LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

ANNOUNCEMENT NO: NRCS-WA-09-11

OPENING DATE: March 4, 2009

CLOSING DATE: September 4, 2009 (1st cut off will be on April 3, 2009, applications received by that time will receive first consideration)

Multiple Leadership Development positions may be established. Each selected employee will retain their present position and grade and will continue to be eligible for promotion or reassignment under competitive merit promotion procedures.

GENERAL INFORMATION:
The Leadership Development Program (LDP) is a unique developmental activity for employees of Washington State NRCS who have the potential and desire to pursue greater leadership responsibility. The purpose, therefore, is to enhance a participant’s leadership and management skills. This program was developed as a direct response to our need to systematically develop the leadership skills of the State’s current and future leaders. It is hoped that this program will offer an opportunity for intense personal and professional growth for the participants.

The training objectives paramount to this LDP are: (1) to challenge employees to undertake leadership development; (2) to expose employees to all levels of management, which may assist them in future career decisions; and (3) to broaden candidates’ perspective and provide them with an opportunity to apply leadership skills in a practical working environment. These objectives may be achieved through a variety of activities tailored to the specific needs of the individual and the organization. These activities may include training courses, details, special projects, reading assignments, shadowing, self assessment, and/or other activities appropriate to the need. Participants will be supported in their endeavors by the State Leadership Team and by assigned mentor(s).

Each employee selected for the LDP is required to make commitments that affect both official and personal time. LDP is a collateral assignment, which may take up to 10 percent of duty time, and also involves a commitment of personal time. Supervisors of selected candidates will work with the State Leadership Team to adjust participants’ workload as appropriate to accommodate the collateral duties. The program features the following components:
• Program can be completed in one year, but may span up to a two-year period, depending on the individual participant’s needs and the needs of the organization.
• Participants selected under this announcement may begin the program immediately, or may delay initiating activities for up to four months to accommodate personal and workload issues. If the program is not initiated within four months, the participant will be dropped from the program and may apply to participate at a later time.
• Participants will be retained in their present positions at their current duty station during the training period and will continue to be eligible for reassignments or promotion under merit promotion procedures. If selected for a new position within the state, participants will be expected to remain in the LDP and fulfill their responsibilities.
• Participants will be evaluated by their mentors with input from other members of the leadership team for their performance in the program and will receive an official review from the State Conservationist.
• Depending on the activities undertaken, the program may involve overnight travel away from the duty station.
• Multiple selections may be made from this announcement.

BASIC ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:
To be eligible for participation in the program, applicants must currently be at the GS-9, -11 or -12 grade level and must have a performance Summary Rating of at least "Fully Successful". An “Agreement of Responsibilities” must be signed by both the applicant and their supervisor. Eligible candidates may be in any career field.

METHOD OF EVALUATION:
All eligible candidates who respond to this announcement will be evaluated on their written application package. In addition, candidates may be asked to participate in an oral presentation and/or interview with members of the State Leadership Team. The State Conservationist will make final selections for the program.

HOW TO APPLY:
Employees who wish to be considered for the LDP must apply in writing to:

    Natural Resources Conservation Service  
    Attn: Cheryle Miller, Human Resources Officer  
    316 W Boone Ave, Suite 450  
    Spokane, WA  99201.

All the following materials must be submitted:

1. A brief resume showing current position and past work experience, with emphasis on the applicant’s contributions and accomplishments in those positions.
2. Responses to 3 essay topics.
3. Agreement of Responsibilities (attached). To be signed by applicant and their supervisor.
4. Copy of most recent completed performance appraisal.

Failure to submit all required material will automatically disqualify a candidate from further consideration.

Candidates will be considered without discrimination for any reason such as race, color, religion, sex, national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, membership in an employee organization, or other non-merit factor.
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

Essay Topics

Instructions: Respond to the following 3 essay questions. Examples used in answering the topics may be from NRCS work experiences or outside experience. Limit responses to no more than 1 page for each topic.

1. Explain why you want to be in the Leadership Development Program.

2. Describe your ability and skill to recognize, analyze, and define problems, and to find alternative solutions.

3. Describe how you define your leadership potential and/or describe pertinent leadership roles you have had in the past and specific responsibilities involved.
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

AGREEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES - EMPLOYEE

I understand that if I am selected for participation in the Leadership Development Program, I must be willing to make the commitments identified in the announcement and to carry out developmental activities identified in the Individual Development Plan.

I also understand that I will be released from the program if I do not make satisfactory progress or fail to take full advantage of the developmental activities.

_____________________________________                                          ______________
Signature                                                                                Date

AGREEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES – SUPERVISOR

I understand that if the above employee is selected for participation in the Leadership Development Program, I must be willing to make the commitments identified in the announcement and to support the employee throughout the Leadership Development Program.

_____________________________________                                          ______________
Signature                                                                                Date