINKS' box lists various helpful links. In the center, a 'WELCOME TO AGLEARN' banner features a 'PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK' announcement for May 2-8, 2021, with a 'New' badge. To the right, there are promotional tiles for 'Linked In Learning' and 'Percipio - Skillsoft'.

Natural Resources Conservation Service





Instructions for adding the planner program and launching courses

You can search the programs for planner:

The screenshot shows the AgLearn user interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Find Learning' highlighted. Below it, a search bar is used to find 'planner' programs. The search results show two entries: 'Level I Conservation Planner' and 'Level III Certified Conservation Planner'. The 'Level I Conservation Planner' entry is highlighted with a yellow circle. The search results include a list of requirements and instructions for launching courses.

Search programs: 4 records shown

To self-assign a program, please access it through either your **Assignment Plan** or your **IDP** by opening the Programs tab and selecting the "Add programs" button.

Search by

Program Name

Program Short Name

Show more...

Search by

Program Name	Program Summary
<p>Level I Conservation Planner</p>	<p>Level I Conservation Planner role designation requirements based on 180-409-GM, 1st Ed., Amend. 45, Oct 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Level I conservation planner is not a certified conservation planner and is not authorized to certify conservation plans as indicated in 409.5 F (1). The Level I conservation planner role may lead to other planner roles or be an end point for those who do not need the more advanced training and are not required to review and approve other planner's work. The Level I conservation planner may determine client objectives, conduct resource inventories, run assessment tools, and develop alternative solutions to address resource concerns for planning areas. The Level I conservation planner's work must be reviewed and approved by a Level III or IV conservation planner prior to the final discussion of alternatives with the client. This includes the completed environmental evaluation worksheet (e.g. NRCS-CPA-52). A Level III or IV conservation planner must sign as the certified planner on conservation plans and sign the second (NRCS) signature line in block O on the NRCS-CPA-52 for plans developed by Level I conservation planners. (Level I conservation planners may sign block O of the NRCS-CPA-52 on the first line.) For NRCS employees with conservation planning being a major duty included in their position description, State conservationists may set time periods to achieve the Level I conservation planner role (e.g., a soil conservationist will achieve the Level I conservation planner role within 12 months of their effective date of employment in that position). Complete the core competency requirements for Level I conservation planner in 409.15 Exhibit 3 to achieve the Level I planner designation. National proficiency exams may be utilized to meet certain course requirements for the Level I conservation planner. See 409.16 Exhibit 4 for list of approved national proficiency exams. <p>Instructions for launching courses: First add this program to one of your learning plans. To do so, click on "Dashboard" at the top of your screen, then "Learning Plans" under "My Learning," and then click on "Programs" under "My IDP" or "Assignment Plan." Click to "Add Program," and then click the "Search" tab. Type in the title of the program (Level I Conservation Planner) and click "Search." Click on the program and click "Save." After completing these steps, you will be able to launch content from the Programs tab of your learning plan or from this page: https://aglearn.usda.gov/totara/program/view.php?id=198.</p>
<p>Level III Certified Conservation Planner</p>	<p>This program documents training requirements for Level III Certified Conservation Planners based on 180-409-GM, 1st Ed., Amend. 45, Oct 2020.</p> <p>Level III Certified Conservation Planners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Level III certified conservation planner designation is the primary role for those regularly delivering conservation planning assistance to clients. The Level III certified conservation planner may conduct all steps of the conservation planning process without supervision for progressive and resource management system level plans for all land uses and resource concerns common to their work area. Level III certified conservation planners may approve or disapprove Level I conservation planners' work and sign conservation plans to certify the plan meets client objectives and meets applicable NRCS policy, procedures, and conservation practice standards. Level III certified conservation planners may sign the NRCS-CPA-52, "Environmental Evaluation Worksheet," as the planners in block O, regardless of whether or not they are the responsible Federal official who signs in block S. For NRCS employees with conservation planning being a major duty included in their position description, the State conservationist may set time periods to achieve the Level III certified conservation planner role (e.g., a soil conservationist will achieve the Level III certified planner role within 2 years of their effective date of employment in that position). Complete the required training for Level I conservation planner and the core competency requirements for Level III in 409.15 to achieve the Level III Certified Conservation Planner designation. National proficiency exams may be utilized to meet certain course requirements for the Level III certified conservation planner. See 409.16 for list of approved national proficiency exams. <p>Instructions for launching courses: First add this program to one of your learning plans. To do so, click on "Dashboard" at the top of your screen, then "Learning Plans" under "My Learning," and then click on "Programs" under "My IDP" or "Assignment Plan." Click "Add Program," and then click the "Search" tab. Type in the title of the program (Level III Certified Conservation Planner) and click "Search." Click on the program and click "Save." After completing these steps, you will be able to launch content from the Programs tab of your learning plan or from this page: https://aglearn.usda.gov/totara/program/view.php?id=199.</p>
<p>Level IV</p>	<p>This program documents training requirements for Level IV Certified Conservation Planner based on 180-409-GM, 1st Ed., Amend. 45, Oct 2020.</p>



