NIC Portal User's Guide

Version 1.4

U.S. Forest Service

National Information Center for State & Private Forestry

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Introduction

Background

The National Information Center (NIC) for State and Private Forestry was formed to coordinate the collection, synthesis and dissemination of corporate information. The National Information Center Application Portal (NIC Portal) provides a single point of access to the US Forest Service State and Private Forestry applications, including:

- **Community Accomplishment Reporting System (CARS) –** a web-based application for the reporting of Urban & Community Forestry program accomplishments.

- **Forest Legacy Information System (FLIS) –** a web-based application to record acquisitions, agreements, and transfers of property rights resulting from State efforts to protect forest lands.

- **State Fact Sheets (SFS) –** a web-based application used to produce State and Private Forestry State Fact Sheets.

- **SMART Accomplishment Reporting (SMARTar) -** a web-based application for the reporting of Forest Stewardship Program accomplishments.

Why do I need a NIC Portal Account?

Your NIC Portal account allows you to access various State and Private Forestry applications through a common interface as needed. This account defines your roles and permissions within the NIC Portal application suite.

NIC Portal Account Requests

To request a NIC Portal user account, you must first have a USDA eAuthentication account. If you do not have an existing eAuthentication account, simply proceed to the next section (Requesting an eAuthentication Account) of this document for step by step instructions. If you have an existing eAuthentication account, simply skip the next section and proceed to the following section titled "Requesting Your NIC Portal Account" for step by step instructions.

Requesting an USDA eAuthentication Account

1. Navigate to the NIC Portal. It may be found at the following address: https://apps.fs.usda.gov/nicportal. You will be taken to the eAuthentication login screen (**Figure 1**).

   Note: You may want to bookmark the NIC Portal address or add it to your Favorites.

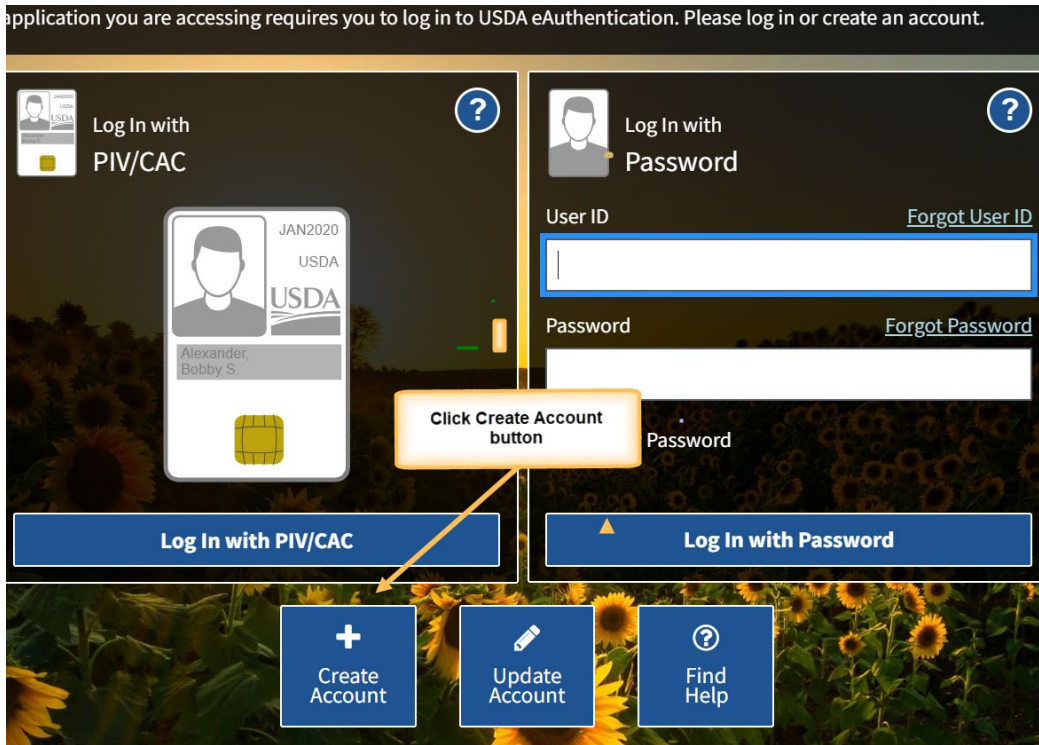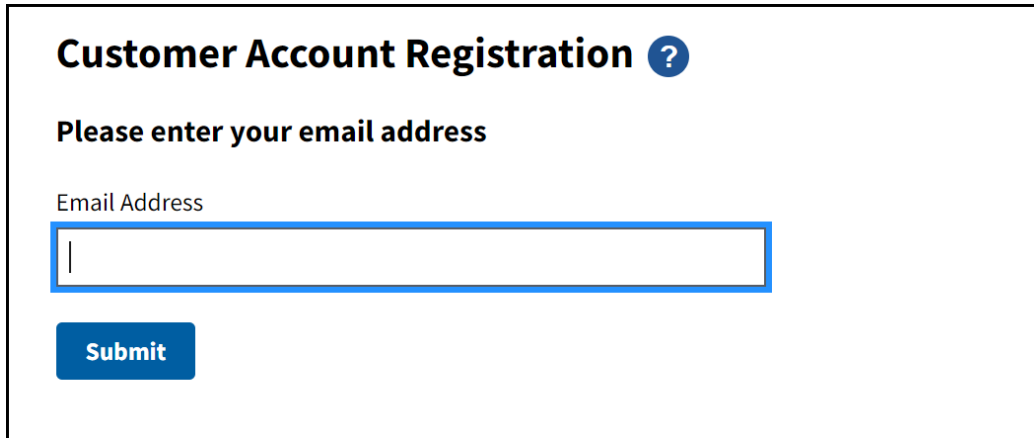2. Click on the **Create Account** button (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1 - USDA eAuthentication Login page.

