

# **Natural Resources Conservation Service**

**Engineering Career Group  
Career Guide**

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## Introduction

### NRCS Career Mapping

These Career Maps will allow incumbents to identify the steps needed to qualify for higher-level positions in their current career group. Each career map has a career guide that will provide sample training and developmental activities needed to meet competency gaps between the incumbent's current position and his or her desired position. In addition, these maps will be used for recruitment purposes, explaining what a candidate needs to qualify for various positions.

Each occupation's Career Guide will include:

- A list of competencies with proficiency ratings identified for each position
- A sample list of training and experiential activities that are linked to developing each competency
- Clear guidance about how positions relate to each other

Together, these elements will help inform NRCS employees' and candidates' decisions about their careers at NRCS.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the knowledge area requirements and associated training and developmental experiences associated with each position in the Engineering career group. The Career Guides are not intended to be all encompassing, but rather to give users an overview and snapshot of each job within NRCS.

## Career Group Description

This is an overall description of the career group.

**Table 2. Engineering Career Group Description**

Description
These positions are responsible for the planning, design, and construction of engineering works of improvement for any conservation activities taken on by NRCS. These positions require the application of sound engineering principles. This includes adapting proven methods and procedures, as well as devising new design procedures incorporating the latest technological advances in conservation engineering.

## Jobs within Engineering

**Table 3. Job Titles within Engineering**

OPM Series Code	Job Title
0802	Civil Engineering Technician
0810	Civil Engineer
0819	Environmental Engineer
0890	Agricultural Engineer
0801	Assistant State Conservationist - Operations

This is a description of any internship program NRCS offers that prepares individuals for hiring into this career group.

**Table 4. Engineering Intern Description**

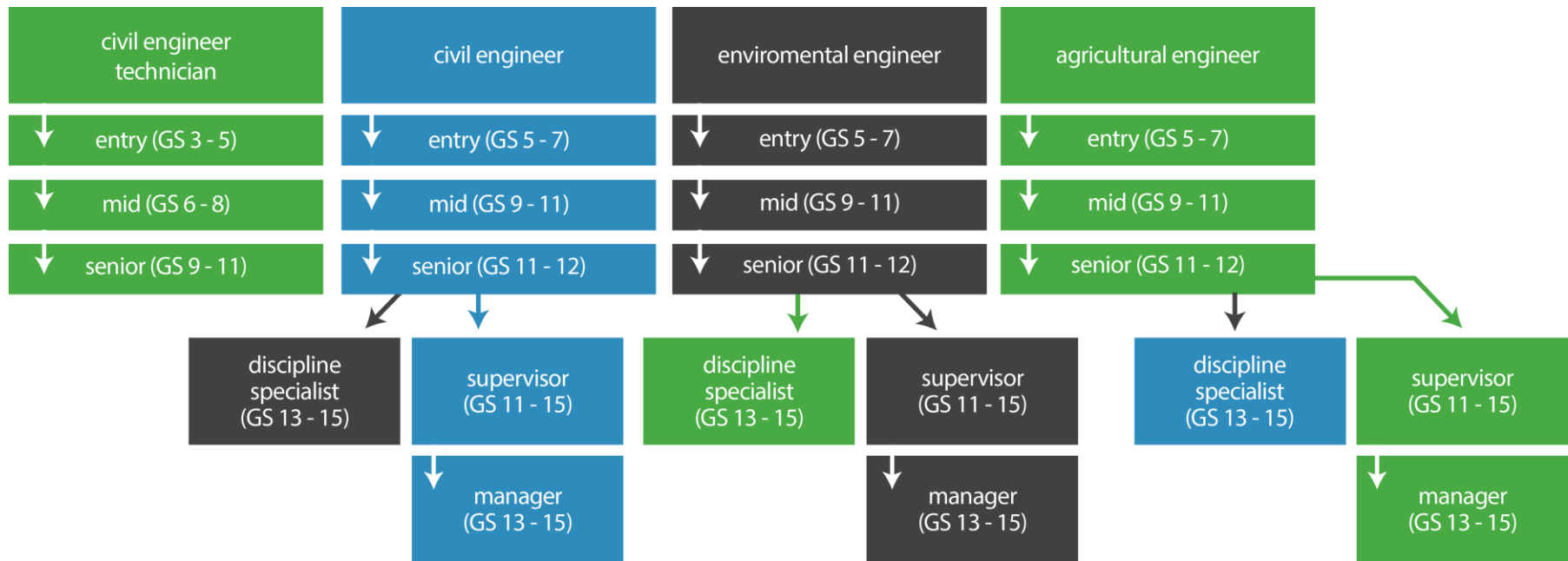
The incumbent serves as an engineer trainee and assistant. The trainee learns to assist in overall planning, design, installation, and maintenance of the engineering phases of soil and water conservation practices.

## Crosswalk of Career Levels to the General Schedule

This table reflects the General Schedule (GS) levels associated with the individual Career Level labels. Definitions of the Career Levels are included in the Appendix.

**Table 5. GS by Career Level**

Job	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
Civil Engineering Technician	GS 3-5	GS 6-8	GS 9-11			
Civil Engineer	GS 5-7	GS 9-11	GS 11-12	GS 13-15	GS 11-15	GS 13-15
Environmental Engineer	GS 5-7	GS 9-11	GS 11-12	GS 13-15	GS 11-15	GS 13-15
Agricultural Engineer	GS 5-7	GS 9-11	GS 11-12	GS 13-15	GS 11-15	GS 13-15



## Engineering Job Descriptions

This is a general overview of each Engineering job, intended to provide a common framework for describing what the job is.

**Table 6. Engineering Job Descriptions**

Job	Description
Civil Engineering Technician	This person provides engineering assistance, working with landowners, groups, and units of government to apply and maintain a variety of conservation practices. This job also includes the responsibility of designing engineering practices, preparing engineering drawings, computing quantities, and preparing cost estimates. This position does not require an engineering degree.
Civil Engineer	This person provides engineering assistance, working with landowners, groups, and units of government to apply and maintain a variety of conservation practices. This person is responsible for providing technical guidance and the overall planning, design, installation, and maintenance of the civil engineering phases of conservation activities.
Environmental Engineer	This person provides engineering assistance, working with landowners, groups, and units of government to apply and maintain a variety of conservation practices. This person is responsible for providing technical guidance and the overall planning, design, installation, and maintenance of the environmental engineering phases of conservation activities.
Agricultural Engineer	This person provides engineering assistance, working with landowners, groups, and units of government to apply and maintain a variety of conservation practices. This person is responsible for providing technical guidance and the overall planning, design, installation, and maintenance of the agricultural engineering phases of conservation activities.



Job	Description
Assistant State Conservationist - Operations	This person manages and directs functions involved in planning, organizing, and implementing a comprehensive soil, water, engineering, and resource conservation and development program for the state. The incumbent of this position has responsibility for operations and internal controls.

## Overall Engineering Job Duties

These are three major duties associated with all Career Levels in a job.

**Table 7. Overall Engineering Job Duties**

Job	Duty 1	Duty 2	Duty 3
Civil Engineering Technician	Conducts planning and data collection	Conducts analysis and design	Performs quality assurance of conservation practices
Civil Engineer	Conducts planning and data collection	Conducts analysis and design	Performs quality assurance of conservation practices
Environmental Engineer	Conducts planning and data collection	Conducts analysis and design	Performs quality assurance of conservation practices
Agricultural Engineer	Conducts planning and data collection	Conducts analysis and design	Performs quality assurance of conservation practices
Assistant State Conservationist - Operations	Formulates and establishes the State natural resource conservation policies and programs based on broad national agency objectives	Develops and implements a system of operational and program assessments and reviews to evaluate effectiveness of conservation planning and practices	Develops and maintains effective working relationships with the conservation districts and the State-level natural resources agencies

## Specifics by Job – Civil Engineering Technician

### Job Duties by Career Level – Civil Engineering Technician

These are three major duties associated with the individual Career Levels for the Civil Engineering Technician job. In general, these are slight deviations of the Overall Duties, intended to show the differences in responsibility between the Career Levels.

**Table 8. Career Level Duties – Civil Engineering Technician**

Job Duty	Entry	Mid	Senior
Assists in survey work, basic CAD work, and data collection	✓		
Performs basic GIS, quantity computations, and drafting/CAD	✓		
Assists in construction surveys, inspection, and testing	✓		
Performs survey work, CAD work, and data collection		✓	
Independently performs and reviews GIS, quantity computations, design calculations, drafting/CAD, and designs		✓	
Independently performs construction surveys, inspection, and testing		✓	
Performs, trains, and provides guidance for survey work, CAD work, and data collection			✓
Performs, reviews, trains, and provides guidance for GIS, quantity computations, design calculations, drafting/CAD, and designs			✓
Performs, trains, and provides guidance for construction surveys, inspection, and testing			✓

## Foundational Competencies – Civil Engineering Technician

These are the top foundational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. The set of top foundational competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes the top competencies.

**Table 9. Foundational Competencies –  
Civil Engineering Technician**

Foundational Competency	Proficiency Rating		
	Entry	Mid	Senior
1. Attention to Detail	1	3	4
2. Accountability	1	3	5
3. Organizing and Prioritizing Work	1	2	4
4. Representing the Agency	1	2	3
5. Resource Management	1	2	3
6. Technology Management	1	2	4
7. Organizational Awareness	1	2	3
8. Initiative	1	2	3
9. Oral Communication	1	2	3
10. Teamwork	1	2	3
11. Problem Solving	1	2	3

## Recommended Foundational Experience – Civil Engineering Technician

These are the top experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Foundational Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

**Table 10. Recommended Foundational Experience – Civil Engineering Technician**

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Attention to Detail	Entry	Reviews own work to verify that work adheres to given instructions, applicable regulations, and guidelines
		Edits own work products for basic errors (e.g., grammatical, typographical) before submitting to supervisors
		Collects and enters data into electronic information systems accurately
	Mid	Ensures own products and services are complete, accurate, and in accordance with established policies, standards/specifications, and guidelines
		Reviews the quality of information or data provided by others for accuracy and completeness
		Conducts thorough analysis to provide accurate and complete information in order to make decisions
	Sr	Ensures own and others' work products are technically accurate, reliable, and in accordance with established policies, standard/specifications, and guidelines
		Reinforces importance of high-quality products and services with peers and team members
		Prepares manuals, guidelines, or standard operation procedures to minimize mistakes or errors
		Serves in an advisory capacity as a recognized expert in ensuring high quality products

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Accountability	Entry	Develops knowledge of relevant policies, rules, and procedures and follows them accordingly
		Identifies and corrects own mistakes and brings them to the attention of others when necessary
		Accepts responsibility for own actions, regardless of outcome
	Mid	Conveys to others the importance of accomplishing goals and delivering results on time
		Accepts responsibility when missed deadlines affect others' work or unit-level outcomes and makes changes to ensure timelines are met in the future
		Fulfills commitments made to peers, supervisors, and customers, providing plenty of notice if unable to meet obligations so that alternative plans can be made
		Tracks progress of work and responds to obstacles threatening established goals
	Sr	Provides guidance and communicates methods for achieving results to correct failed or delayed unit-level efforts
		Leads efforts to establish a methodology for achieving results
		Ensures a culture of accountability among others by defining roles and responsibilities
		Creates policies, rules, procedures, systems, and/or processes that ensure accountability (e.g., internal controls)

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Organizing and Prioritizing Work	Entry	Organizes and accomplishes assigned tasks/work to ensure timely delivery of information, products, and/or services
		Seeks guidance on setting work/task priorities and follows priorities as assigned
		Maintains appropriate files and records to document progress toward goals
	Mid	Prepares routine plans, including identifying timelines and scheduling tasks
		Prioritizes routine tasks to ensure timely delivery of information, products, and services
		Systematically breaks large tasks down into smaller, more manageable subtasks
	Sr	Prepares plans for complex and/or controversial projects and identifies resources to deliver projects within established parameters
		Develops progressive long-term strategic plans and business plans
		Revises project plans of others, critiquing and recommending changes when needed
		Defines measurable and observable work outcomes for self and work unit that are fully aligned with, and advance, the Agency's goals and strategic direction

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Representing the Agency	Entry	Appropriately supports the Agency's goals in interactions with others
		Maintains professional attitude and actions in all business situations
		Develops knowledge of relevant policies, rules, and procedures for representing the Agency (e.g., standards of conduct) and follows them accordingly
	Mid	Recognizes confrontational situations with customers and refers/redirects them appropriately
		Promotes support for the mission and programs of the Agency through all forms of communication
		Represents the Agency in small group presentations or meetings with customers
		Participates in Agency outreach activities (e.g., county fairs, job fairs)
	Sr	Takes effective steps to resolve confrontational situations with customers in a manner that reflects positively on the Agency
		Promotes the Agency in a professional manner that educates others, protects its interests, and enhances its image and reputation
		Represents the Agency as a professional expert on natural resource conservation issues (e.g., presents a technical paper at a conference)



Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Resource Management	Entry	Develops knowledge of proper use of government resources (e.g., travel card) and completes required training courses (e.g., GPS training) to effectively use resources
		Appropriately uses available resources (e.g., obtains proper authorization, protects resources, reports damages/misuse in accordance with policy)
		Maintains appropriate documentation for resource use (e.g., timesheet, vehicle usage)
		Identifies apparent maintenance needs to job-related resources (e.g., equipment)
	Mid	Identifies and requests or obtains necessary job-related resources (e.g., office supplies, training) according to policy
		Identifies and reports misuse and/or fraudulent behavior
		Maintains job-related tools and resources to keep resources in good working order
	Sr	Requests and/or acquires resources (e.g., supplies or equipment) based on policy, workload analysis, and supporting documentation
		Communicates and implements policies and guidance to appropriately manage resources and ensure understanding
		Tracks and documents inventories, usage, and disposal of resources
		Fully utilizes available resources, ensuring resources are not wasted

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Technology Management	Entry	Develops a basic awareness of technology (i.e., eFOTG, Customer Service Toolkit, etc.) needed to accomplish specific duties
		Follows specific guidance to safeguard technology to ensure the prevention of abuse, waste, loss, or unauthorized use (i.e., locking computer, using passwords to manage files)
		Completes security awareness training
	Mid	Understands the process to gain access to and utilize technical resources
		Demonstrates knowledge of current technological developments and appropriately applies this knowledge to achieve results
		Identifies problems or issues with technology systems and/or equipment
		Adapts processes to keep pace with new technological developments
	Sr	Resolves identified problems or issues with technological systems and equipment
		Provides assistance and instruction on new technology to users
		Identifies and justifies the need for new technology and develops new and/or revised systems or equipment for large scale use
Coordinates with others internal and external to the Agency to ensure that technology is effectively utilized by the Agency		

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Organizational Awareness	Entry	Develops a basic understanding of, and carries out, basic tasks in accordance with the Agency's mission, vision, functions, values, and policies/procedures
		Acquires an understanding of the Agency's organizational structure and appropriate interactions between staff
		Participates in NRCS training activities and attends relevant organizational meetings
	Mid	Applies sufficient knowledge of Agency to independently perform varied assignments
		Takes initiative to increase understanding of relevant organizational processes through self-directed activities
		Articulates basic information regarding the Agency's vision, mission, and functions to customers and partners
	Sr	Demonstrates and maintains a thorough understanding of the Agency's mission, functions, values, and policies/procedures
		Understands the interrelationships between various units, organizations, and partners and how these affect the Agency's mission
		Applies depth or breadth of knowledge of Agency to guide others on varied assignments

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Initiative	Entry	Demonstrates a willingness to learn the work requirements of one's job
		Completes work assignments as directed by supervisors or manager without additional reminders or prompting
	Mid	Seeks out new responsibilities, assignments, and opportunities
		Asks coworkers, peers, and supervisors questions to better understand work requirements and needs of customers
		Participates in a mentoring relationship as a protégé
	Sr	Seeks out more challenging responsibilities, such as managing projects
		Volunteers to take the lead on team efforts outside of one's normal job duties
		Takes the initiative to develop tools/instructions to share with coworkers (e.g., developing standard operating procedures for a specific area)
		Participates in a mentoring relationship to assist in the development of less-experienced staff
	Oral Communication	Entry
Asks questions to clarify understanding		
Provides in-person briefings to immediate supervisors and others as directed on work assignment/task status		
Uses appropriate language and grammar when speaking to others		
Mid		Presents information in own area of expertise to small or moderately-sized groups
		Communicates information clearly and concisely to avoid miscommunication
		Answers basic or routine questions from customers, vendors, or other individuals and tailors responses appropriately
Sr		Makes oral presentations to a variety of audiences of varying size, conveying main ideas and supporting points clearly and concisely
		Handles questions from others appropriately, asking clarifying questions when necessary, and quickly adapting to unforeseen circumstances
		Seeks input from others and carefully listens to others' ideas and comments
		Adapts communication style to audience and their level of understanding

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Teamwork	Entry	Provides help or assistance to team members when asked, regardless of the task
		Participates in efforts to improve team cooperation and trust
		Communicates openly and candidly with other team members
		Recognizes team boundaries and identifies own role and responsibilities on team
	Mid	Proactively offers assistance to ensure team achieves goals and objectives
		Considers other work group members' priorities, needs, and concerns
		Works collaboratively and flexibly with others to accomplish shared goals
		Shares relevant skills and knowledge with others
	Sr	Is cognizant and respectful of others' time
		Contributes ideas and shares skills and knowledge with team members, encouraging others to do the same
		Understands different team members' roles, how these various roles interact with each other, and the resulting impact on workflow
		Works with divergent personalities and work styles, ensuring focus remains on the goal and the team makes consistent progress on tasks
Problem Solving	Entry	Solves straightforward problems that have occurred in the past
		Performs evaluations and analyses of information to draw reasonable, logical conclusions for basic problems
		Identifies the problem and information that may be relevant to a solution
	Mid	Applies proven solutions, strategies, and/or procedures to solve problems
		Determines cause of a customer problem and takes approved, corrective actions
		Identifies problems, considers available information, and evaluates alternative solutions to problems affecting own work
	Sr	Reconciles conflicting and/or incomplete information to develop solutions
		Uses data and information to identify relationships, issues, assumptions, and emerging trends, and draws sound conclusions
		Solves problems by thoroughly analyzing their causes and short- and long-term implications of solution

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
		Anticipates potential problems and takes or proposes corrective actions

## Occupational Competencies – Civil Engineering Technician

These are the top occupational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. These should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes all of the occupational competencies associated with the Civil Engineering Technician job.