Instructions for adding the planner program and launching courses

Then note the instructions for launching courses:

AgLearn



[Dashboard](#) /
 [Record of Learning](#) /
 [My IDP – FY2021](#) /
 [Team](#) /
 [Reports](#) /
 [Find Learning](#) /
 [Ask AgLearn Now \(Help\)](#)

[Dashboard](#) /
 [Find Programs](#) /
 [USDA](#) /
 [FPAC](#) /
 [NRCS](#) /
 [NRCS-NHQ](#) /
 [Level III Certified Conservation Planner](#)

Level III Certified Conservation Planner

Date assigned: May 06, 2021

Due date: No due date set

Progress:

This program documents training requirements for Level III Certified Conservation Planners based on 180-409-GM, 1st Ed., Amend. 45, Oct 2020.

Level III Certified Conservation Planners:

- The Level III certified conservation planner designation is the primary role for those regularly delivering conservation planning assistance to clients.
- The Level III certified conservation planner may conduct all steps of the conservation planning process without supervision for progressive and resource management system level plans for all land uses and resource concerns common to their work area.
- Level III certified conservation planners may approve or disapprove Level I conservation planners' work and sign conservation plans to certify the plan meets client objectives and meets applicable NRCS policy, procedures, and conservation practice standards.
- Level III certified conservation planners may sign the NRCS-CPA-52, "Environmental Evaluation Worksheet," as the planners in block O, regardless of whether or not they are the responsible Federal official who signs in block S.
- For NRCS employees with conservation planning being a major duty included in their position description, the State conservationist may set time periods to achieve the Level III certified conservation planner role (e.g., a soil conservationist will achieve the Level III certified planner role within 2 years of their effective date of employment in that position).
- Complete the required training for Level I conservation planner and the core competency requirements for Level III in 409.15 to achieve the Level III Certified Conservation Planner designation.
- National proficiency exams may be utilized to meet certain course requirements for the Level III certified conservation planner. See 409.16 for list of approved national proficiency exams.

Instructions for launching courses: First add this program to one of your learning plans. To do so, click on "Dashboard" at the top of your screen, then "Learning Plans" under "My Learning," and then click on "Programs" under "My IDP" or "Assignment Plan." Click "Add Program," and then click the "Search" tab. Type in the title of the program (Level III Certified Conservation Planner) and click "Search." Click on the program and click "Save." After completing these steps, you will be able to launch content from the Programs tab of your learning plan or from this page: <https://aglearn.usda.gov/totara/program/view.php?id=199>.