3. The **Account Registration** page will appear (**Figure 2**). Click on which type of user you are.

Figure 2 - USDA eAuthentication Create an Account – Account Registration

4. The **Customer Account Registration** form will be displayed (**Figure 3**). Please enter your email address and click Submit.
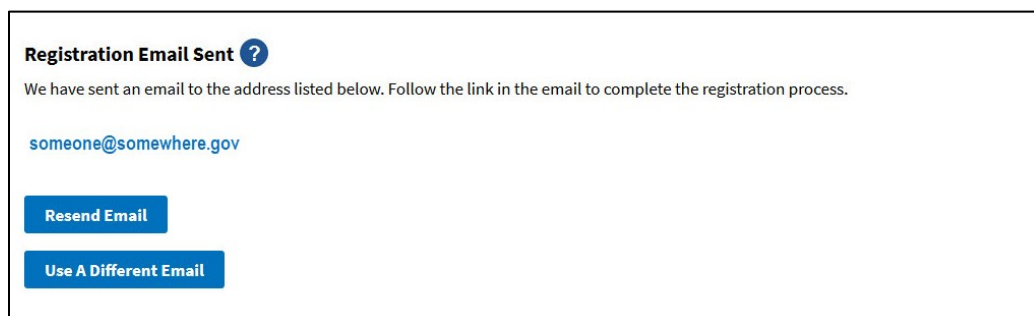
Figure 3 - USDA eAuthentication Customer Account Registration page.

Note: **Please use your work contact information when completing this request.**

5. The system will display the **Registration Email Sent** page (**Figure 4**). Review the displayed information for accuracy.
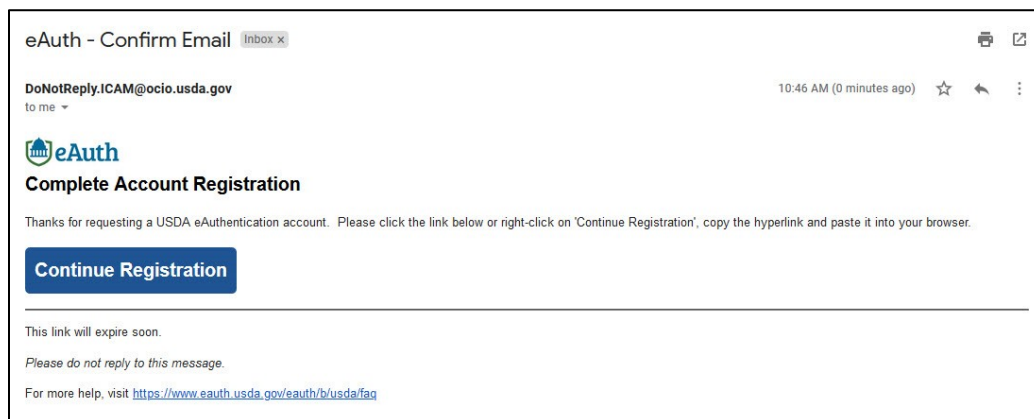
Figure 4 - USDA eAuthentication Registration Email Sent page.

