

## Employment Opportunities

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is a leader in natural resource conservation, helping private landowners, land users, and Tribal and local governments to reduce erosion, protect wildlife, promote good land use, and implement other measures to preserve the nation's natural resources for future generations. NRCS offers exciting career opportunities in natural resources and the environment to students who are still in college and to those who have already graduated.

There are several means in which an applicant can apply for employment opportunities with NRCS. NRCS fills vacant positions from various sources — new hires, internal placement and transfers from other federal agencies. NRCS hires employees under permanent and temporary/excepted appointments. Such positions may be filled on a full-time, part-time or intermittent (work as needed) basis.

Vacancy announcements are posted on USAJOBS at: <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/a9nrcshqp.htm>. NRCS accepts resumes, OF-612 Federal Employment Forms or other documents containing the required applicant information. Depending on the application process, additional forms may be required.

## NEW HIRES

### Permanent Positions

Vacancy announcements are posted at: <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/a9nrcshqp.htm>. The announcement indicates whether the position is open to everyone (meaning the public) or NRCS employees only. It also specifically identifies the qualification requirements and application process.



College graduates or seniors (within 9 months of graduation) with educational emphasis in Soil Science, Soil Conservation, or other natural resources related disciplines are encouraged to apply to the continuously open vacancy announcement for Soil Scientist and/or Soil Conservationist positions. College coursework must include 30 semester hours in a natural resources or agricultural field (including 12 semester hours in a combination of soils and crops or plant sciences). Based on the continuous vacancy announcement, Office of Personnel Management (OPM) maintains a standing register of qualified applicants for the GS-5 & GS-7 levels. Applicants are rated based on education and experience. Upon a request from NRCS to fill a position, OPM issues a listing of applicants for consideration based on the applicants rating and location preference.

Specific job requirements, qualifications and the application process for the Soil Conservationist and/or Soil Scientist positions may be found in announcement CK 124854, posted at the following address: <http://www.jsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/summary.asp?OPMControl=VK0563>

### Special Employment Programs

There are various types of excepted appointments used by the agency. Each state does its own recruitment and hiring. For more information, please contact the state in which employment consideration is desired. NRCS State Office information can be found on the web at:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/organization/regions.html>. Special employment programs include:

- **Career Intern Program**—This program is designed to attract individuals with diverse professional and technical experience and academic training to the Federal workforce and prepare them for careers in public service. It is especially useful for hiring at grades GS-5 through 7 for technical positions and 5, 7 and 9 for scientific and administrative/professional positions.

Selected applicants will participate in a two-year internship in the Excepted Service and may be eligible for noncompetitive conversion at the end of

this two-year period. The agency will provide 160 to 240 hours of training to be accomplished on-the-job and through formal instruction for each year of the internship.

- **Student Career Experience Program (SCEP)**—This program is for students interested in career opportunities. The SCEP allows students to gain paid work experience while pursuing a degree in a natural resources-related career field. The work may be either full or part-time depending on the needs of the agency and the student's availability. The duties are designed to provide hands-on experience and training directly related to the student's academic study. Upon graduation from college, students may be eligible for non-competitive conversion to permanent full-time federal employment.

To be eligible for this program, students must be currently enrolled or accepted for enrollment as at least a half-time degree-seeking student at an accredited high school, technical or vocational school, 2 year or 4 year college or university, graduate or professional school; academic standing (maintain a 2.0 overall scholastic average in a 4.0 scale or have a C or above in your major field of study) and must be mobile to all locations within the state for which selected. Participants in the SCEP must sign an agreement of understanding and successfully complete at least 640 hours of full-time career-related work prior to graduation to be eligible for permanent placement.



- **Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP)**—This program allows an agency to hire qualified students non-competitively for temporary work assignments. Work may be either full-time or part-time depending on the needs of the agency and the student's availability. The STEP program allows a student to gain valuable experience in resource-related field work, but provides maximum flexibility to both students and managers because the nature of the work assignment does not have to be directly related to the student's academic or career goals, and there is no obligation on either the student or the agency's part for permanent employment.

To be eligible for this program, students must be currently enrolled or accepted for enrollment as at least a half-time degree-seeking student at an accredited high school, technical or vocational school, 2 year or 4 year college or university, graduate or professional school; must be a U.S. citizen; and must remain in good academic standing.

### INTERNAL PLACEMENT AND TRANSFERS FROM OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES

There are many career opportunities advertised through NRCS Merit Promotion Procedures for individuals currently employed by NRCS and other individuals with career/career conditional status who would like to transfer into the agency.

Advertisements for all such positions are posted on our website.

The following documents, along with others identified in the announcement must be submitted to the designated address in the announcement.

- OF-612, resume or any other form that includes the job information, personal information; education (transcript), work experience, and other qualification documentation.
- Current performance appraisal/rating within 15 months.
- Copy of an SF-50B Notice of Personnel Action (showing competitive status).
- KSA supplemental statements

### OTHER OPPORTUNITIES



NRCS frequently has other employment opportunities for short term, intermittent and seasonal type work. Contact the local or state NRCS office for specific employment information.

### VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Volunteers in NRCS Earth Team Volunteer Program play an important role in keeping our long-standing commitment to working with people to protect and conserve natural resources. The Earth Team needs people with a variety of skills who are willing to commit their time and talents to work directly with local farmers and ranchers in putting conservation practices on the land, organizing and developing conservation tours and exhibits, writing articles and speaking to community groups, entering and editing computer data, providing office assistance, and performing a myriad of other necessary tasks either outdoors or in a local NRCS office.

To learn more about the Earth Team or sign up as a volunteer, contact your local NRCS Office or call 1-888-LANDCARE.

## Helping People Conserve Our Natural Resources and Environment

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities, who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202)720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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*Local People,  
Global Mission*



Natural Resources Conservation Service