

**Biological Sciences Technician (Plants), GS-404-07  
(Manhattan, Kansas)**

**POSITION DESCRIPTION  
COVER SHEET**

<b>REASON FOR THIS POSITION</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. NEW	<input type="checkbox"/> 2. IDENTICAL ADDITION TO THE ESTABLISHED PD NUMBER	<input type="checkbox"/> 3. REPLACES PD NUMBER

<b>RECOMMENDED</b>					
4. TITLE Biological Science Technician (Plants)			5. PAY PLAN GS	6. SERIES 0404	7. GRADE 07
8. WORKING TITLE (Optional)			9. INCUMBENT (Optional)		

<b>OFFICIAL</b>						
10. TITLE Biological Science Technician (Plants)						
11. PP GS	12. SERIES 0404	13. FUNC	14. GRADE 07	15. DATE MONTH   DAY   YEAR		16. I/A <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
						17. CLASSIFIER Kayla D. Ascher

<b>18. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE (Agency/Bureau)</b>	
1st Natural Resources Conservation Service	5th
2nd KS State Conservationists Off	6th
3rd Plant Materials Staff	7th
4th Manhattan 3800 S 20th St	8th

<b>SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATION</b>			
I certify that this is an accurate statement of the major duties and responsibilities of the position and its organizational relationship and that the position is necessary to carry out Government functions for which I am responsible. This certification is made with the knowledge that this information is to be used for statutory purposes relating to appointment and payment of public funds and that false or misleading statements may constitute violations of such statute or their implementing regulations.			
19. SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE	20. DATE	22. SECOND LEVEL SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE	23. DATE
21. SUPERVISOR'S NAME AND TITLE		24. SECOND LEVEL SUPERVISOR'S NAME AND TITLE	

<b>FACTOR EVALUATION SYSTEM</b>						
FACTOR	25. FLD / BMK	26. POINTS	FACTOR	25. FLD / BMK	26. POINTS	
1. Knowledge Required	FLD 1-5	750	6. Personal Contacts	2B	75	
2. Supervisory Controls	FLD 2-3	275	7. Purpose of Contacts			
3. Guidelines	FLD 3-2	125	8. Physical Demands	FLD 8-3	20	
4. Complexity	FLD 4-3	150	9. Work Environment	FLD 9-2	20	
5. Scope and Effect	FLD 5-3	150	27. TOTAL POINTS ▶		27. 1,565	
					28. GRADE ▶	28. GS-07

<b>CLASSIFICATION CERTIFICATION</b>	
I certify that this position has been classified as required by Title 5, US Code, in conformance with standards published by the OPM or, if no published standard applies directly, consistently with the most applicable published standards.	
29. SIGNATURE	30. DATE
31. NAME AND TITLE Jane Medina, Human Resources Manager	

32. REMARKS This position is determined to be NONEXEMPT from the provisions of FLSA.  Evaluation statement on file.	33. OPM CERTIFICATION NUMBER
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## **INTRODUCTION**

This position is located at the Plant Materials Center (PMC) in Manhattan, Kansas. The PMC's mission is the assembly, observation, evaluation, selection, improvement, and increase of grasses, legumes, forbs, and woody plant materials for conservation use in Kansas, Nebraska, northern Oklahoma, and northeastern Colorado. The incumbent is responsible for assisting in the daily administration, production, development, and continuing evolution of the Manhattan PMC.

## **DUTIES**

Coordinates, performs, and oversees all field work at the PMC in accordance with the PMC annual business plan, daily operating schedule, and the needs of other PMC Staff. This includes field preparation, planting, cultivation, irrigation, and harvesting of nurseries, polycross blocks, and foundation production fields. Prepares all necessary records for planting, including dates, rates, and all management treatments including seed harvesting and cleaning.

Responsible for coordinating and performing the production of plant materials for seed increase operations to ensure adequate production and high quality of plant materials. Observes conditions such as soil moisture, evidence of disease or insect damage, or other field conditions, and takes appropriate corrective actions.