6. The system will send you a system-generated email (**Figure 5**).

Figure 5 - USDA eAuthentication Confirmation Email.

7. Upon receipt of the system generated email, complete the activation of your eAuthentication account as instructed. Once activated, your eAuthentication account is available for use (**Figure 6**).

Customer Account Registration

Account Registration Complete

You have completed the account registration process and your account is ready for use.

We have sent a confirmation email for your records.

Your User ID is :   someone@somewhere.gov
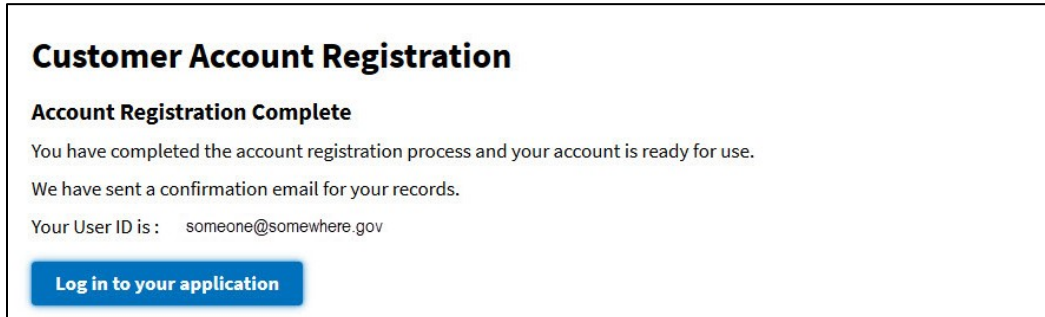
[Log in to your application]

Figure 6 - USDA eAuthentication Confirmation Email.

Requesting Your NIC Portal Account

Your NIC Portal account controls which application(s) within the NIC Portal Suite you have access to. In the process of creating your NIC Portal Account you request user roles and permissions for the various applications that are part of the NIC Portal Suite. You create your NIC Portal user account as follows:

1. Navigate to the NIC Portal. It may be found at the following address: https://apps.fs.usda.gov/nicportal. You will be taken to the eAuthentication login screen (**Figure 7**).
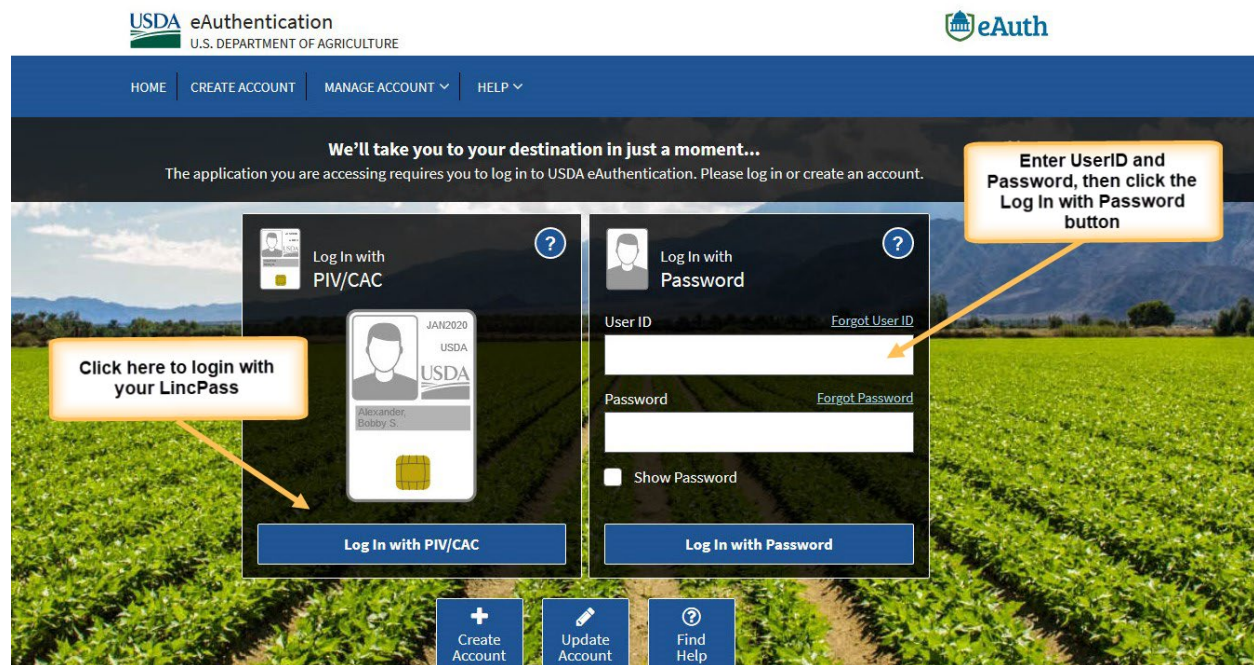