**Table 11. Occupational Competencies – Civil Engineering Technician**

Occupational Competency	Proficiency Rating		
	Entry	Mid	Senior
1. Surveying	1	2	4
2. Data Collection and Analyses	1	2	4
3. Problem Identification	1	2	4
4. Planning Assistance	1	2	4
5. Design	1	3	4
6. Quality Control/Quality Assurance	1	2	4

## Recommended Occupational Experience – Civil Engineering Technician

These are the top experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Occupational Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

**Table 12. Recommended Occupational Experience – Civil Engineering Technician**

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Surveying	Entry	Under supervision, develops basic understanding of surveying methods, procedures, and basic surveying tools
		Under supervision, gathers basic required survey data
		Under close supervision, performs required calculations to analyze survey data
	Mid	Independently uses basic surveying tools (e.g., level, laser level)
		Under limited supervision, uses complex surveying tools (e.g., Total Station, GPS) to gather survey data
		Under limited supervision, performs required calculations to analyze survey data
		Under limited supervision, plans and conducts routine surveys
		Develops a basic knowledge of proper surveying equipment maintenance and calibration
	Sr	Develops and provides training to others in the use of surveying equipment
		Develops specific methods and procedures to survey unique and/or difficult areas
		Advises and/or directs others on how to carry out more complex surveying projects
		Recommends new survey technologies and methodologies that would enhance survey performance
		Provides oversight and subject matter expertise on surveying for various work units

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Data Collection and Analyses	Entry	Under supervision, develops awareness of basic data and information collection requirements and techniques (e.g., soils, water quality/quantity, water use requirements)
		Under supervision, collects basic data and carries out required analyses
		Under supervision, develops awareness of basic engineering needs for data collection
		Under close supervision, develops awareness of basic materials testing processes and general materials properties
	Mid	Independently collects and/or analyzes data for basic engineering (e.g., waterways) or processes
		With limited supervision, conducts more complex data collection and/or analyses
		With limited supervision, assists in preparing comprehensive data analysis reports
		Independently executes routine test procedures (e.g., specific gravity, crumb dispersion, slump test)
	Sr	Oversees data collection and/or analyses for highly complex and/or unique engineering projects or processes
		Conducts training for others on data collection and/or analyses
		Provides oversight and training for complex procedures
		Investigates new methods and equipment for data collection and analyses and recommends implementation



Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Problem Identification	Entry	Under close supervision, develops an awareness of common types of resource concerns/problems that are found in common sites located in area
		Under close supervision, assists in analyzing situation to identify basic resource concerns/problems
		Develops a basic knowledge of NRCS' conservation planning process and the conservation practice standards
	Mid	Under supervision, assists others in identifying concerns/problems in more complex situations
		Under some supervision, prepares reports documenting resource concerns/problems
		Demonstrates a basic knowledge of NRCS' conservation planning process and the conservation practice standards
	Sr	Provides training on methods to assess most resource concerns/problems
		Independently provides assessment of resource concerns/problems found in complex and/or unique situations
		Revises assessments conducted by others and provides troubleshooting assistance and guidance
		Participates in an interdisciplinary inventory and evaluation team

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Planning Assistance	Entry	Under close supervision, develops an awareness of different engineering alternatives commonly used in their service area
		Under supervision, develops familiarity with relevant NRCS references in order to develop alternatives
		Accompanies others to meetings with landowners/clients
	Mid	Under limited supervision, develops options/plans to provide solutions to most concerns/problems
		Under limited supervision, prepares reports documenting explanations on ways to address resource concerns
		With limited supervision, advises landowners/clients on routine alternatives and solutions
		With limited supervision, assists landowners/clients in selecting alternative(s) to address routine resource concerns
	Sr	Develops innovative alternatives to address complex resource concerns across a wide geographical area
		Develops and provides training on the formulation and evaluation of alternatives
Reviews assessments conducted by others and provides troubleshooting assistance and guidance		

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Design	Entry	Develops an awareness of NRCS design policies and procedures
		Under supervision, performs basic design computations
		Under supervision, incorporates standard drawings into a design
		Under close supervision, develops an awareness of computer-aided drafting and design standards
	Mid	Independently develops designs and construction documents for a variety of projects in accordance with NRCS policies and procedures
		Performs reviews of designs developed by others
		Advises others on component design and construction documents
		Independently performs computations in support of more complex designs
		Independently performs computer-aided drafting and design using agency tools
	Sr	Conducts training on developing designs and construction documents
		Independently designs more complex structures to address difficult/unique situations
		Performs independent reviews and approvals of designs for more complex projects
		Develops and implements design assistance tools
		Provides guidance to others on computer-aided drafting and design
		Develops 3D models (e.g., CADD) for development and conceptualization of designs

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Quality Control/Quality Assurance	Entry	Under close supervision, develops the required understanding of the quality assurance process
		Under close supervision, assists with quality assurance and develops quality assurance skills consistent with NRCS policies and procedures
	Mid	With limited supervision, assists with quality assurance reviews and recommending corrective actions
		With minimal guidance, develops as-built records for routine projects
		Assists with pre-construction activities
	Sr	Develops and maintains state construction and material specifications
		Provides training on more complex NRCS policies and procedures with regard to quality assurance
		Reviews for constructability of the more complex designs
		Serves as a contracting officer's technical representative (COTR) on engineering projects

## Recommended Education/Certifications – Civil Engineering Technician

These are the recommended education/certification requirements to be able to attain each level of the Civil Engineer Technician job. These recommendations are based on Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidelines as well as Subject Matter Expert recommendations.

**Table 13. Recommended Education and Certifications – Civil Engineering Technician**

Education/Certifications	Career Level		
	Entry	Mid	Senior
1. Four-year course of study above high school leading to a bachelor's degree in an appropriate field of engineering, construction or industrial technology	✓	✓	✓
2. Bachelor's degree must include at least 24 semester hours in any combination of courses such as engineering, engineering or industrial technology, construction, physics, drafting, surveying, physical science or mathematics	✓	✓	✓
3. At least six of the 24 semester hours must have been in drafting	✓	✓	✓

## Professional Associations – Civil Engineering Technician

These are five professional associations that are recommended as resources for individuals interested in the Civil Engineering Technician job.

**Table 14. Professional Associations –  
Civil Engineering Technician**

American Society of Civil Engineers
Chartered Institution of Civil Engineering Surveyors
National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies
The American Concrete Institute
The Soil and Water Conservation Society

## Specifics by Job – Civil Engineer

### Job Duties by Career Level – Civil Engineer

These are three major duties associated with the individual Career Levels for the Civil Engineer job. In general, these are slight deviations of the Overall Duties, intended to show the differences in responsibility between the Career Levels.

**Table 15. Career Level Duties – Civil Engineer**

Job Duty	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
Performs site investigations, survey work, CAD work, and data collection	✓					
Prepares and reviews engineering designs and reports, which includes design calculations and plan preparation	✓					
Performs quality assurance to ensure that projects get carried out as designed and recommends additions as needed	✓					
Performs, trains, and provides guidance for site investigations, survey work, CAD work, and data collection		✓				
Prepares, provides training, provides guidance, and reviews engineering designs and reports which includes design calculations and plan preparation		✓				

Job Duty	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
Performs, provides training for, and guidance on quality assurance, ensuring projects are carried out as designed and recommends additions as needed		✓				
Performs, trains, oversees, and provides guidance for site investigations, survey work, CAD work, and data collection			✓			
Prepares, trains for, oversees, provides guidance, and reviews engineering designs and reports including design calculation and plan preparation			✓			
Performs, trains, oversees, and provides guidance on quality assurance, ensuring projects are carried out as designed and recommends additions as needed			✓			
Provides discipline-specific technical leadership for planning and data collection				✓		
Provides discipline-specific technical leadership for engineering analysis and design				✓		
Provides discipline-specific technical leadership for quality assurance				✓		
Performs, and supervises individuals performing site investigations, survey work, CAD work, and data collection					✓	



Job Duty	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
Performs and supervises the individuals creating engineering designs and reports, which includes design calculations and plan preparation					✓	
Performs and supervises individuals performing quality assurance to ensure that projects are carried out as designed and recommends additions as needed					✓	
Directs and leads the technical program						✓
Finalizes and issues technical policies and procedures in accordance with Agency priorities						✓
Manages resources, dollars, and people to meet Agency priorities						✓

## Foundational Competencies – Civil Engineer

These are the top foundational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. The set of top foundational competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes the top competencies.

**Table 16. Foundational Competencies – Civil Engineer**

Foundational Competency	Proficiency Rating					
	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
1. Attention to Detail	1	3	4	4	4	5
2. Organizing and Prioritizing Work	1	2	4	4	4	5
3. Representing the Agency	1	2	3	3	4	5
4. Resource Management	1	2	3	3	4	5
5. Technology Management	1	2	4	4	4	5
6. Organizational Awareness	1	2	3	3	4	5
7. Oral Communication	1	2	3	3	4	5
8. Written Communication	1	2	3	3	4	5
9. Conflict Management	1	2	4	4	4	5
10. Interpersonal Skills	1	2	4	4	4	5
11. Teamwork	1	2	4	4	4	5
12. Creativity and Innovation	1	2	4	4	4	5
13. Decisive Judgment and Decision Making	1	2	4	4	4	5
14. Problem Solving	1	2	4	4	4	5

## Recommended Foundational Experience – Civil Engineer

These are the top experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Foundational Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

**Table 17. Recommended Foundational Experience – Civil Engineer**

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Attention to Detail	Entry	Reviews own work to verify that work adheres to given instructions, applicable regulations, and guidelines
		Edits own work products for basic errors (e.g., grammatical, typographical) before submitting to supervisors
		Collects and enters data into electronic information systems accurately
	Mid	Ensures own products and services are complete, accurate, and in accordance with established policies, standards/specifications, and guidelines
		Reviews the quality of information or data provided by others for accuracy and completeness
		Conducts thorough analysis to provide accurate and complete information in order to make decisions
	Sr/Dis Spec/Sup	Ensures own and others' work products are technically accurate, reliable, and in accordance with established policies, standard/specifications, and guidelines
		Reinforces importance of high-quality products and services with peers and team members
		Prepares manuals, guidelines, or standard operation procedures to minimize mistakes or errors
		Serves in an advisory capacity as a recognized expert in ensuring high quality products
	Mgr	Establishes a climate for the organizational unit that emphasizes the importance and impact of high-quality products and services
		Finalizes or oversees the development of manuals, guidelines, or standard operating procedures to minimize mistakes or errors

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
		Oversees the integration of multi-faceted information from various subject areas into a policy, document, model, etc.

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Organizing and Prioritizing Work	Entry	Organizes and accomplishes assigned tasks/work to ensure timely delivery of information, products, and/or services
		Seeks guidance on setting work/task priorities and follows priorities as assigned
		Maintains appropriate files and records to document progress toward goals
	Mid	Prepares routine plans, including identifying timelines and scheduling tasks
		Prioritizes routine tasks to ensure timely delivery of information, products, and services
		Systematically breaks large tasks down into smaller, more manageable subtasks
	Sr	Prepares plans for complex and/or controversial projects and identifies resources to deliver projects within established parameters
		Develops progressive long-term strategic plans and business plans
		Reviews project plans of others, critiquing and recommending changes when needed
		Defines measurable and observable work outcomes for self and work unit that are fully aligned with and advance the Agency's goals and strategic direction
	Dis Spec/ Sup	Prepares plans for complex and/or controversial projects and identifies resources to deliver projects within established parameters
		Develops progressive long-term strategic plans and business plans
		Reviews project plans of others, critiquing and recommending changes when needed
		Defines measurable and observable work outcomes for self and work unit that are fully aligned with and advance the Agency's goals and strategic direction
	Mgr	Anticipates changing workload requirements well in advance and advocates for needed resources based on strategy and planning
		Plans and implements multi-agency, multi-year, large-scale efforts
		Coordinates work with multiple internal or external parties to ensure results are achieved that support the Agency's goals and strategic direction

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Representing the Agency	Entry	Appropriately supports the Agency's goals in interactions with others
		Maintains professional attitude and actions in all business situations
		Develops knowledge of relevant policies, rules, and procedures for representing the Agency (e.g., standards of conduct) and follows them accordingly
	Mid	Recognizes confrontational situations with customers and refers/redirects them appropriately
		Promotes support for the mission and programs of the Agency through all forms of communication
		Represents the Agency in small group presentations or meetings with customers
		Participates in Agency outreach activities (e.g., county fairs, job fairs)
	Sr/Dis Spec	Takes effective steps to resolve confrontational situations with customers in a manner that reflects positively on the Agency
		Promotes the Agency in a professional manner that educates others, protects its interests, and enhances its image and reputation
		Represents the Agency as a professional expert on natural resource conservation issues (e.g., presents a technical paper at a conference)
	Sup	Serves as a role model and advises others on presenting a professional image of the Agency to enhance trust and credibility
		Engages with others in a manner that earns their respect and advances the goals and objectives of the Agency
		Serves as an Agency representative on interagency teams and projects
		Represents the Agency's interests to a variety of parties (e.g., at technical group meetings, to universities)
	Mgr	Manages complex and difficult situations with confidence and decisiveness, enhancing the reputation and image of the Agency
		Meets with elected or appointed officials to provide Agency and program information for decision-making
Promotes and justifies the Agency's programs and actions in contentious situations		
Markets the Agency's mission and programs through media outlets		

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Resource Management	Entry	Develops knowledge of proper use of government resources (e.g., travel card) and completes required training courses (e.g., GPS training) to effectively use resources
		Appropriately uses available resources (e.g., obtains proper authorization, protects resources, reports damages/misuse in accordance with policy)
		Maintains appropriate documentation for resource use (e.g., timesheet, vehicle usage)
		Identifies apparent maintenance needs to job-related resources (e.g., equipment)
	Mid	Identifies and requests or obtains necessary job-related resources (e.g., office supplies, training) according to policy
		Identifies and reports misuse and/or fraudulent behavior
		Maintains job-related tools and resources to keep resources in good working order
	Sr/ Dis Spec	Requests and/or acquires resources (e.g., supplies or equipment) based on policy, workload analysis, and supporting documentation
		Communicates and implements policies and guidance to appropriately manage resources and ensure understanding
		Tracks and documents inventories, usage, and disposal of resources
		Fully utilizes available resources, ensuring resources are not wasted
	Sup	Implements, monitors and ensures that resources for work unit are distributed and utilized in an efficient manner (e.g., personnel, accountable property)
		Develops procedures, policies, and guidelines for appropriately managing resources to prevent misuse, waste, and abuse of Agency resources
		Develops innovative strategies to track usage and maximize utilization of resources
	Mgr	Handles resource requirements for extremely complex projects/assignments, monitoring and regularly redirecting resources to maximize results across initiatives
Develops and implements flexible and innovative approaches to stretch limited resources or leverage additional resources, resulting in greater contributions to the Agency		
Partners with Agency and Department leadership to identify tools to manage resources		

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Technology Management	Entry	Develops a basic awareness of technology (i.e., eFOTG, Customer Service Toolkit, etc.) needed to accomplish specific duties
		Follows specific guidance to safeguard technology to ensure the prevention of abuse, waste, loss, or unauthorized use (i.e., locking computer, using passwords to manage files)
		Completes security awareness training
	Mid	Understands the process to gain access to and utilize technical resources
		Demonstrates knowledge of current technological developments and appropriately applies this knowledge to achieve results
		Identifies problems or issues with technology systems and/or equipment
		Adapts processes to keep pace with new technological developments
	Sr/Dis Spec/Sup	Resolves identified problems or issues with technological systems and equipment
		Provides assistance and instruction on new technology to users
		Identifies and justifies the need for new technology and develops new and/or revised systems or equipment for large scale use
		Coordinates with others internal and external to the Agency to ensure that technology is effectively utilized by the Agency
	Mgr	Effectively anticipates future technological developments and takes steps to ensure that new technology is easily incorporated to achieve the objectives of the Agency
		Identifies new technological resources available internal and external to the Agency, and skillfully gains access to these resources
		Develops plans and/or recommendations to address new and future technological needs



Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Organizational Awareness	Entry	Develops a basic understanding of and carries out basic tasks in accordance with the Agency's mission, vision, functions, values, and policies/procedures
		Acquires an understanding of the Agency's organizational structure and appropriate interactions between staff
		Participates in NRCS training activities and attends relevant organizational meetings
	Mid	Applies sufficient knowledge of Agency to independently perform varied assignments
		Takes initiative to increase understanding of relevant organizational processes through self-directed activities
		Articulates basic information regarding the Agency's vision, mission, and functions to customers and partners
	Sr/Dis Spec	Demonstrates and maintains a thorough understanding of the Agency's mission, functions, values, and policies/procedures
		Understands the interrelationships between various units, organizations, and partners and how these affect the Agency's mission
		Applies depth or breadth of knowledge of Agency to guide others on varied assignments
	Sup	Contributes to the development of the strategic plan for assigned area of responsibility
		Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the Agency's mission, functions, values, applicable policies and procedures, and internal and external factors that may impact NRCS projects
		Applies depth and breadth of knowledge of Agency to perform well and/or guide others on the full range of complex or varied assignments that impact the reputation of the Agency
	Mgr	Develops Agency strategic objectives and goals
		Utilizes knowledge of Agency structure to realign functions and/or positions to create more effective and efficient workflows
		Demonstrates an understanding of the impact of Congressional action on the Agency

		Demonstrates expertise regarding organizational systems and the internal and external factors impacting NRCS projects
		Seeks out and capitalizes on opportunities to leverage knowledge of how Agency and processes work to make contributions with far-ranging impact

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Oral Communication	Entry	Actively listens when others are speaking
		Asks questions to clarify understanding
		Provides in-person briefings to immediate supervisors and others, as directed, on work assignment/task status
		Uses appropriate language and grammar when speaking to others
	Mid	Presents information in own area of expertise to small or moderately-sized groups
		Communicates information clearly and concisely to avoid miscommunication
		Answers basic or routine questions from customers, vendors, or other individuals and tailors responses appropriately
	Sr/Dis Spec	Makes oral presentations to a variety of audiences of varying size, conveying main ideas and supporting points clearly and concisely
		Handles questions from others appropriately, asking clarifying questions when necessary and quickly adapting to unforeseen circumstances
		Seeks input from others and carefully listens to others' ideas and comments
		Adapts communication style to audience and their level of understanding
	Sup	Leads presentations and briefings for high-level internal and external stakeholders
		Clearly explains benefits of programs and policies to stakeholders to improve understanding
		Responds to difficult/complex questions with ease, responding promptly and accurately in a clear, concise, credible, and courteous manner
		Presents at state-wide and/or national/professional meetings or conferences
		Communicates with diverse populations (e.g., different language, special needs)

	Mgr	Presents highly complex information articulately when meeting with key executives or public officials, including issues with high-visibility
		Communicates sensitive information on topics in vague or uncertain situations without misleading the audience
		Uses communication to produce enthusiasm and foster an atmosphere of open exchange and support

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Written Communication	Entry	Understands the Agency's style, format guidelines, and filing codes procedures
		Uses appropriate grammar, punctuation, and spelling
		Clearly communicates information in writing to supervisor and colleagues
		Writes basic internal communications
	Mid	Drafts concise, straightforward summaries of information (e.g., portions of plans/reports)
		Prepares routine written communications that are accurate, clear, concise, and well-organized
		Answers routine or basic questions to internal and external customers appropriately (e.g., tone, detail) and in a timely manner when responding in writing
		Utilizes the Agency's style, format guidelines, and filing code procedures
	Sr	Interprets and prepares summaries or recommendations
		Reviews and edits reports or materials prepared by others for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and conformance to style and format guidelines
		Utilizes available resources, such as an editor, to proof and edit documents for distribution
		Addresses issues with internal and external customers appropriately (e.g., tone, detail) and in a timely manner when responding in writing
	Dis Spec	Interprets and prepares summaries or recommendations
Reviews and edits reports or materials prepared by others for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and conformance to style and format guidelines		
Utilizes available resources, such as an editor, to proof and edit documents for distribution		

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
		Addresses issues with internal and external customers appropriately (e.g., tone, detail) and in a timely manner when responding in writing
	Sup	Writes complex technical reports, plans, and procedural manuals using clear terminology and concise format for use by decision makers
		Recognizes the most critical issues and considers ramifications of written communications, tailoring communications accordingly
		Writes clear, concise issue papers or policy documents on complex topics establishing Agency-wide guidance or guidelines
	Mgr	Writes, reviews, and publishes advanced technical/program findings and guidelines to be made available to other groups and agencies
		Prepares highly complex written communication for national distribution that have significant implications for the Agency
		Communicates persuasively about programs, projects, and proposals in writing with multiple stakeholders
		Addresses Congressional inquiries with straightforward, concise written responses

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Conflict Management	Entry	Resolves minor work-related disagreements or conflicts with peers
		Actively listens to others and tries to understand their perspectives
		Directs escalating disagreements or conflicts to manager or supervisor, when necessary
		Develops knowledge of relevant policies, rules, and procedures (i.e., conflict management policies) and follows them accordingly
	Mid	Develops options to resolve disagreements or conflicts that require resolution at a higher level
		Considers all sides of an issue when discussing an issue with others
		Anticipates situations that have the potential for conflict
	Sr/Dis Spec/ Sup	Takes steps to address, resolve, and minimize the escalation of complex or sensitive issues
		Balances the needs of different team members or units, achieving highly effective resolutions
		Identifies subtle indicators of conflict and mitigates emerging issues
		Manages conflict by serving as an unofficial mediator
	Mgr	Resolves conflicts arising at multiple organizational levels due to competing objectives, limited resources, or differing perspectives
		Leads consensus process on organizational unit's response to a controversial issue
		Develops consensus among multiple stakeholders with opposing viewpoints on critical/complex issues
		Develops, practices, and trains others in the application of mediation techniques

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Interpersonal Skills	Entry	Interacts with coworkers in a tactful manner
		Responds to others' inquiries or questions courteously and in a timely fashion
		Treats everyone fairly, equitable, and professionally, respecting individual differences and diversity
	Mid	Builds productive and professional relationships with coworkers inside own work group
		Seeks opportunities to develop professional relationships with others inside and outside of Agency
		Interacts with customers in a tactful manner and adjusts behavior appropriately
	Sr/Dis Spec/ Sup	Builds and maintains a network of professional relationships with staff and coworkers, as well as people in other offices or states
		Reads and interprets others' behavior during interactions and uses this insight to make necessary adjustments in the moment of the interaction
		Promotes an atmosphere of approachability, resulting in individuals seeking information or advice
	Mgr	Maintains a calm, open demeanor while resolving highly sensitive or controversial issues, leading by example
		Builds and maintains strategic interpersonal relationships and alliances across agencies
		Fosters a climate that respects individual differences and diversity
		Forms effective working relationships with problem/controversial employees

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Teamwork	Entry	Provides help or assistance to team members when asked, regardless of the task
		Participates in efforts to improve team cooperation and trust
		Communicates openly and candidly with other team members
		Recognizes team boundaries and identifies own role and responsibilities on team
	Mid	Proactively offers assistance to ensure team achieves goals and objectives
		Considers other work group members' priorities, needs, and concerns
		Works collaboratively and flexibly with others to accomplish shared goals
		Shares relevant skills and knowledge with others
	Sr/Dis Spec/Sup	Is cognizant and respectful of others' time
		Solicits others' contributions and opinions, understanding their perspectives and integrating them into decisions and plans, as appropriate
		Maintains a positive team atmosphere by recognizing and directly addressing any issues that are impacting team cohesion and performance
		Creates opportunities for sharing of knowledge, skills, and best practices within and across work units and organizations
	Mgr	Creates effective teams with structure and membership appropriate to the task
		Establishes communication processes that ensure work activities are well-integrated across teams, business units, or agencies
		Promotes open, direct, candid, and regular exchanges of information within and outside of the organizational unit
		Solicits ideas to gain an understanding of the priorities, needs, and concerns of stakeholders internal and external to the Agency
		Assembles and facilitates teams consisting of members from different agencies, areas of expertise, and opinions in order to address complex issues

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Creativity and Innovation	Entry	Considers and is open to innovative ideas
		Offers useful new ways to accomplish routine work, such as proposing a more efficient way to perform a task
		Participates in brainstorming sessions
	Mid	Explores, identifies, and recommends new ideas and approaches for performing routine work
		Contributes to brainstorming sessions and offers new ideas
		Experiments with new ways of presenting data or information to others
	Sr/Dis Spec/ Sup	Devises new methods for planning and carrying out program or project objectives at the state and/or regional level
		Works with individuals in other content areas to think of new and innovative approaches to accomplish work in more efficient and effective ways
		Develops innovative or creative solutions in response to new and emerging issues
		Facilitates brainstorming sessions with stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and perspectives in order to generate new and different ideas
	Mgr	Devises new methods, procedures, and approaches that have a far-reaching impact (i.e., nation-wide, national, or Agency-wide)
		Considers the ramifications of new policies, procedures, methods, approaches, etc. and their impact across programs and/or geopolitical boundaries
		Anticipates how work processes may be affected by changes in the environment and develops creative alternatives
Writes Agency-wide policies and procedures in a manner that allows for future flexibility and innovation		



Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Decisive Judgment and Decision Making	Entry	Provides straightforward answers to routine questions
		Determines who to go to for help making decisions in a variety of situations
		Makes sound and timely decisions in well-defined, low-risk situations that affect own work
	Mid	Utilizes decision-making methods that have been shown to work in the past
		Considers alternative courses of action when making decisions
		Utilizes available information as a basis for making decisions
		Makes sound and timely decisions in a variety of situations affecting own work
		Recognizes when information is lacking and seeks out additional information to assist in decision-making
	Sr/Dis Spec/ Sup	Considers and adjusts course of action when current strategy is unsuccessful, even when the current strategy was fully supported
		Considers the costs, risks, and benefits when making decisions and chooses courses of action in which the benefits outweigh the risks
		Makes decisions and takes action when complete knowledge and information are not available
		Follows through with a carefully thought-out decision, even when faced with resistance or opposition
	Mgr	Makes timely decisions regarding highly complex technical, administrative, or policy issues
		Makes decisions or recommendations in the most sensitive, difficult, and ambiguous situations that have significant organizational impact
		Takes an Agency-wide, strategic view when making decisions

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Problem Solving	Entry	Solves straightforward problems that have occurred in the past
		Performs evaluations and analyses of information to draw reasonable, logical conclusions for basic problems
		Identifies the problem and information that may be relevant to a solution
	Mid	Applies proven solutions, strategies, and/or procedures to solve problems
		Determines cause of a customer problem and takes approved, corrective actions
		Identifies problems, considers available information, and evaluates alternative solutions to problems affecting own work
	Sr/Dis Spec/ Sup	Identifies and leverages resources and expertise, internal or external to the work unit, to address complex problems
		Synthesizes information from internal and external sources to develop an action plan addressing complex issues (e.g., applying information from NHQ to State problems; updating guidelines with new technologies)
		Identifies connections between seemingly unrelated pieces of information to resolve difficult or ambiguous problems
	Mgr	Improves efficiency by developing, planning, and implementing multi-tier solutions to address highly complex or unprecedented problems
		Resolves problems of particular difficulty, sensitivity, or strategic importance
		Identifies and resolves subtle issues and/or trends and their causes across organizational groups
Manages a group's problem solving process, assisting others in staying focused on the current problem and systematically working through the issue		

## Leadership Competencies

These are the top leadership competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. The set of leadership competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes the top competencies.

**Table 18. Leadership Competencies – Civil Engineer**

Leadership Competency	Proficiency Rating					
	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
1. Fiscal Responsibility	NA	NA	2	2	3	4
2. Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work	NA	NA	2	2	4	5
3. Developing Others	NA	NA	3	3	4	5
4. Human Resource Management	NA	NA	2	2	3	5
5. Team Building	1	2	3	3	4	5
6. External Awareness	1	2	3	3	4	5
7. Relationship Management	1	2	3	3	4	5
8. Leveraging Diversity	1	3	4	4	4	5
9. Political Savvy	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	3
10. Vision	NA	NA	2	2	4	5
11. Strategic Thinking and Action	NA	NA	2	2	3	5

## Recommended Leadership Experience – Civil Engineer

These are the top experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Leadership Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

**Table 19. Recommended Leadership Experience – Civil Engineer**

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Fiscal Responsibility	Sr/Dis Spec	Establishes cost-effective limited-focus budgets that incorporate the appropriate financial resources
		Justifies requested budget allocation to management in relation to program objectives
		Adheres to financial policies including budget execution, obligations and payments (e.g., approves payments when work is completed)
	Sup	Monitors expenditures to ensure project/programs operate within budget and uses proper budget accounting
		Makes effective and efficient use of financial resources
		Safeguards financial resources to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse
		Prepares and monitors unit's annual operating budget
		Develops an awareness of appropriation laws
	Mgr	Demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of Agency financial processes
		Understands and appropriately applies provisions of appropriation law
		Establishes cost-effective budgets that tap into financial resources from conventional and unconventional sources
		Establishes procedures to ensure that projects/programs operate within budget and uses proper budget accounting

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work	Sr/ Dis Spec	Assigns work based on employees' experience and competency level
		Encourages feedback from staff when assigning and evaluating work
		Understands work requirements and staff capabilities
		Clearly communicates expectations and work requirements to employees
	Sup	Coordinates tasks and monitors performance on tasks to exceed unit objectives
		Coordinates multi-function projects that require multiple groups of employees, stakeholders, etc.
	Mgr	Adjusts work activities to ensure seamless integration and effectiveness across work units during periods of rapid change in the operating environment and/or when working with narrow windows of time
		Establishes and clearly communicates expectations that are linked to unit objectives and the Agency's mission to unit leaders engaged in highly complex work activities
		Coordinates and monitors performance on complex programs (e.g., special initiatives) across partners to meet both organizational and unit objectives

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Developing Others	Sr/Dis Spec	Proactively provides regular, timely, and constructive developmental feedback to employees and fosters developmental opportunities that improve work performance
		Uses performance information and solicits employee input to identify development needs
		Identifies appropriate developmental opportunities and, where possible, ensures employees receive training or development in a fair and equitable manner
	Sup	Identifies developmental opportunities to help employees perform a wide range of highly complex work activities
		Identifies or creates opportunities (e.g., stretch assignments, on-the-job training, detail assignments) for employees to pursue self-development activities
		Builds and uses systems and processes to develop employees to meet current and emerging requirements
	Mgr	Identifies creative developmental strategies to address skill needs of workforce
		Sets an example and guides others across the Agency to be skillful trainers, coaches, and mentors
		Establishes or promotes a culture around getting others to maximize their potential

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Human Resource Management	Sr/Dis Spec	Conducts interviews with candidates
		Contributes to overall staffing plan
		Requests and obtains staff according to HR policy
		Makes recommendation to supervisor and leadership for performance awards
	Sup	Monitors Agency needs to identify, recruit, and select individuals
		Follows HR policies and communicates these policies to employees
		Identifies poor performers and creates opportunities for poor performers to improve performance; identifies opportunities for ADR when necessary
	Mgr	Assesses current and emerging priorities, performance information, and employee goals to identify both immediate and long-term organizational needs; ensures individuals receive necessary training to meet these needs
		Anticipates skill needs that are consistent with organizational trends and changing priorities; identifies creative recruitment strategies to address these needs

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Team Building	Entry	Provides assistance when help is needed to accomplish team goals
		Shares relevant information with team members
		Encourages team members to develop and maintain collaborative relationships with each other
	Mid	Is proactive in recognizing when help is needed and provides assistance to help the team in accomplishing goals
		Independently offers assistance and provides support to advance goals
		Clearly articulates team goals and objectives to team members and explains why they are on the team
		Restructures roles, responsibilities, and possibly team members of dysfunctional teams to meet overall objectives
	Sr/ Dis Spec	Integrates new team members into structure and assists them in transitioning to role
		Understands team dynamics and uses knowledge to motivate team members
		Gains support and buy-in throughout product/project development to gain support for product/project throughout the Agency
		Obtains feedback from team members to improve product/project
		Restructures roles, responsibilities, and possibly team members of dysfunctional teams to meet overall objectives
	Sup	Builds and maintains a positive team atmosphere by demonstrating and promoting collaboration among work units
		Creates senior-level teams to design and implement requirements for new systems and procedures
		Leads a team to resolve challenging or controversial regional concerns/issues
	Mgr	Champions initiatives, leverages opportunities, and minimize obstacles, thereby easing the path to achieving different units' goals
		Leads a team to resolve challenging or controversial Agency-wide legislative and regulatory policy issues
		Recognizes effective teams and integrates best practices
		Inspires teams to achieve success



Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
External Awareness	Entry	Maintains awareness and evaluates the impact of external events on current processes
		Responds to environmental, budgetary, political, or other events and circumstances requiring change
		Effectively alters plans and redistributes resources to address changing requirements
		Develops an awareness of local, national, and/or international policies when instructed by supervisor
		Talks to customers and partners to understand their needs and issues
	Mid	Consults with leadership regarding the impact of how external factors may affect the Agency
		Considers external policies and trends when reviewing correspondence, reports, and policy documents
		Gathers and summarizes information to predict stakeholder views on a new policy
	Sr/Dis Spec	Considers external factors that may affect the unit's work and uses this knowledge in accomplishing work
		Refocuses efforts, redistributes resources, or otherwise overcomes roadblocks in consideration of external factors (e.g., changes in administration, or a new Farm Bill) to achieve NRCS objectives
		Synthesizes complex information gathered from a variety of external sources and disseminates it to staff
		Understands how external factors (e.g. political events) impact the Agency
	Sup	Contributes to the development of long-term goals by recommending effective strategies based on external factors that may possibly impact the Agency
		Anticipates how work processes may be affected by changes in the external environment and develops alternatives
		Provides policy advice to officials which are consistent with local, national, and international policies and trends

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
	Mgr	Demonstrates an in-depth understanding of external factors that may affect the Agency's work and uses this knowledge constructively in establishing goals and priorities and accomplishing work
		Anticipates how work processes may be affected by changes in the external environment or events and, in response, develops creative and highly effective alternatives
		Develops programs or initiatives (e.g., WHIP, ecological site descriptions) taking into account the diverse views and needs of other agencies or external organizations

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Relationship Management	Entry	Develops a basic knowledge of what organizations, agencies, or groups NRCS partners with (i.e., FSA, Soil and Water Conservation Districts).
		Identifies individuals or groups whose input would improve or facilitate one's own task accomplishment
	Mid	Works with individuals across work units to address mutual issues and concerns
		Builds a network within the Agency by proactively communicating with employees outside of own work unit on a regular basis
		Coordinates with internal and external partners and customers regarding new strategies to ensure effective coordination
	Sr/Dis Spec	Builds consensus by understanding and considering common goals and by soliciting input from, and promoting trust between, various parties
		Works with individuals outside of Agency to address mutual issues and concerns
		Develops and manages relationships with staff and State leadership to gain endorsement for initiatives and help achieve common goals
	Sup	Partners with various groups by sharing information and resources across multiple organizational levels, including updates/changes
		Identifies new and/or non-traditional partners and new ways to develop relationships with partners that will have a positive impact on Agency goals
		Develops and manages relationships with national leadership to gain endorsement for initiatives and help achieve common goals
	Mgr	Initiates, develops, publicizes, and garners support for programs and policies by meeting with partners, stakeholders, employees, customers, and other interested parties
		Works across Federal, state, and local agencies/authorities to coordinate conservation efforts (e.g., cooperative agreements, coordinating the EWP program)
		Establishes long-lasting relationships with non-traditional partners to develop relationships that will have a positive impact on Agency goals

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Leveraging Diversity	Entry	Adheres to EEO policies, goals, objectives, and philosophies by dealing with everyone fairly, equitably, and professionally
		Demonstrates knowledge of Agency policy in regard to diversity
		Meets with staff to obtain input on diversity issues within workgroup
		Develops an awareness of situations which could potentially lead to allegations of harassment or discrimination
	Mid	Promotes diversity by assisting, sponsoring, or joining an employee group or other professional diversity-related association, or participates in outreach/recruitment efforts
		Monitors the work environment to identify situations which could potentially lead to allegations of harassment or discrimination
		Builds a high quality, diverse workforce and ensures fairness by recruiting, hiring, promoting, and providing developmental opportunities in a fair and equitable manner
		Encourages employee participation in diversity-related activities and organizations
	Sr/Dis Spec/ Sup	Builds a climate of trust by demonstrating behavior that clearly values individual differences and diversity
		Makes self and employees aware of any programs that support diversity, such as employee groups, educational entities, or professional associations
		Encourages employees to express their individual views toward improving work products, services, processes, teamwork, and the work environment itself
	Mgr	Establishes rules and practices to ensure diversity and collaboration within the Agency; works with the different unit leaders to effectively leverage diverse thought, opinions, experiences, and backgrounds to achieve the vision and mission of the Agency
		Actively promotes NRCS diversity programs and initiatives, highlighting the Agency's commitment to diversity and its value to the organization; facilitates participation in diversity-related programs and initiatives

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
		Proactively monitors the workplace to identify situations that could potentially lead to allegations of harassment or discrimination, and establishes practices/creates an environment to prevent such situations
Political Savvy	Sup	Considers impact when addressing employee expectations (e.g., working with union, relocations)
		Considers staff concerns or feedback regarding organizational changes
		Demonstrates knowledge of stakeholders and peers/leaders in the Agency
	Mgr	Evaluate political implications by considering different courses of action on a key issue
		Meets with key decision makers to ensure approval of resources to support needed adjustments and/or organizational change
		Discusses organizational change with employees to ensure their understanding; addresses known and potential concerns
		Understands the most appropriate time and methods for expressing needs and requesting resources
Vision	Sr/Dis Spec	Involves staff in setting annual goals, objectives, and measures to ensure buy-in
		Conveys vision of Agency to staff and stakeholders
		Articulates relationship between employees' work and Agency mission, vision, and objectives
	Sup	Directs and provides guidance to managers to develop long-term strategic plan
		Revisits unit vision periodically to ensure vision is being strived for and is still appropriate
		Reflects periodically on the current state of the Agency and identifies whether changes are necessary
		Articulates unit vision to allow others to recognize its value
	Mgr	Formulates short- and long-term strategies across organizational units that take a broad perspective and achieve significant results in support of organizational goals
		Communicates a vision by translating broad organizational goals into well-defined strategies, plans, priorities, and assignments

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
		Considers various viewpoints from internal and external sources when developing new organizational mission and vision

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Strategic Action and Thinking	Sr	Considers customer needs and trends in the development of strategic plans
		Conducts review of the Agency's core mission and gathers information from relevant sources to support development of a strategic plan
		Brainstorms ideas with team members to address needed updates/changes and develop strategies
	Dis Spec	Considers customer needs and trends in the development of strategic plans
		Conducts review of the Agency's core mission and gathers information from relevant sources to support development of a strategic plan
		Brainstorms ideas with team members to address needed updates/changes and develop strategies
	Sup	Assists with the development and implementation of Agency or State policy by determining target audience and building coalitions with the appropriate population
		Develops implementation strategies to meet business plan priorities
		Implements strategic objectives and develops metrics to assess attainment of goals
	Mgr	Anticipates changes (e.g., a demographic change, policy change) and establishes a plan to address the future needs of the Agency
		Designs approaches and procedures to develop a strategic plan supporting key goals and objectives
		Leads and directs a diverse strategic planning team tasked with addressing and outlining the future direction of the Agency

## Occupational Competencies – Civil Engineer

These are the top occupational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. These should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes all of the occupational competencies associated with the Civil Engineer job.

**Table 20. Occupational Competencies – Civil Engineer**

Occupational Competency	Proficiency Rating					
	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
1. Problem Identification/ Defining Objectives	1	2	4	5	4	5
2. Development of Alternatives – Decision Support	1	2	4	5	5	5
3. Data Collection and Analyses	1	3	4	5	5	5
4. Design	1	2	4	5	5	5
5. Construction Oversight	1	2	4	5	4	5
6. Quality Assurance	1	2	4	5	5	5
7. Hydraulic Engineering	1	2	4	5	5	5



## Recommended Occupational Experience – Civil Engineer

These are the top experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Occupational Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

**Table 21. Recommended Occupational Experience – Civil Engineer**

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Problem Identification/ Defining Objectives	Entry	Builds awareness of resource concerns common to his/her area of operations
		Attends meetings with customers during on-site visits
		Assists in documenting customer's needs during on-site visits
		Under supervision, develops understanding of how to assess resource concern
	Mid	Under supervision, assists in identifying resource concerns in increasingly complex situations
		Under some supervision, works to determine objectives for simple projects
		Meets with customers to obtain additional information to better understand their goals/objectives
	Sr/Sup	Provides training on methods to assess most resource concerns found in work area
		Provides expertise to identify resource concerns and define objectives in complex and/or unique situations within assigned work area
		Works with other agencies and/or entities to define resource concerns and objectives
		Provides expertise to prioritize resource concerns and objectives in collaboration with State/Federal/Tribal agencies, conservation partners, and/or other stakeholders
	Dis Spec/Mgr	Identifies the need and coordinates development of training at the National/Regional/State levels for identification of natural resource concerns
		Develops standard operating procedures for problem identification across a wide variety of landscape and situations

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
		Works with customers to determine requirements for unique or complex projects, including those projects that are extensively regulated or have high impact/visibility

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Development of Alternatives – Decision Support	Entry	Under close supervision, develops an awareness of different engineering alternatives commonly used in their service area
		Under supervision, develops familiarity with relevant NRCS references in order to develop alternatives
		Accompanies others to meetings with customers
	Mid	Understands basic engineering principles and practices in order to formulate routing alternatives
		With limited supervision, advises customers on appropriate engineering practices for routine alternatives
		With limited supervision, assists customers in selecting alternative(s) to address routine resource concerns
	Sr	Provides advice and guidance to employees on the development and selection of engineering practices
		Develops innovative alternatives to address complex resource concerns across a wide geographical area
		Applies engineering principles and practices in order to formulate complex alternatives
		Develops and provides training on the formulation and evaluation of alternatives
	Dis Spec/ Sup/Mgr	Engages multiple stakeholders in developing alternative solutions for unique or complex projects, including those projects that are extensively regulated or high impact/visibility
		Identifies the need and coordinates development of training at the National/Regional/State levels for the formulation and evaluation of alternatives
Evaluates the technical merit of innovative alternatives for use in complex situations		

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Data Collection and Analyses	Entry	Develops awareness of basic data collection requirements and techniques
		Under supervision, develops awareness of existing data that can be used in performing analysis
		Under supervision, collects basic data on routine sites and performs standard analyses
		Under supervision, develops familiarity with NRCS surveying, note taking, and documentation requirements
	Mid	Plans, collects, and analyzes data as required throughout each phase of a project
		Independently uses a variety of instruments for data collection (e.g., basic and high tech surveying instruments and techniques) and creates the required end-products
		Recognizes and requests specialized assistance (e.g., geologist, soil scientist) for data collection in more complex sites
		Provides basic training to others on data collection and analyses methodologies
	Sr	Reviews and approves data collection reports for highly complex and/or unique projects
		Trains others on data collection/analyses methods and techniques
		Recommends and integrates more advanced technologies, software, and equipment for data collection and analyses
		Develops innovative data collection techniques and analyses to address unique and/or complex engineering problems
	Dis Spec/ Sup/Mgr	Identifies the need and coordinates development of training at the National/Regional/State levels
		Develops National/State policies and procedures on data collection and analyses
		Reviews and approves the development of innovative data collection techniques and/or analyses
		Represents NRCS in expert panels, interagency working groups, etc. in reviewing new technologies, equipment, or methods of data collection and

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
		analyses
Design	Entry	Under close supervision, develops an awareness of the NRCS design process and related skills for practices commonly used in their service area
		Under close supervision, develops an awareness of conservation practice standards and specifications
		Under close supervision, prepares routine design
	Mid	Independently prepares simple designs
		Under limited supervision, develops a complete design package for a routine project
		Under supervision, develops components of complex designs
		Under limited supervision, reviews routine designs developed by others
	Sr	Prepares designs and supporting documentation for complex engineering practices
		Performs reviews and approval of designs for complex engineering practices
		Provides advice and guidance for design interpretation and makes modifications as necessary during the construction phase for complex projects
		Performs structural and/or geotechnical analyses for the design of complex engineering practices
	Dis Spec/Sup/Mgr	Develops National/Regional/State level policies and procedures on design preparation and review
		Creates innovative standards, design procedures, and construction specifications where none exist
Performs reviews and approval of designs for the most complex or high impact/visibility projects		
Reviews and approves structural designs of complex engineering practices		

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Construction Oversight	Entry	Under close supervision, participates in the interpretation of plans and specifications for construction of routine projects
		Under close supervision, develops understanding of construction contract provisions
		Under close supervision, assists in the verification of project completion
		Under close supervision, assists with the documentation of construction activities
	Mid	Under limited supervision, participates in the interpretation of plans and specifications for construction of routine projects
		Under limited supervision, verifies completion of components of routine construction project
		Under limited supervision, documents daily construction activities for routine construction projects
	Sr/Sup	Develops and recommends State-wide policies and procedures on construction oversight responsibilities
		Develops and maintains State construction and material specifications
		Integrates innovative techniques and technologies to improve state construction oversight
		Develops and provides training on NRCS policies and procedures with regard to contracting and construction oversight
	Dis Spec/ Mgr	Identifies the need and coordinates development of training at the National/Regional/State levels
		Develops and maintains construction and material specifications for use throughout the agency
Identifies and develops innovative techniques and technologies to improve construction oversight at the National/State levels		

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Quality Assurance	Entry	Under close supervision, develops basic understanding of the quality assurance processes
		Under close supervision, assists in implementing component(s) of a Construction Quality Assurance plan
		Observes engineering spot checks
		Under supervision, develops understanding of engineering job approval authority policy
	Mid	With limited supervision, implements a Construction Quality Assurance plan for a routine practice
		Assists in the development of reports to summarize results of quality assurance reviews
		Assists in conducting spot checks on routine engineering practices
		Earns engineering job approval authority for routine practices
	Sr	Serves as contracting officer's technical representative (COTR) on complex projects
		Concurs on the selection of the contracting officer's technical representative (COTR)
		Develops all phases of a Quality Assurance plan for construction projects
		Reviews spot checks and directs implementation of corrective actions
		Develops and provides training on policies and procedures with regard to quality assurance process
	Dis Spec/ Sup/Mgr	Identifies the need and coordinates development of training at the National/Regional/State levels
		Utilizes results from existing reviews to make modifications to policies and standards
		Integrates innovative techniques and technologies from other fields and disciplines to improve quality assurance policies and procedures
Develops policies and procedures to conduct quality assurance reviews of new materials and technologies		

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Hydraulic Engineering	Entry	Under close supervision, develops awareness of different hydrologic and hydraulic modeling techniques
		Develops an understanding of the hydrologic cycle and different flow regimes (e.g., open channel vs. pressure)
		Under close supervision, assists in the design of basic hydraulic engineering practices
		Under close supervision, collects hydrologic data for routine hydraulic engineering practice
	Mid	Under limited supervision, utilizes different hydrologic and hydraulic modeling techniques
		Under limited supervision, designs basic hydraulic engineering practices
		Under limited supervision, collects hydrologic data for hydraulic engineering practices
		Under limited supervision, performs basic hydrology calculations
	Sr	Provides expertise in hydrologic and hydraulic modeling techniques for complex projects
		Oversees and/or designs complex hydraulic engineering practices
		Coordinates the collection of hydrologic data for complex hydraulic engineering practices
		Performs complex hydrology calculations
		Develops and provides training to others on hydraulic engineering practices
		Recommends use of new hydrologic techniques/software
	Dis Spec/ Sup/ Mgr	Identifies the need and coordinates development of training at the National/Regional/State levels
		Develops National/Regional/State level policies and procedures on hydraulic engineering
		Reviews designs of complex hydraulic engineering practices
Performs the most complex hydrology calculations for unique situations		
Reviews and approves the use of new hydrologic techniques/software		



## Recommended Education/Certifications – Civil Engineer

These are the recommended education/certification requirements to be able to attain each level of the Civil Engineer job. These recommendations are based on Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidelines as well as Subject Matter Expert recommendations.

**Table 22. Recommended Education and Certifications – Civil Engineer**

Education/Certifications	Career Level					
	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
1. Completion of a 4-year engineering degree accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology as a professional engineering curriculum; or including differential and integral calculus and courses in five of the following areas: statics, dynamics, strength of materials, fluid mechanics, hydraulics, thermodynamics, electrical fields and circuits, nature and properties of materials	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. State Licensure				R	R	✓

**R = Education/licensure that is recommended but not required to obtain the job at the specified level**

## Professional Associations – Civil Engineer

These ten professional associations are recommended as resources for individuals interested in the Civil Engineer job.

**Table 23. Professional Associations – Civil Engineer**

American Society of Civil Engineers
American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers
National Society of Professional Engineers
American Society for Testing Materials
American Association of State Dam Safety Officials
International Erosion Control Association
American Water Resources Association
American Water Works Association
The American Concrete Institute
The Soil and Water Conservation Society

## Specifics by Job – Environmental Engineer

### Job Duties by Career Level – Environmental Engineer

These are three major duties associated with the individual Career Levels for the Environmental Engineer job. In general, these are slight deviations of the Overall Duties, intended to show the differences in responsibility between the Career Levels.