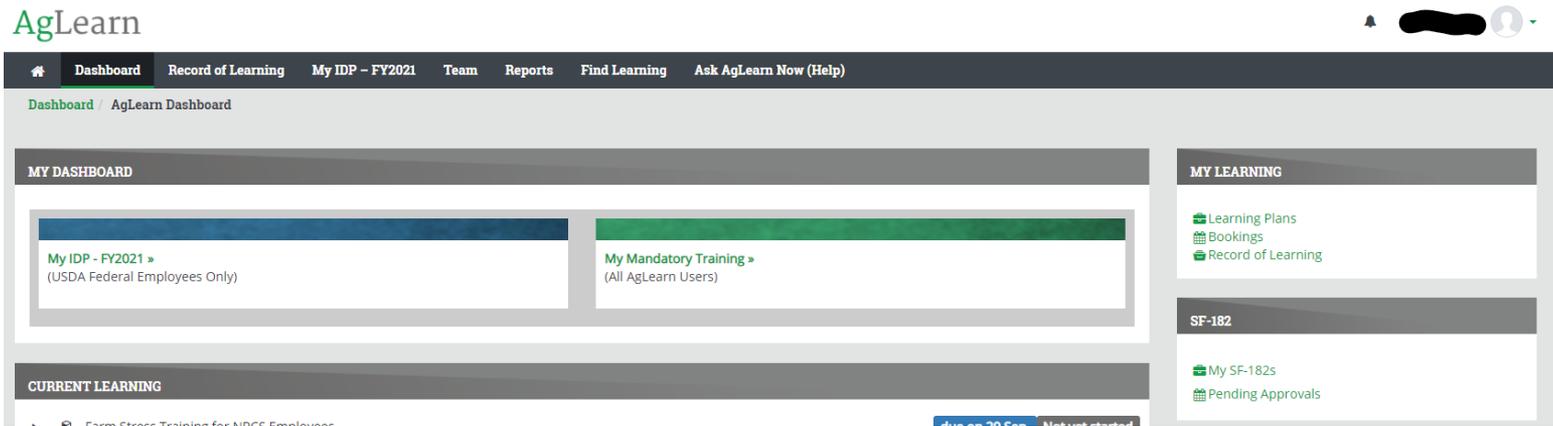


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Steps to add Planner Certification In Aglearn

1. Login to Aglearn:



The screenshot shows the AgLearn dashboard interface. At the top left is the AgLearn logo. To the right of the logo are a notification bell icon, a profile picture icon, and a dropdown arrow. Below the logo is a navigation bar with the following items: Home, Dashboard (highlighted), Record of Learning, My IDP - FY2021, Team, Reports, Find Learning, and Ask AgLearn Now (Help). Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: Dashboard / AgLearn Dashboard. The main content area is divided into three sections: MY DASHBOARD, MY LEARNING, and CURRENT LEARNING. The MY DASHBOARD section contains two cards: 'My IDP - FY2021 >' (USDA Federal Employees Only) and 'My Mandatory Training >' (All AgLearn Users). The MY LEARNING section contains three items: Learning Plans, Bookings, and Record of Learning. The SF-182 section contains two items: My SF-182s and Pending Approvals. The CURRENT LEARNING section is partially visible at the bottom.





2. In Dashboard select Learning Plans:

The screenshot shows the AgLearn dashboard. At the top left is the 'AgLearn' logo. To the right are a notification bell and a user profile icon. Below this is a dark navigation bar with the following menu items: Home, Dashboard, Record of Learning, My IDP - FY2021, Team, Reports, Find Learning, and Ask AgLearn Now (Help). Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: Dashboard > AgLearn Dashboard. The main content area is divided into three sections. The 'MY DASHBOARD' section contains two cards: 'My IDP - FY2021 > (USDA Federal Employees Only)' and 'My Mandatory Training > (All AgLearn Users)'. The 'MY LEARNING' section contains three items: 'Learning Plans' (highlighted in yellow), 'Bookings', and 'Record of Learning'. The 'SF-182' section contains two items: 'My SF-182s' and 'Pending Approvals'. At the bottom, there is a 'CURRENT LEARNING' section with a partially visible card for 'Farm Stress Training for NRCS Employees'.





3. Select the appropriate learning plan:

AgLearn

Dashboard Record of Learning **My IDP – FY2021** Team Reports Find Learning Ask AgLearn Now (Help)

Dashboard / Learning Plans

LEARNING

- Learning Plans
 - Manage plans
- Approved Plans
 - Assignment Plan
 - My IDP – FY2021
- Completed Plans
 - My IDP – FY2019
 - My IDP – FY2020
- Required Learning
- Programs
 - Farm Stress Training for NRCS Employees
 - FPAC Experienced Supervisor Training
 - USDA Grants Management Complete Program #1

Learning Plans

Your current and completed learning plans are shown below. You do not currently have permission to create a Learning Plan.

Approved Plans	Due date	Status	Ac
Assignment Plan Courses (1) Programs	30 Dec 2050	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: #800000;"></div>	
My IDP – FY2021 Goals (5) Courses (18) Programs	29 Sep 2021	<div style="width: 20%; height: 10px; background-color: #800000;"></div>	
Completed Plans	Completed		Actions
My IDP – FY2019 Goals (2) Courses Programs	09/29/2019		





4. Select PROGRAMS

Plan: My IDP – FY2021

OVERVIEW GOALS COURSES **PROGRAMS**

Below is a short summary of your learning plan.