Figure 7 - USDA eAuthentication Login page.

2. Enter your eAuthentication **User ID** and **Password** and click the **Login In with Password** button. Alternatively, in the event that you have a LincPass, simply click on the **Log In with PIV/CAC** (LincPass) button and enter your PIN if requested. The system will display the NIC Portal Account Request Form.

3. In the first portlet of the **Create Account** page, enter your Account Information (**Figure 8**). Account Information includes First Name, Last Name, Phone Number, and Email Address.

Figure 8 - Verify and complete account contact information.

4. In the **Request User Access** frame (**Figure 9**), select the user roles and permissions you need for each application.

Figure 9 - Select application user roles and permission.

Note: Only select those roles and permissions that you know you need. Requesting unneeded roles and permissions has the potential of delaying the processing of your request because of the additional review required. For more information about user roles and permissions see the User Roles and Data Entry Permission sections of this document.

5. After making your selections (you may select access to multiple applications in the same request depending on what applications you need access to), click the "**Next**" button.

6. On the **Create Account, Step 2** page, select the appropriate **Organization(s) for each application that you are requesting access to**. In the example shown in **Figure 10**, the user is identifying as a member of the Alaska Division of Forestry (if your Organization is missing, see *My Organization Isn't Listed*).

Figure 10 - Selecting an Organization.

7. After selecting the appropriate organization(s), click the "**Next**" button. The **Review Account** page will be displayed (**Figure 11**). Review your account request and if the information is correct, click the "**Submit**" button. The **Back** button may be used to navigate back to preceding steps to make any corrections.

Figure 6 - The Review Account page.

8. The **Account Submitted for Approval** page will display (**Figure 12**); this confirms the submission of the account request.

Figure 7 - The Account Submitted for Approval page.

9. This completes the request process go ahead and close your web browser.

Shortly after you submit your request, you will receive a system-generated email acknowledging receipt of your request. You will receive additional system generated emails as your request is considered.

Your NIC Portal Home Page

After you have logged-in, you will see the NIC Portal Home Page (**Figure 13**).

Figure 8 - Features of your NIC Portal home page.

In the header bar, you will find a link to a page that will allow you to keep your **Account Details** up-to-date and current, as well as provide you with a way in which to request changes to your permissions to the NIC Portal Applications (*Viewing and updating your account details*).

For detailed instructions, there is a link to the NIC Portal User's guide labeled **Help**. Clicking this will open up this User's Guide in a new tab.

Once you are done with your work, you can use the **Logout** link that follows the **Help** link. If you are using Internet Explorer v11, and you have only one tab open with the NIC Portal, the system will close the browser window. If you have more than one window open, or more than one tab open, or if you are using a browser OTHER than Internet Explorer, the system will be unable to close the browser – this will mean that you are not yet fully logged out of the eAuthentication system. **It is recommended that you close all instances of the browser to be *properly* logged out of NIC Portal**.

The **Announcements** portlet on the top left will display any announcements that pertain to the NIC Portal or any of the applications. These announcements are created by the NIC Administrators and alert you of important information concerning the NIC Portal application suite.