**Table 24. Career Level Duties – Environmental Engineer**

Job Duty	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
Performs site investigations, survey work, CAD work, and data collection	✓					
Prepares and reviews engineering designs and reports, which include design calculations and plan preparation	✓					
Performs quality assurance to ensure that projects get carried out as designed and recommend additions as needed	✓					
Performs, trains, and provides guidance for site investigations, survey work, CAD work, and data collection		✓				
Prepares training, provides guidance, and reviews engineering designs and reports, which includes design calculations and plan preparation		✓				

Job Duty	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
Performs, trains, and provides guidance on quality assurance, ensuring projects are carried out as designed and recommending additions as needed		✓				
Performs, trains, oversees, and provides guidance for site investigations, survey work, CAD work, and data collection			✓			
Prepares, trains, oversees, provides guidance, and reviews engineering designs and reports, including design calculations and plan preparation			✓			
Performs, trains, oversees, and provides guidance on quality assurance, ensuring projects are carried out as designed, and recommends additions as needed			✓			
Provides discipline-specific technical leadership for planning and data collection				✓		
Provides discipline-specific technical leadership for engineering analysis and design				✓		
Provides discipline-specific technical leadership for quality assurance				✓		
Performs and supervises the individuals performing site investigations, survey work, CAD work, and data collection					✓	
Performs and supervises the individuals performing engineering designs and reports, which includes design calculations and plan preparation					✓	

Job Duty	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
Performs and supervises the individuals performing quality assurance, ensuring projects are carried out as designed, and recommends additions as needed					✓	
Directs and leads the technical program						✓
Finalizes and issues technical policies and procedures in accordance with Agency priorities						✓
Manages resources, dollars, and people to meet Agency priorities						✓

## Foundational Competencies – Environmental Engineer

These are the top foundational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. The set of top foundational competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes the top competencies.

**Table 25. Foundational Competencies – Environmental Engineer**

Foundational Competency	Proficiency Rating					
	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
1. Attention to Detail	1	3	4	4	5	5
2. Organizing and Prioritizing Work	2	3	4	4	5	5
3. Representing the Agency	1	3	4	4	5	5
4. Technology Management	1	3	4	4	5	5
5. Organizational Awareness	1	3	4	4	4	5
6. Initiative	1	3	4	4	5	5
7. Written Communication	1	3	4	4	4	5
8. Conflict Management	1	2	3	3	4	5
9. Interpersonal Skills	1	2	3	3	5	5
10. Teamwork	1	3	4	4	5	5
11. Creativity and Innovation	1	3	4	4	4	5
12. Decisive Judgment and Decision Making	1	3	4	4	4	5
13. Problem Solving	1	3	4	4	5	5
14. Customer Service	1	3	4	4	5	5

## Recommended Foundational Experience – Environmental Engineer

These are the top experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Foundational Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

**Table 26. Recommended Foundational Experience – Environmental Engineer**

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Attention to Detail	Entry	Reviews own work to verify that work adheres to given instructions, applicable regulations, and guidelines
		Edits own work products for basic errors (e.g., grammatical, typographical) before submitting to supervisors
		Collects and enters data into electronic information systems accurately
	Mid	Ensures own products and services are complete, accurate, and in accordance with established policies, standards/specifications, and guidelines
		Reviews the quality of information or data provided by others for accuracy and completeness
		Conducts thorough analysis to provide accurate and complete information in order to make decisions
	Sr/Disc Spec/Sup	Ensures own and others' work products are technically accurate, reliable, and in accordance with established policies, standard/specifications, and guidelines
		Reinforces importance of high-quality products and services with peers and team members
		Prepares manuals, guidelines, or standard operation procedures to minimize mistakes or errors
		Serves in an advisory capacity as a recognized expert in ensuring high quality products
	Mgr	Establishes a climate for the organizational unit that emphasizes the importance and impact of high-quality products and services
		Finalizes or oversees the development of manuals, guidelines, or standard operating procedures to minimize mistakes or errors

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
		Oversees the integration of multi-faceted information from various subject areas into a policy, document, model, etc.

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Organizing and Prioritizing Work	Entry	Organizes and accomplishes assigned tasks/work to ensure timely delivery of information, products, and/or services
		Seeks guidance on setting work/task priorities and follows priorities as assigned
		Maintains appropriate files and records to document progress toward goals
	Mid	Prepares routine plans, including identifying timelines and scheduling tasks
		Prioritizes routine tasks to ensure timely delivery of information, products, and services
		Systematically breaks large tasks down into smaller, more manageable subtasks
	Sr/Dis Spec/Sup	Prepares plans for complex and/or controversial projects and identifies resources to deliver projects within established parameters
		Develops progressive long-term strategic plans and business plans
		Reviews project plans of others, critiquing and recommending changes when needed
		Defines measurable and observable work outcomes for self and work unit that are fully aligned with and advance the Agency's goals and strategic direction
	Mgr	Anticipates changing workload requirements well in advance and advocates for needed resources based on strategy and planning
		Plans and implements multi-agency, multi-year, large-scale efforts
Coordinates work with multiple internal or external parties to ensure results are achieved that support the Agency's goals and strategic direction		



Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Representing the Agency	Entry	Appropriately supports the Agency's goals in interactions with others
		Maintains professional attitude and actions in all business situations
		Develops knowledge of relevant policies, rules, and procedures for representing the Agency (e.g., standards of conduct) and follows them accordingly
	Mid	Recognizes confrontational situations with customers and refers/redirects them appropriately
		Promotes support for the mission and programs of the Agency through all forms of communication
		Represents the Agency in small group presentations or meetings with customers
		Participates in Agency outreach activities (e.g., county fairs, job fairs)
	Sr/Dis Spec	Takes effective steps to resolve confrontational situations with customers in a manner that reflects positively on the Agency
		Promotes the Agency in a professional manner that educates others, protects its interests, and enhances its image and reputation
		Represents the Agency as a professional expert on natural resource conservation issues (e.g., presents a technical paper at a conference)
	Sup	Serves as a role model and advises others on presenting a professional image of the Agency to enhance trust and credibility
		Engages with others in a manner that earns their respect and advances the goals and objectives of the Agency
		Serves as an Agency representative on interagency teams and projects
		Represents the Agency's interests to a variety of parties (e.g., at technical group meetings, to universities)
	Mgr	Manages complex and difficult situations with confidence and decisiveness, enhancing the reputation and image of the Agency
Meets with elected or appointed officials to provide Agency and program information for decision-making		

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
		Promotes and justifies the Agency's programs and actions in contentious situations
		Markets the Agency's mission and programs through media outlets

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Initiative	Entry	Demonstrates a willingness to learn the work requirements of one's job
		Completes work assignments as directed by supervisor or manager without additional reminders or prompting
	Mid	Seeks out more challenging responsibilities, such as managing projects
		Volunteers to take the lead on team efforts outside of one's normal job duties
		Takes the initiative to develop tools/instructions to share with coworkers (e.g., developing standard operating procedures for a specific area)
	Sr/Dis Spec	Volunteers to take the lead on state-wide efforts that do not fit within one's normal comfort zone or job duties, such as developing training
		Identifies and implements solutions for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of established work processes
		Volunteers for a challenging detail that is outside the normal scope of duties
		Volunteers/offers to serve as a member of a special committee or focus group that has Agency-wide impact
	Sup	Puts in a sustained and intense effort to accomplish highly complex and/or critical tasks and or goals
		Volunteers for long-term special assignment or detail that will have an impact on the Agency and its mission
		Identifies major problems or issues and recommends solutions that have the potential to significantly impact and improve the Agency
	Mgr	Establishes a climate for the state or Agency that encourages new ideas and initiative
		Puts in a sustained and intense effort to accomplish highly complex and/or critical tasks and or goals

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
		Identifies major problems or issues and recommends solutions that have the potential to significantly impact and improve the Agency

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Technology Management	Entry	Develops a basic awareness of technology (i.e., eFOTG, Customer Service Toolkit, etc.) needed to accomplish specific duties
		Follows specific guidance to safeguard technology to ensure the prevention of abuse, waste, loss, or unauthorized use (i.e., locking computer, using passwords to manage files)
		Completes security awareness training
	Mid	Understands the process to gain access to and utilize technical resources
		Demonstrates knowledge of current technological developments and appropriately applies this knowledge to achieve results
		Identifies problems or issues with technology systems and/or equipment
		Adapts processes to keep pace with new technological developments
	Sr/Dis Spec/Sup	Resolves identified problems or issues with technological systems and equipment
		Provides assistance and instruction on new technology to users
		Identifies and justifies the need for new technology and develops new and/or revised systems or equipment for large scale use
		Coordinates with others internal and external to the Agency to ensure that technology is effectively utilized by the Agency
	Mgr	Effectively anticipates future technological developments and takes steps to ensure that new technology is easily incorporated to achieve the objectives of the Agency
		Identifies new technological resources available internal and external to the Agency, and skillfully gains access to these resources
		Develops plans and/or recommendations to address new and future technological needs

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Organizational Awareness	Entry	Develops a basic understanding of and carries out basic tasks in accordance with the Agency's mission, vision, functions, values, and policies/procedures
		Acquires an understanding of the Agency's organizational structure and appropriate interactions between staff
		Participates in NRCS training activities and attends relevant organizational meetings
	Mid	Applies sufficient knowledge of Agency to independently perform varied assignments
		Takes initiative to increase understanding of relevant organizational processes through self-directed activities
		Articulates basic information regarding the Agency's vision, mission, and functions to customers and partners
	Sr/Dis Spec	Demonstrates and maintains a thorough understanding of the Agency's mission, functions, values, and policies/procedures
		Understands the interrelationships between various units, organizations, and partners and how these affect the Agency's mission
		Applies depth or breadth of knowledge of Agency to guide others on varied assignments
	Sup	Contributes to the development of the strategic plan for assigned area of responsibility
		Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the Agency's mission, functions, values, applicable policies and procedures, and internal and external factors that may impact NRCS projects
		Applies depth and breadth of knowledge of Agency to perform well and/or guide others on the full range of complex or varied assignments that impact the reputation of the Agency
	Mgr	Develops Agency strategic objectives and goals
		Utilizes knowledge of Agency structure to realign functions and/or positions to create more effective and efficient workflows
		Demonstrates an understanding of the impact of Congressional action on the Agency
		Demonstrates expertise regarding organizational systems and the internal and external factors impacting NRCS projects

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
		Seeks out and capitalizes on opportunities to leverage knowledge of how Agency and processes work to make contributions with far-ranging impact

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Customer Service	Entry	Responds to questions or requests from customers in a timely and professional manner
		Demonstrates understanding of NRCS customer relationships
	Mid	Gathers customer feedback and uses it to suggest improvements to products or services
		Discusses and clearly articulates project changes or problems with customers and proposes solutions to address them
		Proposes viable alternative products and services to better meet customer needs
	Sr/Dis Spec	Anticipates future customer needs and expectations to improve product development and service delivery
		Collaborates with customers to develop work plans, timelines, and expectations, reaching compromises and agreements that provide solutions for all involved
		Resolves situations with customers while still maintaining strong working relationships
		Collaborates with third parties to provide services that otherwise could not be provided by NRCS alone
	Sup	Develops and/or implements innovative customer service initiatives which significantly improves quality or enhances customer satisfaction
		Develops comprehensive understanding of customer needs, concerns, and perspectives, enabling USDA/NRCS to deliver products and services that best address their needs
	Mgr	Assists customers with complex regulatory issues (e.g., Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act)
Develops comprehensive understanding of customer needs, concerns, and perspectives, enabling USDA/NRCS to deliver products and services that best address their needs		

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Written Communication	Entry	Understand the Agency's style, format guidelines, and filing codes procedures
		Uses appropriate grammar, punctuation, and spelling
		Clearly communicates information in writing to supervisor and colleagues
		Writes basic internal communications
	Mid	Drafts concise, straightforward summaries of information (e.g., portions of plans/reports)
		Prepares routine written communications that are accurate, clear, concise, and well-organized
		Answers routine or basic questions to internal and external customers appropriately (e.g., tone, detail) and in a timely manner when responding in writing
		Utilizes the Agency's style, format guidelines, and filing code procedures
	Sr/Dis Spec	Interprets and prepares summaries or recommendations
		Reviews and edits reports or materials prepared by others for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and conformance to style and format guidelines
		Utilizes available resources, such as an editor, to proof and edit documents for distribution
		Addresses issues with internal and external customers appropriately (e.g., tone, detail) and in a timely manner when responding in writing
	Sup	Writes complex technical reports, plans, and procedural manuals using clear terminology and concise format for use by decision makers
		Recognizes the most critical issues and considers ramifications of written communications, tailoring communications accordingly
		Writes clear, concise issue papers or policy documents on complex topics establishing Agency-wide guidance or guidelines



Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Written Communication	Mgr	Writes, reviews, and publishes advanced technical/program findings and guidelines to be made available to other groups and agencies
		Prepares highly complex written communication for national distribution that have significant implications for the Agency
		Communicates persuasively about programs, projects, and proposals in writing with multiple stakeholders
		Addresses Congressional inquiries with straightforward, concise written responses

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Conflict Management	Entry	Resolves minor work-related disagreements or conflicts with peers
		Actively listens to others and tries to understand their perspectives
		Directs escalating disagreements or conflicts to manager or supervisor, when necessary
		Develops knowledge of relevant policies, rules, and procedures (i.e., conflict management policies) and follows them accordingly
	Mid	Develops options to resolve disagreements or conflicts that require resolution at a higher level
		Considers all sides of an issue when discussing an issue with others
		Anticipates situations that have the potential for conflict
	Sr/Dis Spec/ Sup	Takes steps to address, resolve, and minimize the escalation of complex sensitive issues
		Balances the needs of different team members or units, achieving highly effective resolutions
		Identifies subtle indicators of conflict and mitigates emerging issues
		Manages conflict by serving as an unofficial mediator
	Mgr	Resolves conflicts arising at multiple organizational levels due to competing objectives, limited resources, or differing perspectives
		Leads consensus process on organizational unit's response to a controversial issue
		Develops consensus among multiple stakeholders with opposing viewpoints on critical/complex issues
		Develops, practices, and trains others in the application of mediation techniques

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Interpersonal Skills	Entry	Interacts with coworkers in a tactful manner
		Responds to others' inquiries or questions courteously and in a timely fashion
		Treats everyone fairly, equitably, and professionally, respecting individual differences and diversity
	Mid	Builds productive and professional relationships with coworkers inside own work group
		Seeks opportunities to develop professional relationships with others inside and outside of Agency
		Interacts with customers in a tactful manner and adjusts behavior appropriately
	Sr/Dis Spec/Sup	Builds and maintains a network of professional relationships with staff and coworkers, as well as people in other offices or states
		Reads and interprets others' behavior during interactions and uses this insight to make necessary adjustments in the moment of the interaction
		Promotes an atmosphere of approachability, resulting in individuals seeking information or advice
	Mgr	Maintains a calm, open demeanor while resolving highly sensitive or controversial issues, leading by example
		Builds and maintains strategic interpersonal relationships and alliances across agencies
		Fosters a climate that respects individual differences and diversity
		Forms effective working relationships with problem/controversial employees

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Teamwork	Entry	Provides help or assistance to team members when asked, regardless of the task
		Participates in efforts to improve team cooperation and trust
		Communicates openly and candidly with other team members
		Recognizes team boundaries and identifies own role and responsibilities on team
	Mid	Proactively offers assistance to ensure team achieves goals and objectives
		Considers other work group members' priorities, needs, and concerns
		Works collaboratively and flexibly with others to accomplish shared goals
		Shares relevant skills and knowledge with others
	Sr/Dis Spec/ Sup	Is cognizant and respectful of others' time
		Solicits others' contributions and opinions, understanding their perspectives and integrating them into decisions and plans, as appropriate
		Maintains a positive team atmosphere by recognizing and directly addressing any issues that are impacting team cohesion and performance
		Creates opportunities for sharing of knowledge, skills, and best practices within and across work units and organizations
	Mgr	Creates effective teams with structure and membership appropriate to the task
		Establishes communication processes that ensure work activities are well-integrated across teams, business units, or agencies
		Promotes open, direct, candid, and regular exchanges of information within and outside of the organizational unit
		Solicits ideas to gain an understanding of the priorities, needs, and concerns of stakeholders internal and external to the Agency
Assembles and facilitates teams consisting of members from different agencies, areas of expertise, and opinions in order to address complex issues		

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Creativity and Innovation	Entry	Considers and is open to innovative ideas
		Offers useful new ways to accomplish routine work, such as proposing a more efficient way to perform a task
		Participates in brainstorming sessions
	Mid	Explores, identifies, and recommends new ideas and approaches for performing routine work
		Contributes to brainstorming sessions and offers new ideas
		Experiments with new ways of presenting data or information to others
	Sr/Dis Spec/ Sup	Devises new methods for planning and carrying out program or project objectives at the state and/or regional level
		Works with individuals in other content areas to think of new and innovative approaches to accomplish work in more efficient and effective ways
		Develops innovative or creative solutions in response to new and emerging issues
		Facilitates brainstorming sessions with stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and perspectives in order to generate new and different ideas
	Mgr	Devises new methods, procedures, and approaches that have a far-reaching impact (i.e., nation-wide, national, or Agency-wide)
		Considers the ramifications of new policies, procedures, methods, approaches, etc. and their impact across programs and/or geopolitical boundaries
		Anticipates how work processes may be affected by changes in the environment and develops creative alternatives
Writes Agency-wide policies and procedures in a manner that allows for future flexibility and innovation		

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Decisive Judgment and Decision Making	Entry	Provides straightforward answers to routine questions
		Determines who to go to for help making decisions in a variety of situations
		Makes sound and timely decisions in well-defined, low-risk situations that affect own work
	Mid	Utilizes decision-making methods that have been shown to work in the past
		Considers alternative courses of action when making decisions
		Utilizes available information as a basis for making decisions
		Makes sound and timely decisions in a variety of situations affecting own work
		Recognizes when information is lacking and seeks out additional information to assist in decision-making
	Sr/Dis Spec/ Sup	Considers and adjusts course of action when current strategy is unsuccessful, even when the current strategy was fully supported
		Considers the costs, risks, and benefits when making decisions and chooses courses of action in which the benefits outweigh the risks
		Makes decisions and takes action when complete knowledge and information are not available
		Follows through with a carefully thought-out decision even when faced with resistance or opposition
	Mgr	Makes timely decisions regarding highly complex technical, administrative, or policy issues
		Makes decisions or recommendations in the most sensitive, difficult, and ambiguous situations that have significant organizational impact
		Takes an Agency-wide, strategic view when making decisions

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Problem Solving	Entry	Solves straightforward problems that have occurred in the past
		Performs evaluations and analyses of information to draw reasonable, logical conclusions for basic problems
		Identifies the problem and information that may be relevant to a solution
	Mid	Applies proven solutions, strategies, and/or procedures to solve problems
		Determines cause of a customer problem and takes approved, corrective actions
		Identifies problems, considers available information, and evaluates alternative solutions to problems affecting own work
	Sr/Dis Spec/Sup	Identifies and leverages resources and expertise, internal or external to the work unit, to address complex problems
		Synthesizes information from internal and external sources to develop an action plan addressing complex issues (e.g., applying information from NHQ to State problems; updating guidelines with new technologies)
		Identifies connections between seemingly unrelated pieces of information to resolve difficult or ambiguous problems
	Mgr	Improves efficiency by developing, planning, and implementing multi-tier solutions to address highly complex or unprecedented problems
		Resolves problems of particular difficulty, sensitivity, or strategic importance
		Identifies and resolves subtle issues and/or trends and their causes across organizational groups
Manages a group's problem solving process, assisting others in staying focused on the current problem and systematically working through the issue		

## Leadership Competencies

These are the top leadership competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. The set of leadership competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes the top competencies.