▼ Plan details

Plan name

Plan description





5. Select Add programs:

Plan: My IDP – FY2021

OVERVIEW GOALS COURSES **PROGRAMS**

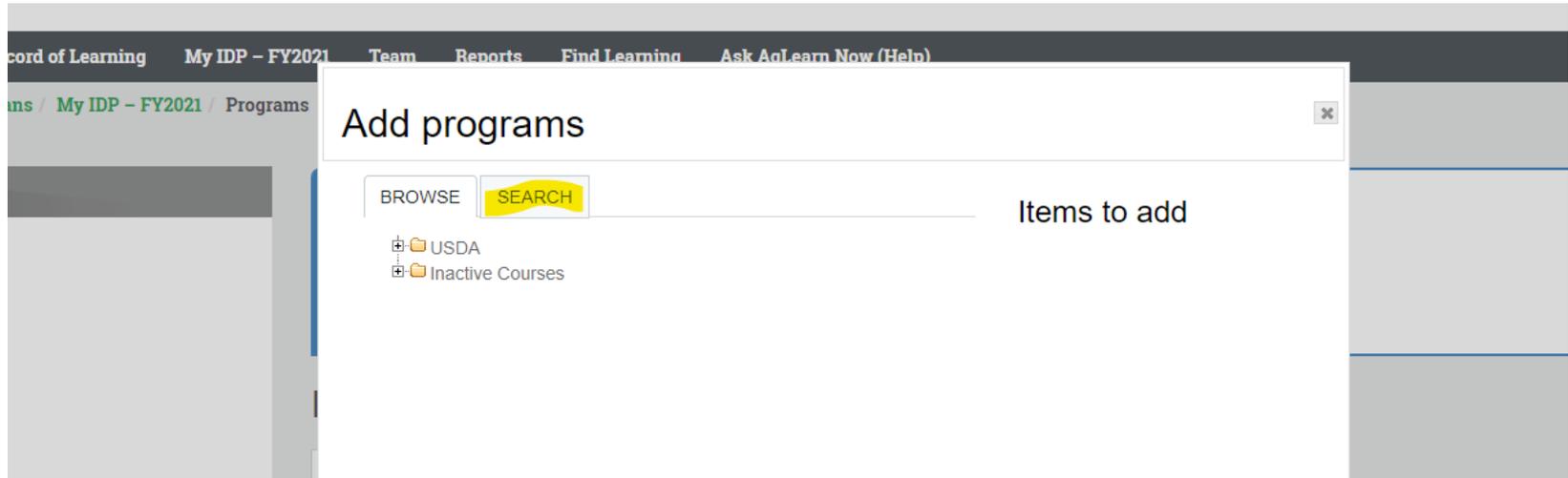
All the programs that form your learning plan are shown below. You can view any program by clicking the program title. Clicking "Add programs" will allow you to request to add new programs to this learning plan.

[Add programs](#)





6. Select SEARCH:





7. Search for the appropriate planner level:

Learning My IDP - FY2021 Team Reports Find Learning Ask AgLearn Now (Help)

My IDP - FY2021 / Programs

Add programs

BROWSE SEARCH

Items to add

Search

- AgLearn User Training - 100 Level Courses
- AgLearn Supervisor Training - 200 Level Courses
- AgLearn Course Training - 300 Level Courses
- AgLearn Administrator Training - 400 Level Courses
- Level I Conservation Planner
- Level III Certified Conservation Planner
- Level IV Certified Conservation Planner
- Level II Specialty Conservation Planner





8. Select the appropriate level:

The screenshot shows a web application interface with a dark top navigation bar containing links for 'Learning', 'My IDP - FY2021', 'Team', 'Reports', 'Find Learning', and 'Ask AgLearn Now (Help)'. Below this, a modal window titled 'Add programs' is open. It features a 'BROWSE' button and a 'SEARCH' button. Under the 'SEARCH' button, there is a search input field containing the text 'Level' and a 'Search' button. To the right of the search field is the text 'Items to add'. Below the search field, a list of program options is displayed:

- AgLearn User Training - 100 Level Courses
- AgLearn Supervisor Training - 200 Level Courses
- AgLearn Course Training - 300 Level Courses
- AgLearn Administrator Training - 400 Level Courses
- Level I Conservation Planner
- **Level III Certified Conservation Planner**
- Level IV Certified Conservation Planner
- Level II Specialty Conservation Planner

The 'Level III Certified Conservation Planner' option is highlighted with a yellow background. The background of the web application is partially visible, showing a sidebar with 'IDP - FY2021 / Programs' and a main content area with some text like 'Employees training complete Program #1'.





