

Hampden-Hampshire Conservation District

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Position Title: Conservation Outreach Coordinator/Technical Assistance Provider

Position Type: Part-time: 30 Hours a week (2 days a week required in office for 4 hrs/day)

About Hampden-Hampshire Conservation District:

Hampden-Hampshire Conservation District (HHCD) is a state-mandated agency whose mission is to support local agriculture and environmental sustainability in Hampden-Hampshire County through education and in cooperation with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation District. The HHCD is governed by a board of elected volunteer members and is one of more than 3,000 conservation districts across the country. The HHCD receives funding through grant opportunities to expand their programming and institute a new conservation program for local farmers. The HHCD is eager to hire an individual for the role of Conservation Planner.

General Job Description

The HHCD Outreach Coordinator/Technical Assistance Provider is to develop and carry out a coordinated natural resources conservation program targeted to land-owners/farmers who would best benefit from plans to mitigate soil & water quality problems in Hampden and Hampshire Counties.

The HHCD Outreach Coordinator/Technical Assistance Provider will document client needs and concerns and assist in developing plans tailored to customer's needs, meeting USDA and NRCS requirements within the assigned Service Area. Employee provides technical assistance to local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, government bodies, tribal entities, state and Federal agencies, private landowners (i.e. individual farmers and ranchers), and the general public in the development, application, and maintenance of a coordinated natural resources conservation program.

The employee also supports Area-wide efforts to deliver consistent conservation technical assistance and Farm Bill Programs effectively and appropriately. The position requires knowledge of a wide variety of soil conservation, agronomic, hydrologic, biology, and forestry concepts, principles, practices, and methodology in order to independently resolve natural resource problems related to the implementation of soil and water conservation plans and provide area-wide technical assistance.

Major Duties

- Works with farmers and other landowners to assess needs and assist in developing conservation plans addressing resource concerns; provides information concerning Farm Bill and State Conservation Programs; connects farmers and land owners to relevant funding opportunities to assist with conservation activities.
- Performs on-site inventory and evaluations; recommends and assists in conducting necessary preliminary surveys; and provides recommendations for feasible practices to solve resource concerns.
- Provides technical guidance and assistance to cooperating landowners in making needed revisions to their conservation plans and contracts.
- Works with farmers and non-farming landowners, developers and their technical staff, planning commissions and others in the planning and application of land treatment measures.
- Performs informational duties such as writing stories and news articles; posting articles and information on social media, responding to inquiries and questions from the public on social media, giving talks at meetings; participating in conservation demonstrations; conducting conservation field tours.

- Develops and provides informational workshops regarding sustainable farming practices, including but not limited to soil and water conservation, to land owners, farmers and the general public.

Outreach/Technical Assistance

- Using resources provided by the HHCD, engages in outreach to local farmers and landowners to determine resource concerns and needs as well as customers already identified through NRCS programs. Schedules site visits and documents resource needs. A priority is to contact all active farmers within the two counties and obtain updated information on their activities and status.
- Works as an intermediary between NRCS and farmers to ensure resource concerns are being addressed.
- Conducts regular follow-up on all customers engaged in practices to address resource concerns.
- Recommends site visits and schedules as necessary with NRCS Staff.

Implements Farm Bill Programs

- Understands all applicable NRCS and Farm Bill programs available to address resource concerns and explains cost-share programs and payment procedures to landowners and farmers.
- Enters conservation planning data and applied practices into the HHCD Conservation District computer system and coordinates in reporting work completed in the NRCS reporting system. Utilizes available computer software programs as needed.

Collaboration, Communication & Educational Responsibilities

- Writes news articles and stories, conducts tours, speaks to groups and collects pertinent information to be used to further agency programs.
- Consistently communicates and treats customers (America's farmers, ranchers and forest landowners, their representatives, visitors, and all USDA staff and leadership) in a courteous, tactful, and respectful manner. Provides customers with consistent information according to established policies and procedures.
- Handles conflict and problems in dealing with the customer constructively and appropriately. Promotes and maintains liaisons with Federal, state, and local agencies and groups to carry out conservation management activities.
- Works as needed with local, state and federal NRCS offices to conduct environmental education on natural resource issues, water quality, and general conservation at workshops, seminars, fairs, and/or assist the Conservation District staff in these activities.
- Participates in meetings with HHCD Conservation District as well as the District and State Conservationist to coordinate work and prioritize where technical assistance will be provided. Communicates with federal, state, and local agency personnel involved in similar work to coordinate work and avoid duplication. Performs other related duties as assigned.

Condition of Employment: Motor vehicle operator: Must possess and maintain a valid state motor vehicle operator's license for the type of vehicle(s) operated to perform the duties of this position. This may require the operation of a motor vehicle in both public and private roads during daylight hours and occasionally after dark.

Condition of Employment first 90 days:

- The Outreach Coordinator/Technical Assistance Provider is required to obtain USDA Security clearance, and obtain access to NRCS issued computer.
- The Outreach Coordinator/Technical Assistance Provider is required to produce demonstrable work product (site visit documentation, funding applications, etc.)
- The Outreach Coordinator/Technical Assistance Provider is required to obtain business card to promote the work of HHCD.

Required Experience & Skills

1. Applicant must have at least 1-year relevant experience
2. Knowledge of the principles, concepts, methodology, and practices of soil conservation and related biological and physical sciences.
3. Knowledge of soil properties and characteristics sufficient to interpret land use potential and deficiencies and advises landowners or agricultural operators of sound resource conservation techniques.
4. Knowledge of federal, state, and local laws and regulations pertaining to natural resource management. Knowledge of the requirements of various Farm Bills provided by the field office to advise agricultural producers and rural landowners on participation in Farm Bill conservation programs.
5. Ability to operate computer and software programs to input and extract data.

Supervision, Reporting Structure, Planning and Resource Allocation

1. The Conservation Planner will report directly to the HHCD Conservation District, in partnership with the HHCD Administrator. NRCS will provide technical training (including shadowing), templates and information gathering tools, security clearance, computer/database.
2. The Conservation Planner will develop, in conjunction with the HHCD board and the HHCD Administrator, a Plan of work with concrete assignments and objectives. It is essential that the HHCD Conservation Planner be able to operate independently and adhere to the completion of weekly & monthly objectives, which are to be detailed in daily logs and reported monthly to the HHCD Board.
3. Job performance will be reviewed for completed work in conformity with policy, the effectiveness of the employee's approach to problem solving, technical soundness, adherence to deadlines and accomplishment of objectives.
4. The purpose of the work is to advise and assist rural and community including conservation groups on the selection of conventional soil conservation measure and water management techniques to reduce erosion, siltation, water loss, and flood damage. The conservation planner interprets environmental data including soil characteristics which are essential in the formulation of sound conservation plans. The work accomplished contributes to the completion of the annual plan of operations, leads to area wide reduction of soil erosion and water runoff, and favorably disposes landowners to accept advice from HHCD and NRCS.

Educational Requirements

The ideal candidate will have at least a bachelor's degree in a related field, such as agricultural science, forest management, or environmental science.

To Apply:

To be considered for the position, email applications to hampdenhamshireconservation@gmail.com. Include a cover letter, resume, and contact information for three professional references. Applications without a cover letter will not be considered. All inquiries & materials submitted are confidential. Applications accepted until August 6th, 2021, or until the position is filled. Please, no phone calls.

EEO/AAP Statement:

Hampden-Hampshire Conservation District provides equal opportunity for all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, mental or physical disability, pregnancy, military or veteran status, or any other basis prohibited by state or federal law. This policy also prohibits employees from harassing any other employee for any reason including, but not limited to, race, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disabled status.