Below that, you will see the names and a brief description of all the applications in the NIC Portal.

Since the NIC Portal is primarily a gateway to the NIC Portal applications, the applications that you have access to are displayed in the Portlet titled **NIC Portal Applications**. Clicking on any application will take you to that application, and once you have completed your tasks in the application, logging out of the application will return you to this NIC Portal Home Page.

Finally, should you have any difficulty or problems, the means of contacting the NIC Portal help desk are displayed in the Portlet titled **NIC Portal Support**. Clicking on the eMail link will initiate an eMail message to the Help Desk.

Viewing and Updating Account Details

Your account details including contact information as well as application roles and permissions may be viewed and updated as needed. Step by step instructions are as follow:

Viewing Your Account Details

1. Navigate to the NIC Portal. It may be found at the following address: https://apps.fs.usda.gov/nicportal. You will be taken to the eAuthentication login screen (**Figure 1**).

2. Login using your eAuthentication credentials (i.e. User ID and Password or LincPass and PIN).

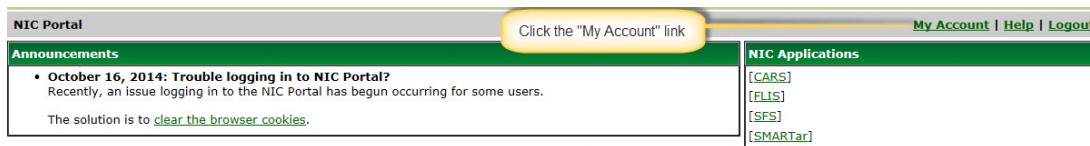3. From the NIC Portal homepage, click the **My Account** link in the banner (**Figure 14**).

Figure 9 - The "My Account" link.

4. In the **My Account** frame, click the **View My Account Status** or **Edit My Account Details** link (**Figure 15**).
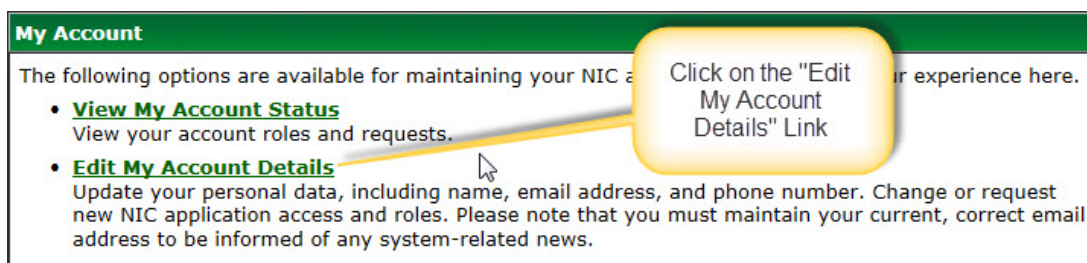

Figure 10 - The Edit My Account Details link.

Editing Your Account Details

5. In the **Edit Account Details** frame (see [Viewing Your Account Details](#)), make the necessary changes (**Figure 16**).

Edit Account Details

* First name	Jane
* Last name	Doe
* Phone number	651-555-1212
* Email address	jdoe@ak.gov
Account ID	
Account state	Active
Request status	Approved

Cancel   Save

Figure 11 - Editing Account Details.

6. Verify your changes and click the **Save** button. The system will confirm that your changes have been saved to the system (**Figure 17**).

Edit Account Details

Account details saved. — Save Confirmation Message

* First name	Jane
* Last name	Doe
* Phone number	651-555-1212
* Email address	jdoe@ak.gov
Account ID	
Account state	Active
Request status	Approved

Cancel   Save

Figure 12 - Confirmation of account changes.

Editing Application Roles and Permissions

7. On the **Edit Account Details** page (see *Viewing Your Account Details*), to change access to an application, click the **Edit Role** button (**Figure 18**).

CARS

Current User Role	State Organization User
Current Data Entry Permission	Yes
Current State Organization(s)	Wisconsin DNR - Division of Forestry

Click the "Edit Role" button

Edit Role

Figure 13 - Edit application role.

