

Student Temporary Employment Program

Natural Resources Conservation Service

North Dakota

You can make a difference in the conservation of our natural resources. We're looking for intelligent and motivated students who want to share their ideas and talents. Working for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) you will have the opportunity to work with landowners, and some of the most dedicated conservationists in the world.

What is the Natural Resources Conservation Service?

NRCS is an agency in the U. S. Department of Agriculture that began conservation work during the Dust Bowl days of the 1930s. A series of dust storms had just ravaged the Nation's farmlands, stripping away millions of tons of topsoil. Huge dust clouds had carried the soil hundreds of miles, all the way to the Atlantic Ocean. Ever since that disaster, NRCS has been trying to make Americans more aware of the need to protect our natural resources, especially soil and water.

The employees of NRCS work with local soil and water conservation districts to encourage and assist people in conserving the Nation's resources. Our programs are aimed at reducing erosion, keeping streams clear, protecting wildlife, and promoting good land use.

NRCS seeks to recruit and retain qualified students, and provide them with the training and experience necessary to assume positions of responsibility and leadership. Career opportunities are available to high school, college, and technical school students through programs such as the Student Temporary Employment Program.

What is a Student Temporary Employment Program?

The Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) is a federal program that employs students in any occupation on a temporary basis. This developmental position is designed to provide a variety of training experience in the application of soil and water conservation practices.

Compensation and Benefits

NRCS student trainees are entitled to compensation based on education and/or experience. Student trainees seeking undergraduate degrees are appointed at grades GS-1 through GS-4, based on qualifications. The following benefits are provided:

- ◆ Work Schedules—NRCS offers four alternative work schedules.
 - ◆ Holidays—Students are entitled to holiday pay if the holiday occurs within their regular tour of duty.
 - ◆ Leave—Students earn annual and sick leave on a pro-rated basis (one hour of annual and sick leave for every 20 hours worked).
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Compensation and Benefits (continued)

- ◆ **Relocation**—When budget allows, NRCS will pay a stipend to students participating in STEP. The purpose of the stipend is to defray a portion of the housing expenses of the student when assigned by NRCS to a work station more than 25 miles from their school or residence. Additional information will be provided when the stipend is authorized to the student or upon request. The student is responsible for transportation to and from assigned duty location each day. Public transportation is only available in some urban areas.
- ◆ **Direct Deposit**—Pay period consist of two weeks. Your paycheck will be electronically deposited into a checking or saving account. Direct deposit offers greater security, timeliness and convenience. Pay is available the first Monday of pay week.

Conversion to Permanent Employment

Students may be noncompetitively converted to the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) whenever they meet the qualification requirements of that program and the agency has an appropriate position available.

Eligibility Requirements

- ◆ Be at least 16 years old.
- ◆ Be a United States citizen or national.
- ◆ Be in good academic standing in a qualifying educational institution.
- ◆ Be enrolled in a field of study that is related to occupations within the NRCS.
- ◆ Possess a valid state driver's license.

How to Apply

Students interested in positions with NRCS should contact the NRCS human resources office, 701-530-2008 or 701-530-2114 (TDD), about openings. Students should then apply through their school's cooperative education coordinator.

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