**Table 27. Leadership Competencies – Environmental Engineer**

Leadership Competency	Proficiency Rating					
	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
1. Assigning, Evaluating and Monitoring Work	NA	2	3	3	4	5
2. Developing Others	NA	1	3	3	4	5
3. Human Resources Management	NA	1	4	4	5	5
4. Team Building	1	3	4	4	5	5
5. External Awareness	NA	1	3	3	4	5
6. Relationship Management	1	2	4	4	5	5
7. Leveraging Diversity	1	2	3	3	4	5
8. Public Service Motivation	NA	1	3	3	4	5
9. Political Savvy	NA	1	3	3	4	5
10. Strategic Thinking and Action	NA	1	3	3	4	5



## Recommended Leadership Experience – Environmental Engineer

These are the top experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Leadership Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

**Table 28. Recommended Leadership Experience – Environmental Engineer**

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work	Mid	Assigns work based on employees' experience and competency level
		Encourages feedback from staff when assigning and evaluating work
		Understands work requirements and staff capabilities
		Clearly communicates expectations and work requirements to employees
	Sr/Dis Spec	Coordinates tasks and monitors performance on tasks to meet objectives
		Makes effective work assignments by matching skills, employee interests, availability, and experience based on unit needs
	Sup	Coordinates tasks and monitors performance on tasks to exceed unit objectives
		Coordinates multi-function projects that require multiple groups of employees, stakeholders, etc.
	Mgr	Adjusts work activities to ensure seamless integration and effectiveness across work units during periods of rapid change in the operating environment and/or when working with narrow windows of time
		Establishes and clearly communicates expectations that are linked to unit objectives and the Agency's mission to unit leaders engaged in highly complex work activities
		Coordinates and monitors performance on complex programs (e.g., special initiatives) across partners to meet both organizational and unit objectives

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Developing Others	Mid	Provides feedback in a constructive manner
		Aids employees in identifying developmental opportunities
		Encourages others to achieve high standards and perform beyond set expectations
		Involves staff in developing project goals and timelines
	Sr/Dis Spec	Proactively provides regular, timely, and constructive developmental feedback to employees and fosters developmental opportunities that improve work performance
		Uses performance information and solicits employee input to identify development needs
		Identifies appropriate developmental opportunities and, where possible, ensures employees receive training or development in a fair and equitable manner
	Sup	Identifies developmental opportunities to help employees perform a wide range of highly complex work activities
		Identifies or creates opportunities (e.g., stretch assignments, on-the-job training, detail assignments) for employees to pursue self-development activities
		Builds and uses systems and processes to develop employees to meet current and emerging requirements
	Mgr	Identifies creative developmental strategies to address skill needs of workforce
		Sets an example and guides others across the Agency to be skillful trainers, coaches, and mentors
		Establishes or promotes a culture around getting others to maximize their potential

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Human Resource Management	Mid	Provides input on what staff is required, recruitment ideas, and training opportunities
		Reports fraudulent activities in accordance with HR policies
		Addresses employee performance and conduct problems in a timely manner
		Develops/creates performance appraisals within suggested timeline
	Sr/Dis Spec	Conducts interviews with candidates
		Contributes to overall staffing plan
		Requests and obtains staff according to HR policy
		Makes recommendations to supervisor and leadership for performance awards
	Sup	Monitors Agency needs to identify, recruit, and select individuals
		Follows HR policies and communicates these policies to employees
		Identifies poor performers and creates opportunities for poor performers to improve performance; identifies opportunities for ADR when necessary
	Mgr	Assess current and emerging priorities, performance information, and employee goals to identify both immediate and long-term organizational needs; ensures individuals receive necessary training to meet these needs
		Anticipates skill needs that are consistent with organizational trends and changing priorities; identifies creative recruitment strategies to address these needs

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Team Building	Entry	Provides assistance when help is needed to accomplish team goals
		Shares relevant information with team members
		Encourages team members to develop and maintain collaborative relationships with each other
	Mid	Is proactive in recognizing when help is needed and provides assistance to help the team in accomplishing goals
		Independently offers assistance and provides support to advance goals
		Clearly articulates team goals and objectives to team members and explains why they are on the team
	Sr/Dis Spec	Integrates new team members into structure and assists them in transitioning to role
		Understands team dynamics and uses knowledge to motivate team members
		Gains support and buy-in throughout product/project development to gain support for product/project throughout the Agency
		Obtains feedback from team members to improve product/project
		Restructures roles, responsibilities, and possibly team members of dysfunctional teams to meet overall objectives
	Sup	Builds and maintains a positive team atmosphere by demonstrating and promoting collaboration among work units
		Creates senior-level teams to design and implement requirements for new systems and procedures
		Leads a team to resolve challenging or controversial state/regional concerns/issues
	Mgr	Champions initiatives, leverages opportunities, and minimize obstacles, easing the path to achieving different units' goals
		Leads a team to resolve challenging or controversial Agency-wide legislative and regulatory policy issues
		Recognizes effective teams and integrates best practices
		Inspires teams to achieve success

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
External Awareness	Mid	Consults with leadership regarding the impact of how external factors may affect the Agency
		Considers external policies and trends when reviewing correspondence, reports, and policy documents
		Gathers and summarizes information to predict stakeholder views on a new policy
	Sr/Dis Spec	Considers external factors that may affect the unit's work and uses this knowledge in accomplishing work
		Refocuses efforts, redistributes resources, or otherwise overcomes roadblocks in consideration of external factors (e.g., changes in administration or a new Farm Bill) to achieve NRCS objectives
		Synthesizes complex information gathered from a variety of external sources and disseminates it to staff
		Understands how external factors (e.g. political events) impact the Agency
	Sup	Contributes to the development of long-term goals by recommending effective strategies based on external factors that may possibly impact the Agency
		Anticipates how work processes may be affected by changes in the external environment and develops alternatives
		Provides policy advice to officials which are consistent with local, national, and international policies and trends
	Mgr	Demonstrates an in-depth understanding of external factors that may affect the Agency's work and uses this knowledge constructively in establishing goals and priorities and accomplishing work
		Anticipates how work processes may be affected by changes in the external environment or events and, in response, develops creative and highly effective alternatives
Develops programs or initiatives (e.g., WHIP, ecological site descriptions) taking into account the diverse views and needs of other agencies or external organizations		



Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Relationship Management	Entry	Develops a basic knowledge of what organizations, agencies, or groups NRCS partners with (i.e., FSA, Soil and Water Conservation Districts).
		Identifies individuals or groups whose input would improve or facilitate one's own task accomplishment
	Mid	Works with individuals across work units to address mutual issues and concerns
		Builds a network within the Agency by proactively communicating with employees outside of own work unit on a regular basis
		Coordinates with internal and external partners and customers regarding new strategies to ensure effective coordination
	Sr/Dis Spec	Builds consensus by understanding and considering common goals and by soliciting input from, and promoting trust between, various parties
		Works with individuals outside of Agency to address mutual issues and concerns
		Develops and manages relationships with staff and State leadership to gain endorsement for initiatives and help achieve common goals
	Sup	Partners with various groups by sharing information and resources across multiple organizational levels, including updates/changes
		Identifies new and/or non-traditional partners and new ways to develop relationships with partners that will have a positive impact on Agency goals
		Develops and manages relationships with national leadership to gain endorsement for initiatives and help achieve common goals
	Mgr	Initiates, develops, publicizes, and gains support for programs and policies by meeting with partners, stakeholders, employees, customers, and other interested parties
		Works across Federal, state, and local agencies/authorities to coordinate conservation efforts (e.g., cooperative agreements, coordinating the EWP program)
		Establishes long-lasting relationships with non-traditional partners to develop relationships that will have a positive impact on Agency goals

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Leveraging Diversity	Entry	Adheres to EEO policies, goals, objectives, and philosophies by dealing with everyone fairly, equitably, and professionally
		Demonstrates knowledge of Agency policy in regard to diversity
		Meets with staff to obtain input on diversity issues within workgroup
		Develops an awareness of situations which could potentially lead to allegations of harassment or discrimination
	Mid	Promotes diversity by assisting, sponsoring, or joining an employee group or other professional diversity-related association or participates in outreach/recruitment efforts
		Monitors the work environment to identify situations which could potentially lead to allegations of harassment or discrimination
		Builds a high quality, diverse workforce and ensures fairness by recruiting, hiring, promoting, and providing developmental opportunities in a fair and equitable manner
		Encourages employee participation in diversity-related activities and organizations
	Sr/ Dis Spec/ Sup	Builds a climate of trust by demonstrating behavior that clearly values individual differences and diversity
		Makes self and employees aware of any programs that support diversity, such as employee groups, educational entities, or professional associations
		Encourages employees to express their individual views toward improving work products, services, processes, teamwork, and the work environment itself
	Mgr	Establishes rules and practices to ensure diversity and collaboration within the Agency; works with the different unit leaders to effectively leverage diverse thought, opinions, experiences, and backgrounds to achieve the vision and mission of the Agency
		Actively promotes NRCS diversity programs and initiatives, highlighting the Agency's commitment to diversity and its value to the organization; facilitates participation in diversity-related programs and initiatives
Proactively monitors the workplace to identify situations which could potentially lead to allegations of harassment or discrimination and establishes practices/creates an environment to prevent such situations		



Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Political Savvy	Mid	Considers impact when addressing employee expectations (e.g., working with union, relocations)
		Considers staff concerns or feedback regarding organizational changes
		Demonstrates knowledge of stakeholders and peers/leaders in the Agency
	Sr/Dis Spec	Evaluates political implications by considering different courses of action on a key issue
		Meets with key decision makers to ensure approval of resources to support needed adjustments and/or organizational change
		Discusses organizational change with employees to ensure their understanding; addresses known and potential concerns
		Understands the most appropriate time and methods for expressing needs and requesting resources
	Sup	Ensures staff understands documentation and required metrics to analyze political issues
		Establishes a clear vision for the Agency by meeting with managers Agency-wide to ensure initiatives are understood
		Anticipates resistance to Agency position and takes proactive steps to address opposing arguments
	Mgr	Leads change in the Agency by meeting with stakeholders to understand perspectives and reach consensus on Agency-wide plan to implement change
		Establishes relationships with diverse organizational interests to effectively communicate priorities, build organizational credibility, and generate external support
		Identifies and coordinates multiple parties to reach a common goal; educates these parties on how their participation and coordination will lead to goal accomplishments
		Addresses controversial issues and gains buy-in with resistant individuals

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Strategic Action and Thinking	Mid	Organizes project team based on consideration of strategic objectives
		Ensures team objectives are consistent with strategic plan
	Sr/ Dis Spec	Considers customer needs and trends in the development of strategic plans
		Conducts review of the Agency's core mission and gathers information from relevant sources to support development of a strategic plan
		Brainstorms ideas with team members to address needed updates/changes and develop strategies
	Sup	Assists with the development and implementation of Agency or State policy by determining target audience and building coalitions with the appropriate population
		Develops implementation strategies to meet business plan priorities
		Implements strategic objectives and develops metrics to assess attainment of goals
	Mgr	Anticipates changes (e.g., a demographic change, policy change) and establishes a plan to address the future needs of the Agency
		Designs approaches and procedures to develop a strategic plan supporting key goals and objectives
Leads and directs a diverse strategic planning team tasked with addressing and outlining the future direction of the Agency		

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Public service	Mid	Responds promptly and accurately to public inquiries
		Suggests gaining feedback from public (e.g., regarding new policy, procedure, priorities)
		Responds promptly and accurately to public inquiries
	Senior/Dis Spec	Develops and follows policy to better use public funds for the good of the community
		Contributes to and improves process to effectively and efficiently use public funds (e.g., program delivery)
		Anticipates and provides resources needed to participate in various public service programs (e.g., the People's Garden, field day activities)
		Utilizes media to communicate NRCS "stories" to create buy-in and get individuals interested in natural resource conservation
	Sup	Strategizes with other leaders to develop action plans to meet public needs
		Cultivates relationships with community stakeholders to validate usefulness of proposed products and services
		Uses feedback from community to aid decision-making and inform leadership of public needs
		Elicits employees' commitment to serve the public good (e.g., in critical situations, emergency response)
	Mgr	Designs and develops programs and initiatives to address critical public requirements
		Works with policy and regulation developers to modify policy/regulation to better serve public
		Establishes a culture for public service motivation and commitment to the public good
		Instills a sense of public service in employees

## Occupational Competencies – Environmental Engineer

These are the top occupational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. These should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the Appendix. This list includes all of the occupational competencies associated with the Environmental Engineer job.

**Table 29. Occupational Competencies – Environmental Engineer**

Occupational Competency	Proficiency Rating					
	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
1. Problem Identification/ Defining Objectives	1	3	4	5	5	5
2. Development of Alternatives – Decision Support	1	3	4	5	5	5
3. Data Collection and Analyses	1	3	4	5	5	5
4. Construction Oversight/Quality Assurance	1	3	4	5	5	5
5. Environmental Engineering Design	2	3	4	5	5	5
6. Environmental Regulatory Expertise	1	3	4	5	5	5

## Recommended Occupational Experience – Environmental Engineer

These are the top experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Occupational Competencies, that an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

**Table 30. Recommended Occupational Experience – Environmental Engineer**

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Problem Identification/ Defining Objectives	Entry	Builds awareness of resource concerns common to his/her area of operations
		Under supervision, assists in identifying basic resource concerns
		Attends meetings with customers and listens to their needs and concerns
		Under supervision, becomes familiar with documentation requirements for customer issues/concerns and objectives
	Mid	Independently works with customers to identify resource concerns and objectives taking into consideration economic, cultural, and social issues
		Independently identifies other disciplines necessary to fully define all resource concerns
		Conducts further investigations to identify additional data collection requirements
		Collaborates with local multidisciplinary teams to address complex resource concerns
	Senior	Provides training on methods to assess most resource concerns found in work area
		Provides expertise to identify resource concerns and define objectives in complex and/or unique situations within assigned work area
		Collaborates with other State/Federal agencies to define resource concerns and objectives
	Dis Spec/ Sup/ Mgr	Identifies the need and coordinates development and/or delivery of training at the National/Regional/State levels for identification of natural resource concerns
		Development of National/State level policies and procedures in order to carry out problem identification
		Works with customers to determine requirements for unique or complex projects, including those projects that are extensively regulated or have high impact/visibility

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Development of Alternatives – Decision Support	Entry	Under close supervision, develops an awareness of different engineering alternatives commonly used in their service area
		Under supervision, develops familiarity with relevant NRCS references in order to develop alternatives
		Under supervision, attends meetings with customer and develops awareness of the potential alternative selection/evaluation process
	Mid	Independently applies engineering principles and practices to identify applicable alternatives
		Independently develops alternatives to solve resource concerns
		Collaborates with multidisciplinary teams to assist customer(s) in evaluating and planning routine engineering practices
		Independently presents alternatives and advises customer on advantages and disadvantages of each alternative
	Sr	Develops and evaluates innovative alternatives to address complex resource concerns across a wide geographical area
		Develops and provides training on the formulation and evaluation of alternatives
		Provides guidance and leadership in the development or revision of interim and state conservation practice standards
	Dis Spec/ Sup/ Mgr	Engages multiple stakeholders in developing alternative solutions for unique or complex projects
		Evaluates the technical merit of innovative alternatives for use in complex situations
		Works with national and international organizations (e.g., universities, professional groups, other government agencies) to develop alternative engineering practices/initiatives to solve resource concerns
		Provides guidance and leadership in the development or revision of national conservation practice standards

