

USDA NRCS High Tunnel Funding Checklist

Capital Region, New York - Dom The Handyman

Use this checklist before buying a kit or starting construction. Final eligibility, specifications, payment rates and contract requirements come from your local USDA NRCS/FSA office.

1. Before contacting USDA

- Write down what crops you grow or plan to grow and why season extension matters.
- Identify the proposed high-tunnel location and water source.
- Gather proof that you own or control the land (deed, lease, or other documentation).
- Gather your tax ID / entity information.
- If you already have USDA farm records or a farm number, bring them.

2. Establish USDA farm records

- Contact the Farm Service Agency (FSA) through the USDA Service Center serving the property.
- Ask FSA to establish or update your farm record/farm number.
- Complete any eligibility forms USDA requires for the operation.

3. Apply for EQIP High Tunnel System 325

- Tell NRCS you want to apply for EQIP High Tunnel System practice 325 / the High Tunnel Initiative.
- Ask for a site visit with the local conservationist.
- Ask for the next New York ranking cutoff and the current New York payment schedule.
- Ask whether supporting practices such as micro-irrigation, drainage or mulching fit your conservation plan.

4. Before choosing a kit

- Get the approved square footage and local Practice 325 technical specifications first.
- Ask what snow/wind criteria apply to your site.
- Only compare kits after you know the approved specifications.
- Send the manufacturer quote/spec sheet to NRCS before ordering.
- Do NOT purchase or start the funded practice before written NRCS contract approval.

5. Plan how the project will be paid

- Ask NRCS for the contracted payment amount for your approved scenario.
- If you qualify as historically underserved, ask about an advance payment of at least 50% of the contracted practice payment.
- Ask about vendor direct deposit if you want NRCS to pay an approved contractor/vendor directly.
- Plan for any cost above the NRCS contracted payment amount.

6. Get an installation quote from Dom

- Send the NRCS practice specifications.
- Send the approved square footage.

- Send the manufacturer kit link/quote/spec sheet.
- Send clear site photos and the property ZIP code.
- Tell Dom your desired timeline and whether irrigation/site prep is part of the project.

7. Build + certify

- Sign the NRCS contract before construction starts.
- Keep invoices, receipts, manufacturer instructions and progress photos.
- Do not change the approved location, size or major structural details without talking to NRCS.
- Contact NRCS when the practice is complete so it can be inspected/certified.

Official resources

USDA NRCS High Tunnel Initiative

New York EQIP

High Tunnel System Practice 325

EQIP Advance Payment / Vendor Direct Deposit

USDA Service Center Locator

Dom The Handyman - Troy / Capital Region, NY - 301-327-0386 - domthehandyman.com