

Department: Natural Resources Conservation Service
Agency: Natural Resources Conservation Service
Job Announcement Number: NRCS-IN-08-01

Student Trainee

Salary Range: \$10.06 to \$13.36 USD Per Hour Open Period: 11/14/2007 to 12/14/2007
Series & Grade: GS-0499, 0899, 1099-02/04 Position Information: Full-Time Student Career Experience Program
Promotion Potential: 11 Duty Location: 9 vacancies - Throughout Indiana, IN

Who May Be Considered:

Applications will be accepted from United States citizens and nationals.

Job Summary:

These positions will be under the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) which provides work experience for students that is directly related to their academic program and career goals. Up to 9 student trainee positions (in soil conservation, soil science, agricultural engineering and public affairs) will be available in various locations throughout Indiana. Most placements will begin in the spring 2008.

For information concerning natural resources conservation in Indiana please visit <http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov>.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment. (<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>).

Major Duties:

Soil Conservation work includes:

- Accompanying soil conservationists to observe methods used in meeting resource conservation need.
- Gathering and assembling data for use in basic conservation plans.
- Performing surveys used for design and preliminary layout work, participating in inspection of construction and making field notes.
- Attending meetings of soil and water conservation district boards.

Agricultural Engineer work includes:

- Operates transit and level in obtaining survey information.
- Performs field survey work including topographic, cross section, profile or other surveys for use in the development of engineering plans by the professional engineer.
- Maintains accurate notes of surveys conducted.
- Helps with standard designs of simple drainage, erosion control or other engineering practices.

Soil Scientist work includes:

- Accompanying soil scientists to observe methods used in providing technical assistance for soil interpretations and special requests.
- Participating in soil surveys and field reviews and gathering data for defining map units.
- Collecting, tabulating and analyzing soil survey data.
- Collecting soil samples.

Public Affairs work includes:

- Writes news releases and feature stories for distribution through farm and non-farm media outlets in Indiana.
- Participates in layouts and design of text and images in publications, exhibits or presentations for use in delivering agency messages.
- Assists with setup of audio-visual equipment and provides orientation or instruction to users.
- Reviews and edits text prepared by other employees for clarity and understanding by internal and external audiences.

Qualifications:

Applicants at the GS-2 level must have a high school diploma or equivalent.

Applicants at the GS-3 level must have completed 1 academic year of post high school study (1 academic year equals 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours).

Applicants at the GS-4 level must have completed 2 academic years of post high school study or have completed their Associates degree.

You must be a U.S. citizen to qualify for this position.

You may need to work outdoors, often under adverse weather conditions.

- Be enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a degree seeking student in an accredited college or university and be taking at least a half-time academic course load in a curriculum that leads to a position as a soil conservationist, soil scientist, public affairs specialist or agricultural engineer. Students must be pursuing a course of study related to the position they are applying for, i.e., soil conservation, natural resources and/or other agriculture disciplines such as agronomy, forestry, biological sciences, soil sciences, public affairs/information arts or agricultural engineering.

- Posses and maintain a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.0 or higher.

- Have and maintain a valid state driver's license.

- A background security investigation and credit check will be required for all new appointments. Your continued employment will be subject to your successful completion of a background security investigation and favorable adjudication. Failure to successfully meet these requirements will be grounds for termination.

- If you are a male over age 18 who was born after December 31, 1959, you must have registered with the Selective Service System (or have an exemption) to be eligible for a Federal job.

- You must be a United States Citizen or National (resident of American Samoa and Swains Island) to be considered for this job.

- Your Social Security Number is requested to uniquely identify your records from those of other applicants who may have the same name. Failure to provide your SSN in your application package will result in your application not being processed.

- Applicants must be mobile to all locations throughout Indiana upon initial placement and subsequent summers as well as upon graduation.

How Will You Be Evaluated:

Applicants will be evaluated on the basis of the information provided in their application package. Your opportunity for consideration will depend on how thoroughly you have prepared your application. Please read all instructions carefully. Incomplete applications will not be referred for consideration.

Benefits:

The Student Career Experience Program provides work experience that is directly related to the student's academic program and career goals. This allows NRCS to discover first hand the abilities of a potential employee and gives managers the ability to evaluate the student's performance in real work situations. The benefit to the student is exposure to public service while enhancing their educational goals and shaping their career choices. Typically students work full-time during the summer and then are placed in a non-pay status to return to school during the fall. Students under the SCEP may be non-competitively converted to career-conditional appointments following completion of their academic and work experience requirements.

Students appointed under the SCEP are eligible for both health and life insurance coverage as long as they are expected to be employed under this appointment authority for at least one year and are expected to be in a pay status for at least one third of the total period of time from the date of their initial appointment to the date of the completion of the program. Costs of the premiums are split between the employee and the agency.

Students are also eligible for federal retirement benefits, Thrift Savings Plan, paid leave, flexible work schedules and other federal benefits.

Housing subsidies and/or transportation costs may be offered on a case-by-case basis.

SALARY RANGE BASED ON LOCALITY PAY AREA OF DUTY STATION OF POSITION:

- GS-2 \$10.09 - \$10.91 per hour
- GS-3 \$11.01 - \$11.91 per hour
- GS-4 \$12.36 - \$13.36 per hour

How to Apply:

You must submit your application so that it will be received by the closing date of the announcement.

Be sure your application includes the following: a resume or an Optional Application for Federal Employment (OF 612), [although we do not require a specific format, certain information is required to determine if you are qualified.](#)

All applicants must submit the following information to be considered.

1. OF-612, Optional Application for Federal Employment or a resume. If using a resume it must include the following information:

- Announcement number, title and grade applying for.
- Your full name, mailing address and phone number
- Social Security Number
- Country of citizenship. U.S. Citizenship is required.
- Work experience (both paid and unpaid experience). List job title, duties, employer's name and address; starting and ending dates; hours worked per week. Indicate if we can

contact your current supervisor.

2. Copy of your current college transcript that includes hours and grades.

3. Written responses to the following questions.

- What knowledge and experience do you have in Agricultural and Natural Resources?
- What are your long range career goals and interests?
- Working for the Natural Resources Conservation Service often requires working outdoors in all types of weather. Please explain your willingness to work in this type of environment.
- Working for the Natural Resources Conservation Service often requires working with individuals and groups. Please explain your ability to communicate with others in these types of situations.
- Natural Resources Conservation Service positions are often located in small towns and rural areas, does working in this type situation appeal to you and why?
- Explain your ability to use computer software such as ESRI GIS programs, Excel, Power Point, Access, CAD, engineering design programs etc.
- Working for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, you will have many demands on your time, please explain your ability to organize and prioritize your work.
- Working for the Natural Resources Conservation Service often requires employees to be mobile. Please characterize your willingness to be mobile, i.e., any location in the Midwest U.S.; any location in Indiana.

Applications may be submitted either by mailing your application package to the address listed on the last page of the announcement or by fax (317) 290-3225. Applications and attached materials will not be returned. Applications must be received by close of business on December 14, 2007.

Applicants may or may not be contacted for interviews or for more information if needed to help determine continuing eligibility for the SCEP program and possible placement in our agency.

NRCS provides reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, please notify us. The decision on granting reasonable accommodation will be on a case-by-case basis.

Contact Information:

Connie Givens
Phone: 317-290-3200 ext. 335
Fax: 317-290-3225

Or Write:
Natural Resources Conservation Service
6013 Lakeside Boulevard
Indianapolis IN 46278

What to Expect Next:

You will be contacted regarding the status of your application. Selections normally take approximately eight weeks after the closing date of the announcement.

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