The Pathways Program offers a clear path of opportunity with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in meeting our mission of Helping People Help the Land. Students from high school through post-graduate school can apply to participate in the available programs.

The Internship Program
The Pathways Internship Program is targeted at current students. If you’re a student in high school, college, trade school or other qualifying educational institution, you may be eligible. This program offers paid opportunities to work at an NRCS office and explore a federal career in natural resources, while completing your education. Students enrolled in college as a freshman or sophomore are ideal candidates for the program; allowing 2–3 years in school to complete 640 hours worked, which is part of the internship requirement.

Interns have the flexibility of working either part- or full-time. Intern jobs will be related to your academic career goals and your field of study. Students who successfully complete the program may be eligible for conversion to a permanent job with the NRCS.

When and How to Apply
NRCS in Nevada hires for Pathways Interns typically in the spring, before the summer a student would start work. To get job announcements sent directly to you, set up a profile on www.USAjobs.gov and select your preferences for job notifications through the Saved Searches option, typing the keyword “Pathways” and the location “Nevada.”

Pathways internship positions are announced and open to apply for, typically, for only five business days. Having your profile set up and ready, while also receiving job notifications through email, is crucial in finding Pathways announcements when they open and applying in a timely manner.

Student Benefits
The Pathways Internship Program has many benefits for students, including:
1) real-world experience working in multiple NRCS offices and counties,
2) experiences working in the field with customers on unique landscapes,
3) diverse experience to add to your resume,
4) learning from NRCS mentors,
5) pay and stipend toward housing provided,
6) relationship building and network building,
7) natural resources hands-on skill building,
8) a truly unique, fun experience,
9) the potential for a full-time job after completion, and MUCH MORE!

Sierra Powell, a Rangeland Management Specialist intern in Elko, Nevada, participated in Natural Resources Inventories, initial site visits for planning, rangeland inventories with biologists, practiced checkouts, performed high tunnel contracting and Emergency Conservation Program, or ECP, site visits, and more during her internship.

The Pathways Internship Program with the NRCS
NRCS Nevada hires Pathways positions for careers in the natural resources field. Examples of typical positions NRCS in Nevada hires for are:

- Soil Conservationists,
- Soil Conservation Technicians,
- Rangeland Management Specialists,
- Engineers, and
- Engineering Technicians.

Click "save this search" here in USAjobs

TIP: When you are actively looking for a job, set your alerts for "daily" versus "weekly" or "monthly" so you don't miss anything!
Student Successes

Joseph Swisher started as a Pathways Student Trainee in Rangeland Management with NRCS in Nevada in the summer of 2016 and was converted to a full-time Soil Conservationist in February 2018. As a Pathways intern, he assisted with rangeland and forest inventory, learned to use geospatial analysis tools, assisted with cultural resources surveys and National Historic Preservation Act and National Environmental Policy Act compliance, performed conservation planning and learned to survey. “Working for NRCS is a great opportunity to learn about conservation and make a direct impact in the local agricultural community,” said Swisher.

Completion and Conversion

Interns may be converted to a permanent NRCS position within 120 days of successfully completing the program. To be eligible for conversion, interns must:

1) complete at least 640 hours of work experience acquired through the Internship Program,
2) complete their degree or certificate requirements,
3) meet qualification standards for the position to which the Intern will be converted,
4) meet agency-specific requirements as specified in your unique NRCS Participant’s Agreement, and
5) perform the job successfully.

More Information

Other Pathways Program opportunities are available, including the Recent Graduates Program and the Presidential Management Fellows Program. For more information about those programs, and the Pathways Internship Program, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/careers and www.usajobs.gov/studentsandgrads.

Owen Hemming joined NRCS in Nevada as a Pathways Student Trainee Soil Conservationist first in the summer of 2017, again in December of 2017, and finally in the summer of 2018. He was then converted to a full-time position as a Soil Conservationist in the fall of 2018. “I wanted to intern with USDA-NRCS because I wanted to help people, especially the farmers, after going through my high school agricultural program and being an FFA member for three years. I also wanted to be in the field and not just stuck inside in a lab doing soil samples all day every day,” explains Hemming. “The Pathways program helped me get a feel for a career with NRCS and helped give me a good idea for classes to take as I went back to school to finish up my degree in college. Being able to get exposed to the career early on helped to reassure my decision that this was the career I wanted, and I could tailor my classes to strengthen my career with NRCS. I love my career because I love helping people and I wanted to make a difference.”