Coordinates the harvesting of all plant materials at the proper growth stage for maximum production of high quality seed or vegetative propagules. Coordinates seed drying and cleaning operations in order to ensure maximum purity and minimum inert matter, weed seed, and other crop seed.

Responsible for all pesticide and fertilizer application and work carried on at the PMC. Responsible for recommending, purchasing, storing, and utilizing all pesticides (herbicide, insecticide, fungicide, etc.) at the PMC. Keeps accurate records of chemical applications, and maintains pesticide application equipment in good order.

Serves as the safety officer at the PMC. Ensures that all safety hazards are recognized, repaired, eliminated, or brought to the attention of the PMC Manager. Performs safety inspections on vehicles and equipment at the PMC. Responsible for having the annual fire extinguisher inspection scheduled, conducted, and deficiencies corrected. Schedules and ensures that monthly safety meetings are carried out by PMC Staff members. Provides training on safety concerns of PMC Staff members.

Supervises and coordinates the packaging, labeling, and shipping of seed and vegetative plant propagules.

Directs the maintenance of equipment, facilities, and grounds to reflect high standards of neatness and repair. Assists with and conducts tours and explains the PMC's functions to guests. Projects a positive attitude concerning Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) operations and procedures. Directs and trains seasonal employees and lower grade technicians to achieve PMC objectives on a daily basis.

Assists with off-site activities, such as, field evaluation plantings, demonstration plots, or germplasm collections. Assists with evaluation, maintenance, and record keeping of such off-site evaluations. Assists with special projects as needed.

Performs other duties as assigned.

Works within a team concept to develop and implement ways to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of the products and/or services provided to internal and external customers.

Performs duties in a manner supportive of a safe and healthy work environment, and exercises safety precautions when exposed to dangerous objects, chemicals, extreme temperatures, etc.

Performs duties in a manner which actively supports civil rights policies regarding personnel rules and regulations and delivery of NRCS programs and services without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or mental or physical handicap.

### **CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT**

Operates a motor vehicle incident to the above duties. Must possess and maintain a valid state motor vehicle operator's license for the type of vehicle(s) operated.

### **EVALUATION FACTORS**

#### **I. Knowledge Required by Position, Level 1-5, 750 points**

Knowledge of farming operations, including farm machinery and implement operation and irrigation in order to carry out duties in seed production. Includes ability to adapt and modify existing equipment to handle new and unfamiliar seed and planting stock with special seedbed preparation needs.

Knowledge of agronomy, plant biology, soils, and related subject matter fields in order to assist in the operation and maintenance of the PMC projects and foundation fields.

Knowledge of state standards for seed purity and quality in order to have foundation fields ready for inspection by Kansas Crop Improvement Association. This requires knowledge of growing plants, harvesting, and seed cleaning operations to ensure adequate production and high quality of plant materials. A constant vigilance of equipment in harvesting, cleaning, drying, and storing, and ability to maintain records on seed harvest, cleaning procedures, and final product amount is also required.

Knowledge of pesticide application techniques and proper handling, storage, and mixing procedures in order to use and apply in a safe and effective matter.

Knowledge of irrigation practices and use of sprinkler and flood-type irrigation systems in order to determine when plant species need water and how much to apply during irrigation set. This includes an ability to troubleshoot irrigation pumps, motors, right-angle gear drives, and hydrants to ensure a steady flow of water on demand.

Ability to operate and maintain equipment required for specialized farming operations in order to coordinate, perform, and oversee all field work at the PMC. These include, but are not limited to trucks, tractors, combines, sprayers, seed stripper, bag closer, skid steer loader, forklift, wood chipper, and seed conditioning and cleaning equipment.

Knowledge of horticultural and nursery practices for the propagation, care, and maintenance of the genetic integrity of plant materials in order to keep genetically pure lines and varieties from becoming mixed and thus decreasing in value.