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Data Collection and Analyses	Entry	Develops awareness of basic data collection requirements and techniques
		Develops familiarity with NRCS surveying, note taking, and documentation requirements
		Develops awareness of existing data that can be used in performing analysis
		Under supervision, collects basic data on routine sites and performs standard analyses
	Mid	Plans, collects, and analyzes data as required throughout each phase of a project
		Independently uses a variety of instruments for data collection (e.g., basic and high tech surveying instruments and techniques) and creates the required end-products
		Independently prepares data analysis reports for routine projects
		Independently reviews and approves data collection reports for routine projects
		Recognizes and requests specialized assistance (e.g., geologist, soil scientist) for data collection in more complex sites
	Sr	Coordinates the data collection and analyses for highly complex and/or unique engineering projects or processes
		Reviews and approves data collection reports for highly complex and/or unique projects
		Recommends and integrates more advanced technologies, software, and equipment for data collection and analyses
		Develops innovative data collection techniques and analyses to address unique and/or complex engineering problems
	Dis Spec/ Sup/ Mgr	Identifies the need and coordinates development and/or delivery of training at the National/Regional/State levels
		Develops National/State policies and procedures on data collection and analyses
		Reviews the development of innovative data collection techniques and/or analyses
Represents NRCS on expert panels, interagency working groups, etc. in reviewing new technologies, equipment, and/or methods		





Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Construction Oversight/ Quality Assurance	Entry	Under close supervision, assists with construction oversight/quality assurance
		Develops understanding of the construction oversight/quality assurance process
		Under close supervision, develops understanding of construction contract provisions
		Under close supervision, assists in the verification of project completion
		Under close supervision, assists with the documentation of construction activities
	Mid	Provides training and oversight to others on construction oversight/quality assurance process
		Conducts spot checks on engineering practices.
		Independently interprets plans and specifications for construction of projects
		Independently documents construction activities for construction projects
		Develops reports summarizing results of construction oversight/quality assurance reviews
	Sr	Develops and maintains State standard construction and material specifications
		Integrates innovative knowledge and technology from other fields and disciplines to improve State construction oversight/quality assurance policies and procedures
		Develops materials and trains others on NRCS policies and procedures with regard to construction oversight/quality assurance
	Dis Spec/ Sup/ Mgr	Develops National level policies and procedures on construction oversight/quality assurance, and assists States with implementation
		Identifies the need and coordinates development and/or delivery of training at the National/Regional/State levels
		Develops policies and procedures to conduct quality assurance reviews of new materials and technologies

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Environmental Engineering Design	Entry	Under limited supervision, develops designs for routine engineering practices in accordance with NRCS conservation practice standards and specifications
		Under limited supervision, utilizes applicable technical tools and software programs
		Independently prepares simple designs
		Under limited supervision, develops a complete design package for a routine project
	Mid	Develops designs and construction plans for a variety of environmental engineering projects
		Provides training on environmental engineering component design to others
		Independently uses applicable technical tools and software programs
		Independently, utilizes standard drawings and recommends drawing modifications
	Coordinates structural and/or geotechnical analyses for the design of routine engineering practices	
	Sr	Develops materials and trains others on environmental engineering designs
		Develops specific methods and procedures to design solutions to unique and/or difficult environmental situations
		Conducts technical reviews to evaluate the proficiency and efficacy of complex environmental designs and/or projects to ensure they comply with NRCS standards
	Dis Spec/ Sup/ Mgr	Develops National-level policies and procedures on environmental engineering design, and assists States with implementation
		Conducts reviews and provides direction on the utilization of technical tools and software programs
		Provides recommendations on the use of new/innovative technology
		Identifies the need and coordinates development and/or delivery of training at the National/Regional/State levels

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Environmental Regulatory Expertise	Entry	Under close supervision, builds awareness of existing Federal/State/Tribal/Local environmental regulations and governing agencies
		Under close supervision, builds awareness of how environmental regulations apply to engineering projects
		Under supervision, builds awareness of important reference materials and internal agency expertise
	Mid	Independently applies regulatory environmental requirements to engineering projects
		Independently explains State/Local environmental regulatory requirements to individual customers
		Advises and trains other NRCS employees on basic environmental engineering regulations
		Participates in local environmental regulatory authority meetings or work groups
	Sr	Participates in State Advisory Boards and other State-level regulatory authorities in the development of environmental laws and regulations
		Provides State-wide guidance on the application of environmental laws and regulations
		Explains regulatory requirements to customers for more complex or high visibility projects
		Develops materials and trains others on environmental engineering regulations
	Dis Spec/ Sup/ Mgr	Provides recommendations to Federal government agencies in the development of new environmental laws and regulations
		Develops NRCS national policies and procedures related to the application of environmental laws and regulations, and assists States with implementation
		Identifies the need and coordinates development and/or delivery of training at the National/Regional/State levels
		Provides expertise on the application of environmental laws and regulations on high visibility/impact projects

## Recommended Education/Certifications – Environmental Engineer

These are the recommended education/certification requirements to be able to attain each level of the Civil Engineer Technician job. These recommendations are based on Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidelines as well as Subject Matter Expert recommendations.

**Table 31. Recommended Education and Certifications – Environmental Engineer**

Education/Certifications	Career Level					
	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
1. Completion of a 4-year engineering degree accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology as a professional engineering curriculum; or including differential and integral calculus and courses in 5 of the following areas: statics, dynamics, strength of materials, fluid mechanics, hydraulics, thermodynamics, electrical fields and circuits, nature and properties of materials	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. One year of graduate-level education or superior academic achievement in a related field*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

\* Indicates educational recommendations that are not required for the position but can be used by individuals who wish to enter this job series above the Entry job level.

## Professional Associations – Environmental Engineer

These six professional associations are recommended as resources for individuals interested in the Environmental Engineer job.

**Table 32. Professional Associations – Environmental Engineer**

American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Water Works Association
American Water Resources Association
The Soil and Water Conservation Society
National Society of Professional Engineers

## Specifics by Job – Agricultural Engineer

### Job Duties by Career Level – Agricultural Engineer

These are three major duties associated with the individual Career Levels for the Agricultural Engineer job. In general, these are slight deviations of the Overall Duties, intended to show the differences in responsibility between the Career Levels.

**Table 33. Career Level Duties –  
Agricultural Engineer**

Job Duty	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
Performs site investigations, survey work, CAD work, and data collection	✓					
Prepares and reviews engineering designs and reports which includes design calculations and plan preparation	✓					
Performs quality assurance to ensure that projects are carried out as designed and recommends additions as needed	✓					
Performs, trains, and provides guidance for site investigations, survey work, CAD work, and data collection		✓				

Job Duty	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
Prepares, provides training, provides guidance, and reviews engineering designs and reports which include design calculations and plan preparation		✓				
Performs, trains, and guides on quality assurance to ensure that projects are carried out as designed and recommends additions as needed		✓				
Performs, trains, oversees, and provides guidance for site investigations, survey work, CAD work, and data collection			✓			
Prepares, provides training and guidance, oversees, and reviews engineering designs and reports, including design calculations and plan preparation			✓			
Performs, trains, oversees, and guides on quality assurance to ensure that projects get carried out as designed and recommend additions as needed			✓			
Provides discipline-specific technical leadership for planning and data collection				✓		
Provides technical leadership for engineering analysis and design				✓		

Job Duty	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
Provides discipline-specific technical leadership for quality assurance				✓		
Performs and supervises the individuals performing site investigations, survey work, CAD work, and data collection					✓	
Performs and supervises the individuals creating engineering designs and reports, which includes design calculations and plan preparation					✓	
Performs and supervises the individuals performing quality assurance ensuring projects get carried out as designed; and recommend additions as needed					✓	
Directs and leads the technical program						✓
Finalizes and issues technical policies and procedures in accordance with Agency priorities						✓
Manages resources, dollars, and people to meet Agency priorities						✓



## Foundational Competencies – Agricultural Engineer

These are the top foundational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. The set of top foundational competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the appendix. This list includes the top competencies.

**Table 34. Foundational Competencies –  
Agricultural Engineer**

Foundational Competency	Proficiency Rating					
	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
1. Representing the Agency	1	3	4	4	5	5
2. Initiative	2	3	4	4	5	5
3. Problem Solving	2	3	4	4	4	5

## Recommended Foundational Experience – Agricultural Engineer

These are the top experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Foundational Competencies, an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

**Table 35. Recommended Foundational Experience – Agricultural Engineer**

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Representing the Agency	Entry	Appropriately supports the Agency’s goals in interactions with others
		Maintains professional attitude and actions in all business situations
		Develops knowledge of relevant policies, rules, and procedures for representing the Agency (e.g., standards of conduct) and follows them accordingly
	Mid	Takes effective steps to resolve confrontational situations with customers in a manner that reflects positively on the Agency
		Promotes the Agency in a professional manner that educates others, protects its interests, and enhances its image and reputation
		Represents the Agency as a professional expert on natural resource conservation issues (e.g., presents a technical paper at a conference)
	Dis Spec	Serves as a role model and advises others on presenting a professional image of the Agency to enhance trust and credibility
		Engages with others in a manner that earns their respect and advances the goals and objectives of the Agency
		Serves as an Agency representative on interagency teams and projects
		Represents the Agency’s interests to a variety of parties (e.g., at technical group meetings, to universities)

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
	Sup	Manages complex and difficult situations with confidence and decisiveness, enhancing the reputation and image of the Agency
		Meets with elected or appointed officials to provide Agency and program information for decision-making
		Promotes and justifies the Agency's programs and actions in contentious situations
	Mgr	Markets the Agency's mission and programs through media outlets
		Manages complex and difficult situations with confidence and decisiveness, enhancing the reputation and image of the Agency
		Meets with elected or appointed officials to provide Agency and program information for decision-making
		Promotes and justifies the Agency's programs and actions in contentious situations

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience
Initiative	Entry	Seeks out new responsibilities, assignments, and opportunities
		Asks coworkers, peers, and supervisors questions to better understand work requirements and needs of customers
		Participates in a mentoring relationship as a protégé
	Mid	Seeks out more challenging responsibilities, such as managing projects
		Volunteers to take the lead on team efforts outside of one's normal job duties
		Takes the initiative to develop tools/instructions to share with coworkers (e.g., developing standard operating procedures for a specific area)
		Participates in a mentoring relationship to assist in the development of less-experienced staff
	Dis Spec	Volunteers to take the lead on state-wide efforts that do not fit within one's normal comfort zone or job duties, such as developing training
		Identifies and implements solutions for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of established work processes
		Volunteers for a challenging detail that is outside the normal scope of duties
		Volunteers/offers to serve as a member of a special committee or focus group that has Agency-wide impact
	Sup	Puts in a sustained and intense effort to accomplish highly complex and/or critical tasks and or goals
		Volunteers for long-term special assignment or detail that will have an impact on the Agency and its mission
		Identifies major problems or issues and recommends solutions that have the potential to significantly impact and improve the Agency
		Establishes a climate for the state or Agency that encourages new ideas and initiative
	Mgr	Puts in a sustained and intense effort to accomplish highly complex and/or critical tasks and or goals
		Volunteers for long-term special assignment or detail that will have an impact on the Agency and its mission
		Identifies major problems or issues and recommends solutions that have the potential to significantly impact and improve the Agency

Foundational Competency	Career Level	Foundational Experience	
Problem Solving		Establishes a climate for the state or Agency that encourages new ideas and initiative	
		Entry	Applies proven solutions, strategies, and/or procedures to solve problems
			Determines cause of a customer problem and takes approved, corrective action
			Identifies problems, considers available information, and evaluates alternative solutions to problems affecting own work
		Mid	Reconciles conflicting and/or incomplete information to develop solutions
			Uses data and information to identify relationships, issues, assumptions, and emerging trends and draws sound conclusions
			Solves problems by thoroughly analyzing their causes and short- and long-term implications of solutions
			Anticipates potential problems and takes or proposes corrective actions
		Dis Spec/ Sup/	Identifies and leverages resources and expertise, internal or external to the work unit, to address complex problems
			Synthesizes information from internal and external sources to develop an action plan addressing complex issues (e.g., applying information from NHQ to State problem; updating guidelines with new technologies)
			Identifies connections between seemingly unrelated pieces of information to resolve difficult or ambiguous problems
		Mgr	Improves efficiency by developing, planning, and implementing multi-tier solutions to address highly complex or unprecedented problems
			Resolves problems of particular difficulty, sensitivity, or strategic importance
			Identifies and resolves subtle issues and/or trends and their causes across organizational groups

## Leadership Competencies

These are the top leadership competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. The set of leadership competencies and associated proficiency levels should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the appendix. This list includes the top competencies.

**Table 36. Leadership Competencies –  
Agricultural Engineer**

Leadership Competency	Proficiency Rating					
	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
1. Fiscal Responsibility	NA	NA	1	1	1	5
2. Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work	NA	NA	1	1	1	5
3. Developing Others	NA	NA	1	1	2	5
4. Human Resource Management	NA	NA	1	1	1	5
5. Team Building	NA	NA	2	2	3	5
6. External Awareness	NA	NA	1	1	2	5
7. Relationship Management	1	2	4	4	5	5
8. Leveraging Diversity	NA	NA	1	1	1	5
9. Public Service Motivation	NA	NA	1	1	2	5
10. Political Savvy	NA	NA	1	1	1	5
11. Vision	NA	NA	1	1	1	5
12. Strategic Thinking and Action	NA	NA	1	1	1	5

## Recommended Leadership Experience – Agricultural Engineer

These are the top experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Leadership Competencies, an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

**Table 37. Recommended Leadership Experience – Agricultural Engineer**

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Fiscal Responsibility	Sr/Dis Spec/ Sup	Develops understanding of the Agency’s basic financial processes and policies
		Manages a limited, specified amount of financial resources
		Assists others with the budgeting of resources by providing estimates of own projects and needs
	Mgr	Understands appropriation laws and demonstrates a mastery of the financial processes of the Agency
		Identifies financial resources available internal and external to the Agency, and skillfully gains access to these resources
		Establishes systems to monitor expenditures within the Agency to ensure that financial resources are effectively allocated to achieve the objectives of the Agency

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Assigning, Evaluating, and Monitoring Work	Sr/Dis Spec/ Sup	Establishes and clearly communicates work expectations to employees
		Assigns work in a fair and equitable manner
	Mgr	Adjusts work activities to ensure seamless integration and effectiveness across work units during periods of rapid change in the operating environment and/or when working with narrow windows of time
		Establishes and clearly communicates expectations that are linked to unit objectives and the Agency's mission to unit leaders engaged in highly complex work activities
		Coordinates and monitors performance on complex programs (e.g., special initiatives) across partners to meet both organizational and unit objectives
	Developing Others	Sr/Dis Spec
Aids employees in identifying developmental opportunities		
Encourages others to achieve high standards and perform beyond set expectations		
Involves staff in developing project goals and timelines		
Sup		Trains, coaches, or mentors employees
		Sets clear goals and developmental milestones for employees
		Sets example regarding high performance standards for the unit or team
Mgr		Identifies creative developmental strategies to address skill needs of workforce
		Sets an example and guides others across the Agency to be skillful trainers, coaches, and mentors
		Establishes or promotes a culture around getting others to maximize their potential



Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Human Resource Management	Sr/Dis Spec	Provides input on what staff is required, recruitment ideas, and training opportunities
		Reports fraudulent activities in accordance with HR policies
		Addresses employee performance and conduct problems in a timely manner
		Develops/creates performance appraisals within suggested timeline
	Sup	Provides input on what staff is required, recruitment ideas, and training opportunities
		Reports fraudulent activities in accordance with HR policies
		Addresses employee performance and conduct problems in a timely manner
	Mgr	Assess current and emerging priorities, performance information, and employee goals to identify both immediate and long-term organizational needs; ensures individuals receive necessary training to meet these needs
		Anticipates skill needs that are consistent with organizational trends and changing priorities; identifies creative recruitment strategies to address these needs

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Team Building	Sr/Dis Spec	Is proactive in recognizing when help is needed and provides assistance to help the team in accomplishing goals
		Independently offers assistance and provides support to advance goals
		Clearly articulates team goals and objectives to team members and explains why they are on the team
	Sup	Integrates new team members into structure and assists them in transitioning to role
		Understands team dynamics and uses knowledge to motivate team members
		Gains support and buy-in throughout product/project development to gain support for product/project throughout the Agency
	Mgr	Champions initiatives, leverages opportunities, and minimize obstacles, thereby easing the path to achieving different units' goals
		Leads a team to resolve challenging or controversial Agency-wide legislative and regulatory policy issues
		Recognizes effective teams and integrates best practices
		Inspires teams to achieve success

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
External Awareness	Sr/Dis Spec	Maintains awareness and evaluates the impact of external events on current processes
		Responds to environmental, budgetary, political, or other events and circumstances requiring change
		Effectively alters plans and redistributes resources to address changing requirements
	Sup	Consults with leadership regarding the impact of how external factors may affect the Agency
		Considers external policies and trends when reviewing correspondence, reports, and policy documents
		Gathers and summarizes information to predict stakeholder views on a new policy
	Mgr	Demonstrates an in-depth understanding of external factors that may affect the Agency's work and uses this knowledge constructively in establishing goals and priorities and accomplishing work
		Anticipates how work processes may be affected by changes in the external environment or events and, in response, develops creative and highly effective alternatives
		Develops programs or initiatives (e.g., WHIP, ecological site descriptions) taking into account the diverse views and needs of other agencies or external organizations