8. Select access to an application by requesting a user role (see *User Roles* for further explanation). After selecting the appropriate user role, select a data entry permission (see *Data Entry* for further explanation). In the example shown in **Figure 19**, the user is selecting State Organization-level permissions, with data-entry privileges, for the Community Accomplishment Reporting System (**CARS**).

Figure 14 - Selecting NIC Account application roles and permissions.

9. After making your selections (you may edit access to multiple applications in the same request), click the **Next** button.

10. On the **Edit Account Role** page, select the appropriate Organization. In the example shown in **Figure 20**, the user is identifying as a member of the California Dept. of Forestry & Fire (if your Organization is missing, see *My Organization Isn't Listed*).

Figure 20 - Selecting your role organization.

11. After selecting the appropriate organization(s), click the "**Next**" button.

12. On the **Edit Review Role** second page, review your account settings (in the example shown in **Figure 21**, the user is changing State Organization access to the **CARS** application from Wisconsin DNR-Division of Forestry to California Dept. of Forestry & Fire Protection CA. If the information is correct, click the "**Save**" button.

Figure 15 - Review Edit Account Role second page.

13. The **Account Status** page will display the saved role (**Figure 22**). This confirms the submission of the role request. You will receive an email now stating the role modification and another email after the modification has been approved.

Figure 16 - Update account role confirmation.

User Roles

User roles together with data entry permission are used to provide system users with appropriate access to applications. The NIC Portal applications roles are:

National Administrator

A **National Administrator** is responsible for maintaining the application. Only NIC Portal administrators are permitted access at this level.

National User

A **national user** is responsible for program oversight and management at the national level. When coupled with data entry permission, National users may be responsible for reviewing and approving submitted information, but also have the ability to add and update information throughout the application as needed.

Regional User

A **regional user** is responsible for program oversight and management at the regional level.   When coupled with data entry permission, Regional users may be responsible for reviewing and approving submitted information, but also have the ability to add and update information for each state within their region.

State Organization User

A **state user** is responsible for program oversight and management at the state level. When coupled with data entry permission, state users may add and update application information for their state.

Organization User [FLIS Only]

An **Organizational User** is responsible for managing information for their organization.

State Monitor [FLIS Only]

State Monitors are responsible for entering Monitoring reports for Conservation Easement tracts located in their state in FLIS.

Organization Monitor [FLIS Only]

Organization Monitors are responsible for entering Monitoring reports for Conservation Easement tracts that are affiliated with their Organization in FLIS.

Data Entry Permission

No

When users select "**No**" as their data-entry permissions, they are granted read-only access to the application.

Yes

Data-entry permissions allow users read, edit, and create information in an application. However, these permissions tiered for all NIC applications.

In most cases, National users are able to edit information throughout the entire application, regional users are allowed to edit information for states within their region, and state users are limited to editing information in their state. However, each application has unique instances where permissions do not strictly follow this model and certain functions are restricted to a specific role.

Troubleshooting

Users Not Receiving Emails Related to My Account

The NIC Portal sends system-generated emails when creating a new account or when editing application roles and permission for an existing account. Most commonly these emails are not delivered because there is an issue with your email address. See **Viewing and Updating Account Details** for more details on viewing and updating your email address. If the email address is correct, it may be that our system-generated messages are being redirected/deleted by spam filter.   In this case, contact your local email administrators to allow NIC Portal emails (the NIC Portal sending address is sm.fs.spfnic@usda.gov).

My Organization Isn't Listed

The list of selectable Organizations for each application is maintained by NIC Portal administrators. If you require access and your Organization does not appear as an option for the application, contact the NIC Portal team (see Contact Us).

Browser Compatibility Issues

NIC Portal applications work best when compatibility view is disable in Internet Explorer. If you see the following compatibility warning (**Figure 23**), turn compatibility view off. Click on the "**Learn more about Compatibility view, and how to turn it off**" link to see how to turn compatibility view off.
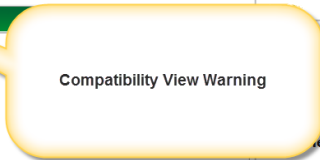
Figure 17 - Compatibility view warning for Internet Explorer.

NIC Portal Contact Information

Additional support is available by email or telephone at the following:

Email: sm.fs.spfnic@usda.gov

Phone: (651) 649-5262

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