9. Select save:

My IDP - FY2021 Team Reports Find Learning Ask AgLearn Now (Help)

1 / Programs

Add programs

BROWSE SEARCH

Search level Search

Items to add

- Level III Certified Conservation Planner
- AgLearn User Training - 100 Level Courses
- AgLearn Supervisor Training - 200 Level Courses
- AgLearn Course Training - 300 Level Courses
- AgLearn Administrator Training - 400 Level Courses
- Level I Conservation Planner
- Level III Certified Conservation Planner
- Level IV Certified Conservation Planner
- Level II Specialty Conservation Planner

Save Cancel





The certification record is now part of the IDP

This plan has draft items:

- 1 Goal
- 4 Courses

[Send approval request](#)

Plan: My IDP – FY2021

OVERVIEW

GOALS

COURSES

PROGRAMS

All the programs that form your learning plan are shown below. You can view any program by clicking the program title. Clicking "Add programs" will allow you to request to add new programs to this learning plan.

[Add programs](#)

Program Name ^	Progress	Evidence	Priority	Due date	Comments	Actions
 Level III Certified Conservation Planner	<input type="text" value=""/>	0	None ▾	09/29/2021 	 0	





10. To view the Certification Record, select the program:

This plan has draft items:

- 1 Goal
- 4 Courses

[Send approval request](#)

Plan: My IDP – FY2021

OVERVIEW

GOALS

COURSES

PROGRAMS

All the programs that form your learning plan are shown below. You can view any program by clicking the program title. Clicking "Add programs" will allow you to request to add new programs to this learning plan.

[Add programs](#)

Program Name ^	Progress	Evidence	Priority	Due date	Comments	Actions
Level III Certified Conservation Planner	<input type="text" value=""/>	0	None ▾	09/29/2021	0	





11. Note all requirements according to GM 180 part 409.9 are displayed:

Plan: My IDP – FY2021

OVERVIEW	GOALS	COURSES	PROGRAMS
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 Level III Certified Conservation Planner

Date assigned: May 06, 2021 Due date: September 29 2021, 9:00 PM Progress:

This program documents training requirements for Level III Certified Conservation Planners based on 180-409-GM, 1st Ed., Amend. 45, Oct 2020.

Level III Certified Conservation Planners:

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12. The courses are clearly displayed, and options given where appropriate:

Previously Required: Required training for Level I Conservation Planner

All courses in this set must be completed (unless this is an optional set).

Course name	Actions	Status
Conservation Planning, Part 1	Launch course	Not tracked
Introduction to the Field Office Technical Guide	Launch course	Not tracked

AND

Previously Required: Field Office Technical Guide

Any one course in this set must be completed.

Course name	Actions	Status
Introduction to the Field Office Technical Guide	Launch course	Not tracked
Proficiency Exam - Field Office Technical Guide	Launch course	Not tracked

AND

Previously Required: Cultural Resources

Any one course in this set must be completed.

Course name	Actions	Status
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12. Any previously completed courses are documented:

AND

Previously Required: Conservation Planning Business Tool Training

Any one course in this set must be completed.

Course name	Actions	Status
Conservation Planning Business Tool Training (State or National-NEDC/EDS/Instructor led)	Launch course	Not tracked
Conservation Desktop (CD) V2R3 and Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART) Local/State Hands-on Training	Launch course	100%

AND



Advantages of tracking the Certified Planner training in Aglearn:

- **Aglearn is the official record of training**
- **Certification requirements are clearly displayed and recorded**
- **Training history and records are maintained as employees transfer**
 - Especially important as employees move from one state to another
- **Training officers can search Aglearn records to discover training needs**
 - Recertification training and dates can be appropriately tracked
- **Approved local training can be recorded when appropriate**
- **The planner is responsible for maintaining their records**



Aglearn challenges to planner certification tracking:

- **Training history prior to 2016 may not be recorded**
- **Certification dates need to be manually entered by new employees**
- **Recertification date is based on when the first course is started**
 - Recertification date is re-set when the planner meets the last requirement for one of their certification levels
- **For Level IV, the required five advanced natural resources courses are not clearly tracked**





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Questions?



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