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Relationship Management	Entry	Develops a basic knowledge of what organizations, agencies, or groups NRCS partners with (i.e., FSA, Soil and Water Conservation Districts).
		Identifies individuals or groups whose input would improve or facilitate one's own task accomplishment
	Mid	Works with individuals across work units to address mutual issues and concerns
		Builds a network within the Agency by proactively communicating with employees outside of own work unit on a regular basis
		Coordinates with internal and external partners and customers regarding new strategies to ensure effective coordination
	Sr/Dis Spec	Partners with various groups by sharing information and resources across multiple organizational levels, including updates/changes
		Identifies new and/or non-traditional partners and new ways to develop relationships with partners that will have a positive impact on Agency goals
		Develops and manages relationships with national leadership to gain endorsement for initiatives and help achieve common goals
	Sup/Mgr	Initiates, develops, publicizes, and garners support for programs and policies by meeting with partners, stakeholders, employees, customers, and other interested parties
		Works across Federal, state, and local agencies/authorities to coordinate conservation efforts (e.g., cooperative agreements, coordinating the EWP program)
		Establishes long-lasting relationships with non-traditional partners to develop relationships that will have a positive impact on Agency goals

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Leveraging Diversity	Sr/Dis Spec/ Sup	Adheres to EEO policies, goals, objectives, and philosophies by dealing with everyone fairly, equitably, and professionally
		Demonstrates knowledge of Agency policy in regard to diversity
		Meets with staff to obtain input on diversity issues within workgroup
		Develops an awareness of situations which could potentially lead to allegations of harassment or discrimination
	Mgr	Establishes rules and practices to ensure diversity and collaboration within the Agency; works with the different unit leaders to effectively leverage diverse thought, opinions, experiences, and backgrounds to achieve the vision and mission of the Agency
		Actively promotes NRCS diversity programs and initiatives, highlighting the Agency's commitment to diversity and its value to the organization; facilitates participation in diversity-related programs and initiatives
		Proactively monitors the workplace to identify situations which could potentially lead to allegations of harassment or discrimination, and establishes practices/creates an environment to prevent such situations

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience
Political Savvy	Sr/Dis Spec/ Sup	Considers impact when addressing employee expectations (e.g., working with union, relocations)
		Considers staff concerns or feedback regarding organizational changes
		Demonstrates knowledge of stakeholders and peers/leaders in the Agency
	Mgr	Leads change in the Agency by meeting with stakeholders to understand perspectives and reach consensus on Agency-wide plan to implement change
		Establishes relationships with diverse organizational interests to effectively communicate priorities, build organizational credibility, and generate external support
		Identifies and coordinates multiple parties to reach a common goal; educates these parties on how their participation and coordination will lead to goal accomplishments
		Addresses controversial issues and gains buy-in with resistant individuals
Strategic Action and Thinking	Sr/Dis Spec/ Sup	Organizes project team based on consideration of strategic objectives
		Ensures team objectives are consistent with strategic plan
	Mgr	Anticipates changes (e.g., a demographic change, policy change) and establishes a plan to address the future needs of the Agency
		Designs approaches and procedures to develop a strategic plan supporting key goals and objectives
		Leads and directs a diverse strategic planning team tasked with addressing and outlining the future direction of the Agency

Leadership Competency	Career Level	Leadership Experience	
Public Service Motivation	Sr/Dis Spec	Responds promptly and accurately to public inquiries	
		Suggests gaining feedback from public (e.g., regarding new policy, procedure, priorities)	
		Listens to the public to understand community concerns and public needs	
	Sup	Reviews policies and procedures on a regular basis to ensure they are consistent with public needs	
		Determines community needs by talking to citizens or conducting focus groups	
		Ensures employees receive recognition for public service (e.g., nominates employees for formal acknowledgment or award)	
	Mgr	Designs and develops programs and initiatives to address critical public requirements	
		Works with policy and regulation developers to modify policy/regulation to better serve public	
		Establishes a culture for public service motivation and commitment to the public good	
		Instills a sense of public service in employees	
	Vision	Sr/ Dis Spec/ Sup	Gathers input from staff to develop work group vision
			Demonstrates knowledge of Agency vision and mission
Develops and generates support for work group vision			
Understands Agency long-term goals and objectives			
Mgr		Formulates short- and long-term strategies across organizational units that take a broad perspective and achieve significant results in support of organizational goals	
		Communicates a vision by translating broad organizational goals into well-defined strategies, plans, priorities, and assignments	
		Considers various viewpoints from internal and external sources when developing new organizational mission and vision	

## Occupational Competencies – Agricultural Engineer

These are the occupational competencies of the job, applicable at all Career Levels. These should differentiate the job from other jobs within and across the career groups. Proficiency Rating Definitions are included in the appendix. This list includes all of the occupational competencies associated with the Agricultural Engineer job.

**Table 38. Occupational Competencies –  
Agricultural Engineer**

Occupational Competency	Proficiency Rating					
	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
1. Problem Identification/ Defining Objectives	1	3	4	5	5	5
2. Development of Alternatives – Decision Support	1	3	4	5	5	5
3. Data Collection and Analyses	2	3	4	5	5	5
4. Design	1	3	4	5	5	5
5. Quality Assurance	2	3	4	5	5	5
6. Agricultural and Biological Engineering	1	3	4	5	5	5



## Recommended Occupational Experience – Agricultural Engineer

These are the top experiences (e.g., stretch assignments), based on the Occupational Competencies, an individual can participate in to prepare to be a viable candidate for the job.

**Table 39. Recommended Occupational Experience – Agricultural Engineer**

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Problem Identification/ Defining Objectives	Entry	Develops awareness of common types of issues/concerns in local area
		Develops an understanding of appropriate questions to ask the customer
		Assists in analyzing situation to identify basic issues/concerns
		Assists in documenting client needs to review with supervisor and/or others
	Mid	Independently works with customers to determine resource objectives and/or needs and engages them in the conservation planning process
		Identifies situations requiring subject-matter experts (e.g., biologists, engineers, etc.) regarding specific resource concerns
		Works on multidisciplinary teams to address routine resource concerns
		Trains others on how to effectively identify and address natural resource concerns
	Sr	Develops materials and trains others on how to effectively identify and address non-routine/complex natural resource concerns
		Provides assessments for a wide array of diverse issues/concerns
		Works independently with State/Federal/Tribal agencies, conservation partners, and/or other stakeholders

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
	Dis Spec/ Sup/ Mgr	Identifies the need and coordinates development of training at the National/Regional/State levels
		Development of National/State level policies and procedures in order to carry out problem identification
		Works with customers to determine requirements for unique or complex projects, including those projects that are extensively regulated or high impact/visibility

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Development of Alternatives – Decision Support	Entry	Under close supervision, develops an awareness of different engineering alternatives commonly used in their service area
		Under supervision, becomes familiarized with the Conservation Practice Physical Effects document
		Under close supervision, interacts with customers
	Mid	Independently reviews and evaluates investigative data to formulate alternatives that meet resource concerns
		Independently advises customers (internal and external) on problems and alternative solutions and provides technical and planning assistance
		Independently develops preliminary designs for routine situations
	Sr	Provides advice and guidance to employees on the selection of complex engineering practices
		Proposes the use of innovative engineering practices
		Works with others (e.g., non-governmental organizations, commodity groups, other government agencies) to assist landowners in evaluating and planning complex engineering practices
		Develops alternatives and preliminary designs for a wide array of diverse issues/concerns
	Dis Spec/ Sup/ Mgr	Engages multiple stakeholders in planning alternative solutions for unique or complex projects, including those projects that are extensively regulated or high impact/visibility
		Works with national and international organizations (e.g., universities, professional groups, other government agencies) to develop alternatives to solve resource concerns
		Identifies the need and coordinates development of training at the National/Regional/State levels
		Provides direction and guidance for the development of innovative alternatives

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Data Collection and Analyses	Entry	Collects and analyzes data for basic engineering projects or processes
		Identifies applicability of existing data for use in performing analyses
		With limited supervision, collects basic data on routine sites and carries out required analyses
		Independently uses basic surveying instruments to gather survey data
		Assist in preparing comprehensive data analysis reports
	Mid	Plans, collects, and analyzes the required data for a field investigation and as required throughout each phase of a routine project
		Independently prepares comprehensive data analysis reports
		Recognizes the need and requests specialized assistance (e.g., geologist, or soil scientist) for data collection in more complex sites
		Provides basic training on data collection and analyses methodologies
	Sr	Develops materials and trains others on data collection/analyses methods and techniques
		Recommends and integrates more advanced technologies, software, and equipment for use in data collection and analyses
		Develops innovative data collection techniques and analyses to tackle unique and/or complex engineering problems
	Dis Spec/ Sup/ Mgr	Identifies the need and coordinates development of training at the National/Regional/State levels
		Develops National/Regional/State level policies and procedures on data collection and analyses
		Represents NRCS in expert panels, interagency working groups, etc. in reviewing new technologies, equipment, or methods

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Design	Entry	Under close supervision, develops an awareness of the NRCS design process and related skills for practices commonly used in their service area
		Under close supervision, develops an awareness of conservation practice standards, and construction and materials specifications
		Under close supervision, performs components of basic designs
	Mid	Independently develops designs and supporting documentation for a variety of routine projects
		Performs reviews of designs developed by others for routine practices
		Provides training on routine practice component design to others
		Provides advice and guidance for design interpretation and makes modifications as necessary during the construction phase for routine projects
	Sr	Develops materials and trains others on a variety of non-routine/complex practice designs
		Independently develops designs and supporting documentation for complex practices
		Provides advice and guidance for design interpretation and makes modifications as necessary during the construction phase for complex projects
		Performs reviews of designs for complex projects
	Dis Spec/ Sup/ Mgr	Identifies the need and coordinates development of training at the National/Regional/State levels
		Develops National/Regional/State level policies and procedures on design preparation and review
		Creates innovative standards, design procedures, and construction specifications where none exist
		Performs reviews of designs for the most complex or high impact/visibility projects

Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Quality Assurance	Entry	With limited supervision, performs all phases of a Construction Quality Assurance plan for a routine practice
		Assists in the development of reports to summarize results of quality assurance reviews
		Assists in conducting spot checks on routine engineering practices
	Mid	Independently performs all phases of a Construction Quality Assurance plan for all practices
		Independently conducts spot checks on routine practices
		Independently generates comprehensive Quality Assurance reports
		Provides recommendations on management and corrective actions that may be needed
		Provides basic training to others on the quality assurance process
		Serves as contracting officer's technical representative (COTR) on routine projects
	Sr	Provides evaluation assessments and recommends corrective actions for improvement for complex projects and/or complex design issues
		Independently carries out spot checks on complex engineering practices
		Provides comprehensive Quality Assurance reports for complex projects and/or quality assurance issues
		Develops materials and trains others on NRCS policies and procedures with regard to quality assurance processes
	Dis Spec/ Sup/ Mgr	Identifies the need and coordinates development of training at the National/Regional/State levels
		Develops National/Regional/State level policies and procedures on quality assurance
		Utilizes results from existing reviews to make modifications to policies and standards
		Integrates innovative knowledge and technology from other fields and disciplines to improve quality assurance policies and procedures
		Develops policies and procedures to conduct quality assurance reviews of new materials and technologies



Occupational Competency	Career Level	Occupational Experience
Agricultural and Biological Engineering	Entry	Develops an awareness of the development and implementation of engineering practices (e.g., waste storage and treatment, irrigation and drainage, erosion control)
		Develops an awareness of the requirements of local, state, and federal regulations
		Develops an awareness of the appropriate use of engineering tools to plan, analyze, and design routine systems of engineering practices
	Mid	Develops solutions for routine systems of engineering practices (e.g., waste storage and treatment, irrigation and drainage, erosion control, energy conservation and production)
		Independently understands and ensures compliance with local, state, and federal regulations relating to systems of engineering practices
		Independently utilizes full range of engineering tools to plan, analyze, and design routine systems of engineering practices
	Sr	Develops State supplements to internal reference materials
		Provides guidance and assistance for the development and implementation of complex systems of engineering practices (e.g., waste storage and treatment, irrigation and drainage, erosion control, energy conservation and production)
		Provides guidance and leadership in the development or revision of interim and state conservation practice standards
	Dis Spec/ Sup/ Mgr	Provides oversight in the development and/or revision of internal engineering directives and tools to plan, analyze, and design systems of engineering practices
		Serves on expert panels that develop external reference materials
		Advises Federal, Tribal, and State regulators in the development and implementation of regulations affecting systems of engineering practices
		Represents agricultural and biological engineering discipline on internal and external multidisciplinary teams





## Recommended Education/Certifications – Agricultural Engineer

These are the recommended education/certification requirements to attain each level of the Agricultural Engineering job. These recommendations are based on Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidelines as well as Subject Matter Expert recommendations.

**Table 40. Recommended Education and Certifications – Agricultural Engineer**

Education/Certifications	Career Level					
	Entry	Mid	Senior	Dis Spec	Sup	Mgr
1. Completion of a 4-year degree in engineering accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology as a professional engineering curriculum; or including differential and integral calculus and courses in 5 of the following areas: statics, dynamics, strength of materials, fluid mechanics, hydraulics, thermodynamics, electrical fields and circuits, and properties of materials	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. 1 year of graduate-level education or superior academic achievement in a related field*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

\* Indicates educational recommendations not required for the position which can be used for individuals wishing to enter the job series above Entry level.

## Professional Associations – Agricultural Engineer

These seven professional associations are recommended as resources for individuals interested in the Agricultural Engineer job.

**Table 41. Professional Associations –  
Agricultural Engineer**

American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers
American Water Works Association
American Water Resources Association
International Erosion Control Association
Irrigation Association
The Soil and Water Conservation Society
National Society of Professional Engineers

## Appendix

### Job Level Definitions

You will see “Entry,” “Mid,” “Sr,” “Dis Spec,” “Spv,” and “Mgr” career levels along with the necessary proficiency ratings for each of these levels. The table below explains the differences between each of the five possible career levels. Specifically, it provides an overview of each job level, followed by a high level description of the experience/knowledge associated with the job level, the type of duties they perform at that job level, and the supervisory responsibilities at that job level.

	Entry	Mid	Senior/ Technical	Discipline Specialist	Supervisor	Manager
Overview	Starting level of a career. Consists of individuals entering a field of work for the first time, as well as those still early in their career.	Full performance level. Individuals at this level are skilled enough to be independent contributors.	Advanced performance level. Individuals have enhanced technical knowledge or skills in a field.	Advanced performance level. Individuals have enhanced technical knowledge or skills in a field. Apply these knowledge/skills at a regional/national level.	First-line supervisory level. These individuals supervise non-supervisors.	Advanced supervisory level. These individuals typically direct the work of an organizational unit, (including supervising supervisors) and are held accountable for the unit’s progress.

	Entry	Mid	Senior/ Technical	Discipline Specialist	Supervisor	Manager
Experience/ Knowledge	Minimal work experience in the area and foundational knowledge to begin a career in the field.	Sufficient work experience and knowledge in the area to perform all core functions of the job.	Sufficient work experience and technical knowledge to be considered a subject matter expert in the field.	Sufficient work experience and technical knowledge to be considered a subject matter expert in the field from a regional/national perspective.	Sufficient work experience and knowledge in the area and organization to directly oversee the work of others.	Sufficient work experience and knowledge in the area and organization to direct the work of an organizational unit.
Duties	Performs basic position duties often under close supervision.	Performs the key duties of the position independently with little supervision.	Performs advanced position duties that may be based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced technical knowledge or skills in a field.</li> <li>• Extensive non-supervisory administrative responsibilities.</li> </ul>	Performs advanced position duties at the regional/national level that may be based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced technical knowledge or skills in a field</li> <li>• Extensive non-supervisory administrative</li> </ul>	Performs first-line supervisory duties (e.g., supervising employees, performance appraisals and leave approvals).	Performs managerial duties such as managing work plans, schedules, and resources in order to meet organizational objectives.

				responsibilities		
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	Entry	Mid	Senior/ Technical	Discipline Specialist	Supervisor	Manager
Supervisor Responsibilities	None	None	None	None	Supervision of some employees, but does not supervise other supervisors.	Supervision of other supervisors.

## Proficiency Scale Definitions

We prepopulated the necessary proficiency ratings for each career level based on the competency models and proficiency ratings that you developed. The proficiency scale is a 5-point scale that is used to suggest how knowledgeable individuals should be on a particular competency:

### 1 – Basic

- Applies the competency in the simplest situations
- Requires close and extensive guidance
- Demonstrates awareness of concepts and processes

### 2 – Foundational

- Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations
- Requires frequent guidance
- Demonstrates familiarity with concepts and processes

### 3 – Intermediate

- Applies the competency in difficult situations
- Requires occasional guidance
- Demonstrates understanding of concepts and processes

### 4 – Advanced

- Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations
- Generally requires little or no guidance
- Demonstrates broad understanding of concepts and processes

### 5 – Expert

- Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations
- Serves as a key resource and advises others
- Demonstrates comprehensive, expert understanding of concepts and processes