Knowledge of basic computer software programs; such as, word processing and spreadsheets, in order to assist with project work plans and keep accurate records.

## 2. Supervisory Controls, Level 2-3, 275 points

The incumbent is under the general supervisory control of the PMC Manager. Work assignments have definite objectives, priorities, and deadlines. The incumbent plans and carries out the successive steps and handles problems and deviations in the work assignment in accordance with instructions, policies, and previous experience. Completed assignments are accepted without detailed review and evaluated for technical soundness and overall conformity to objectives and deadlines.

The incumbent independently plans weekly assignments for seasonal help and lower grade technicians. The incumbent provides training, leadership by example, and direction to seasonal employees and other technicians.

## 3. Guidelines, Level 3-2, 125 points

Guidelines include, but are not limited to, the PMC long range plan, annual business plan, equipment manuals, NRCS General Manual, National Plant Materials Manual, technical guides, pesticide handbooks, reference books, and Internet Web sites. The incumbent develops guidelines for harvesting and handling new plant materials during development in accordance with commonly accepted agronomic practices. The incumbent uses judgment in applying and adjusting guidelines to situations not specifically covered; such as, pesticide application and seed processing. He/she revises and modifies guidelines on the basis of a thorough understanding of the guidelines intent and purpose.

## 4. Complexity, Level 4-3, 150 points

The incumbent assists with the field management of a 169-acre farm which utilizes much specialized equipment. The incumbent performs a full range of duties associated with field work, seed production, and greenhouse operations. Assignments require the ability to perform a variety of tasks involving precise methods and procedures. A high degree of ingenuity and judgment is essential as well as a great deal of technical knowledge in many fields.

This position is complex due to the number of different plant species (over 100 species), variation in management needed for the species, the change in work activity during the year, and the ability to fill many different job activities in processing the different species. A high degree of organizational ability is required as well as the ability to coordinate the activities of several individuals. This requires a common sense approach to problems and creativity in dealing with new situations and people.

## 5. Scope and Effect, Level 5-3, 150 points

The purpose of the work is to assemble, evaluate, test, improve, and increase plant materials to provide vegetative solutions to conservation problems. The work also involves managing the grounds and the physical facilities of the PMC and growing native plant species for foundation seed production.

The PMC also conducts scientific studies to provide technology-related answers to conservation issues in the service area of Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Colorado. The technology-based studies can apply to the conservation issues unique to the service area or can address national conservation concerns. The PMC may address local conservation concerns or be involved in studies that have a national scope and outcome. The incumbent is a key player in both the success of foundation seed production and technology development through studies and experiments. Work directly effects the entire operation of the PMC.

6. Personal Contacts, Level 2B, 75 points

7. Purpose of Contacts

The incumbent has regular contact with PMC personnel and intermittent contact with personnel from other levels within the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). There are frequent contacts with personnel from Kansas State University and other organizations that share PMC resources. There are also contacts with members of the general public who visit the PMC.

The purpose of the contacts is to provide or acquire information related to work assignments. The information involved may range from being easily understood to moderately technical. The incumbent must also resolve problems in coordinating work that involves common goals and interests by different parties on the PMC.

8. Physical Demands, Level 8-2, 20 points

The work requires frequent walking and standing in field areas, test plots, or buildings. Walking may be complicated by irregular ground contours or the need to carry heavy loads. The incumbent will operate trucks, tractors, combines, and other specialized equipment.

9. Work Environment, Level 9-2, 20 points

The incumbent is exposed to hazards, such as dust, pesticides, fertilizers, and farm equipment. Safety procedures, experience, and protective equipment are used to control the hazards. Incumbent is required to use protective clothing or gear such as hard hats, tyvex suits, respirators, ear plugs, goggles, and latex gloves to shield or moderate the risks from chemicals and risky environments.

Work performed on the PMC requires regular exposure to adverse weather conditions from hot and dusty to cold and icy.

This position is determined to be nonexempt from the provisions of FLSA.