



RCPP TA GUIDANCE

RCPP offers the opportunity for Partners to apply for Technical Assistance (TA) funds. Salary rates shown below are to be used as a guide. Partners can use the descriptions below to determine acceptable rates by positions.

TA CAPACITY

What skillset are you bringing to the table: Are more employees needed within the proposed project area? And if so: in what disciplines?



Salary Comparison

| Type of Position | Grade | Hourly Rate | OPM Base Salary* | USDOL Mean Salary | Reference |
|---|-------|-------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Soil Conservationist | GS-05 | \$20.47 | \$42,724 | \$ 69,810.00 | 19-1031 Conservation Scientists |
| Soil Conservationist | GS-07 | \$25.36 | \$52,921 | | |
| Soil Conservationist | GS-09 | \$31.02 | \$64,732 | | |
| Soil Conservationist | GS-11 | \$37.53 | \$78,319 | | |
| Civil Engineering Technician | GS-09 | \$31.02 | \$64,732 | \$ 61,480.00 | 17-30722 Civil Eng |
| Civil Engineer | GS-12 | \$44.98 | \$93,875 | \$ 90,710.00 | 17-2021 Ag Eng |
| Management Analyst (Initiative Coordinator) | GS-12 | \$44.98 | \$93,875 | \$102,980.00 | 13-1111 Mngt. Analyst |
| Program Manger (Director of Organization) | GS-13 | \$53.49 | \$111,628 | \$101,610.00 | 13-1082 Project Mngt Specialist |

*Table does not represent benefit costs and is based on Step 5

Links: [OPM](#) and [USDOL](#)

Position Descriptions

• Soil Conservationist GS-05

- Can identify the common agricultural crops, plants, and land uses in the work area and can describe what farming operations, land management systems, implements, equipment and cultural resources are present.
- Work towards obtaining appropriate practice certification.
- Recognizes and can explain the relationship between land uses, crops, management, and the content of conservation practices within a conservation plan and the resource conditions on-site.
- Assists staff in conducting surveys and develops understanding of basic surveying principles.
- Can identify the natural resource issues and concerns that are most critical in the management unit/resource team and can provide planning options for conservation practices according to standards and specifications, especially focusing on applicable rates and dates for vegetative practices.
- Has a working knowledge of Farm Bill programs application management and contract management.
- Has obtained Level I Conservation Planner certification.

• Soil Conservationist GS-07

- Performs all routine duties listed on the GS-07, plans and manages own schedule and work assignments with only limited direction from supervisor.
- Can function independently in carrying out customer consultations, conservation planning and application activities.
- Proficient in explaining Farm Bill programs and state conservation programs to producers. This includes explaining program rules and requirements, handling producer interviews, and field reviews.
- Has experience in treating major resource concerns associated with cropland, forest land, pastureland/rangeland, hayland, and critical areas as applicable in the management unit/ resource area.
- Obtained approximately 70% of Job Approval Authority (JAA) necessary to preform conservation planning and implementation in area of responsibility.
- Has obtained Level III Conservation Planner certification.



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• Soil Conservationist GS-09

- Performs all routine duties listed on the GS-05 and GS-07, plans and manages own schedule and work assignments and operates independently in the field with the client.
- Proficient in identifying resource concerns in the field by observing the landscape, assessing the problems, and discussing issues and objectives with the landowner (this encompasses all areas of a planning unit including cropland, forest land, pastureland/rangeland, hayland, critical areas, streams, and other water bodies).
- Understand how to plan, design, and install a practice in accordance with that standard to address identified resource concerns.
- Has obtained Engineering Job Approval Authority (EJAA) and Ecological Science Job Approval Authority (ESJAA) for the common practices in the management unit/ resource area.
- Is comfortable in directing and carrying out all aspects of surveying (setting up and using an instrument, using a rod, recording the notes, and conducting a survey involving benchmarks, turning points and the calculations to close out).
- Prepares check-out and as-built notes in accordance with engineering note-keeping procedures.

• Soil Conservationist GS-11

- Performs all routine duties listed on the GS-09 with limited supervision or assistance.
- Provides direct assistance to landowners for implementation of projects funded through the RCCP. Develops conservation plans, in collaboration with the landowner to provide detail conservation system and practice implementation including conservation practice design, layout, construction, inspection and certification, management, and maintenance of the planned conservation system and practices according to Field Office Technical Guidance standards and specifications.
- Formulates resource assessments and evaluations using the criteria in the FOTG for environmental evaluations, special concerns, planning criteria, measuring and assessment tools (Soil Survey, RUSLE II, Pasture Index Scorecard, Soil Conditioning Index) to provide the landowner with alternatives to make the decision to address the resource concern.
- Has and maintains certified conservation planner certification with appropriate engineering and ecological sciences Job Approval Authority (JAA) to implement conservation planning and conservation practice implementation.
- Designs and conducts inventories as needed to develop plans and create maps, databases, and other graphical material as necessary to illustrate conservation plan implementation.
- Promotes efficiencies by utilizing available technology and encouraging the development of new technology and techniques. Uses computer and mobile technology to share, analyze and summarize data.
- Possesses working knowledge of agronomy, hydrology, climatology, animal husbandry, geology, soils, forestry, and engineering in order to integrate agricultural production activities so that natural resource considerations are addressed from a coordinated multi-disciplinary approach.

• Civil Engineer Technician GS-09

- Performs all routine duties with only limited supervision.
- Is trained in Construction Inspection requirements.
- Recognizes and can explain the relationship between land uses, crops, management, and the content of conservation practices within a conservation plan and the resource conditions on-site.
- Can utilize AutoCAD Civil 3D to compile construction drawing packets incorporating standardized drawings prepared by the State. Construction packets will also include construction specifications, engineering cost estimates, and implementation requirements if applicable.
- Has obtained mid-level Engineering Job Approval Authority (EJAA-Level 3) for the common practices in the in the area, understands how to obtain increased Job Approval Authority, and has identified three additional practices for which increased Job Approval Authority is needed.
- Is competent in the use of common computer design programs such as EFH-2, Engineering Field Tools, Civil Tools, and others applicable tools.
- Can independently operate all survey equipment including trouble shooting and resolving setup issues in the field. Employee can collect a static survey and post-process survey data through OPUS. Employee independently gathers all necessary survey data for the design of the conservation practice with minimal repeat visits to the field to gather additional survey data.
- Understands the importance of documentation in conservation planning, design, and construction. Becomes thoroughly familiar with General Manual 450, part 407(Documentation, Certification, and Spot Checking) and associated state supplements.

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• Civil Engineer GS-12

- Work involves the generation and/or application of theories, principles, practical concepts, and processes related to the science of civil engineering (including its materials, methods, systems, industry codes, and procedures) and the other traditional engineering science disciplines.
- Recognizes and can explain the relationship between land uses, crops, management, and the content of conservation practices within a conservation plan and the resource conditions on-site.
- Has read conservation practice standards that are common to the Area and can understand/apply the standards through the inventory, evaluation, survey and design, and construction inspection of engineered conservation practices.
- Can utilize AutoCAD Civil 3D to compile construction drawing packets incorporating standardized drawings prepared by the State. Construction packets will also include construction specifications, engineering cost estimates, and implementation requirements if applicable.
- Has obtained high levels of EJAA (level 4-5) for common conservation practices in the area with some basic levels of EJAA in less common conservation practices.
- Is competent in the use of common computer design programs such as EFH-2, Engineering Field Tools, Civil Tools, and others applicable tools.
- Can independently operate all survey equipment including trouble shooting and resolving setup issues in the field. Employee can collect a static survey and post-process survey data through OPUS. Employee independently gathers all necessary survey data for the design of the conservation practice with minimal repeat.
- Understands the importance of documentation in conservation planning, design, and construction. Becomes thoroughly familiar with General Manual 450, part 407(Documentation, Certification, and Spot Checking) and associated state supplements. Understands the importance good photo documentation during application of conservation and project work.

• Management Analyst (Initiative Coordinator) GS-12

- Develops and carries out public awareness campaigns.
- Assists in planning and coordinating an effective public information program throughout the state.
- Develops news articles and stories. Determines the information needed to simply explain complex NRCS programs and natural resource concepts and issues for targeted audiences.
- Communicates and markets Agency programs, strategic plan goals and objectives, and priorities to various public sectors served or affected by such programs.
- Provides leadership, guidance and training to state program and field office staff in identifying barriers to delivery and use of NRCS programs by underserved communities and clients, and by developing and carrying out outreach plans and initiatives.
- Employs the full spectrum of communications and marketing planning methods, from strategic communications and media relations to special events/issues, involving multiple processes/activities.

• Program Manager GS-13

- Initiates collaboration with program and technical specialists to complete contracts in the RCPP project area.
- Organizes, plans, and directs the work of partner staff.
- Schedules training for RCPP partner employees to ensure technical and programmatic competency.
- Provides leadership and guidance to subordinates and develops guidance documents for implementing the RCPP initiative.
- Attends meetings to coordinate activities with NRCS District Conservationist(s).
- Maintains good working relationships with partners and technical service providers. Establishes and maintains a cooperative working relationship with other funding partners.
- Responsible for maintaining and adhering to budget expenditures and project timelines.
- Develops or oversees the development of quarterly TA request submissions.
- Develops or oversees the development of annual RCPP reports.
- Provides direction and implementation of agreements.