

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Secretary
Office of the Chief Economist
Climate Change Fellows Program
GS-0343-13, Program & Policy Analysis**

I. INTRODUCTION

Note: Responsibilities described below are for the full performance level of GS-13. At developmental levels, the incumbent will be acquiring background necessary to function at the full performance level. For the factor level differences for the developmental position of GS-12, please see the GS-12, Statement of Difference (SOD).

The position is located within the Climate Change Program Office (CCPO), Office of Energy and Environmental Policy (OEEP), Office of Chief Economist (OCE), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA provides leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, and related issues based on sound public policy, the best available science, and efficient management. The OCE advises the Secretary of Agriculture on the economic implications of policies and programs affecting the U.S. food and fiber system and rural areas. OCE supports USDA policy decision making by analyzing the physical, economic, and societal impact of proposals and coordinating a response among several USDA agencies. Requests for analyses come from the Secretary, other Administration officials, and members of Congress. These requests may concern proposed changes in USDA programs, policies, and legislation. OCE also coordinates, reviews, and approves the Department's commodity, farm sector, and weather forecasts, which are available to the public.

The CCPO coordinates USDA's responses to climate change, focusing on implications of climate change on agriculture, forests, grazing lands, and rural communities, while measuring and promoting incentives for 'climate-smart' management practices on farms, ranches, and forest lands. CCPO ensures that USDA is a source of objective, analytical assessments of the causes and effects of climate change and proposed response strategies both within USDA and for our partners. CCPO is also responsible for coordinating activities with other Federal agencies, interacting with the legislative branch on climate change issues affecting agriculture and forestry, and representing USDA on U.S. delegations to international climate change discussions. CCPO's responsibilities include analysis, planning, research coordination, and the development of climate change response strategies. CCPO also serves as a liaison with other Federal agencies, informs the Department of scientific developments and policy issues relating to the effects of climate change on agriculture and forestry, and recommends responsive courses of action— ensuring that recognition of the potential for climate change is fully integrated into USDA's research, planning, and decision-making processes.

The primary purpose of this position is to serve as a fellow in the Climate Change Fellows Program (CCFP), providing technical expertise, in conjunction with USDA professionals, to develop and implement climate change mitigation strategies and programs. The fellow will be responsible for coordinating analysis and synthesizing information on greenhouse gas sources

and sinks in the agriculture and forest sectors and communicating information to USDA agencies, decision-makers, and the public.

II. MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The fellow applies an advanced knowledge of a wide range of the qualitative and quantitative processes in the evaluation and assessment of programs and policies related to climate change. Performs extensive research and studies of climate change and its effects on the production of agricultural and forestry products, as well as voluntary opportunities to reduce emissions from the U.S. agriculture and forestry sectors. These opportunities could include, for instance, examining enhanced efficiency fertilizers, drugs/feed additives that would reduce enteric methane emissions from ruminants, and sustainable forestry practices.

Estimates changes in greenhouse gas emissions from the agriculture and forestry sectors and identifies strategies to reduce emissions and sequester carbon. Advises managers and policy makers throughout the USDA and other agencies relative to the effects of climate change and recommends establishment of programs and policy to minimize the negative impacts of such changes.

The incumbent performs policy analysis on carbon and biofuel markets as they apply to the agriculture and forest sectors. The incumbent will provide insight on the most effective policies for incentivizing voluntary greenhouse gas mitigation on U.S. farms and ranches. The incumbent performs analysis on additional opportunities for incorporating market-based conservation principles into USDA programs and activities relative to climate change. The incumbent may also perform analysis related to the intersection of climate change and food loss and waste.

As a result of studies and analysis, makes and recommends changes as necessary to include designing and developing comprehensive management plans of action and designing training and development programs for use throughout USDA.

Works with USDA employees on climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts across the Department. Assists with implementation of the USDA and climate change relevant portions of the Inflation Reduction Act. Analyzes programs related to agriculture, forest management and climate change, and adaptation and mitigation benefits. Assists with economic and policy analysis in the areas of agriculture, forest management and climate change, and/or development of science-based tools and information products that will help improve management of working lands in light of climate change.

Identifies, researches, and investigates new or improved practices and processes for implementation. Studies and evaluates the content and implications of newly issued or modified regulations, standards and/or legislation as they relate to climate change issues. Determines what, if any, changes are to be made to agency procedures as a result of the new or modified regulations.

The incumbent communicates regularly with various USDA and other federal and state agencies and the private sector to exchange information regarding the Department of Agriculture policies,

regulations, and business process. The incumbent leads executive meetings to brief staff on accomplishments, policy changes, and constituent issues. The incumbent independently writes correspondence, reports, or other documents related to work assignments or activities.

The incumbent convenes stakeholders for listening sessions, webinars, and other meetings regarding climate change and agriculture. The incumbent organizes panels of experts for conferences and meetings related to climate change and agriculture.

The incumbent may be responsible for implementation of contracts, grants and agreements with third parties to perform technical work products and analysis on a variety of projects related to agriculture and greenhouse gas emissions.

The incumbent develops background information on programs, policies, and internal/external issues to maintain continuity of operations within the office. The incumbent briefs the Director and CCPO staff on vital issues of interest to insure up-to-date information. The incumbent plans and facilitates executive meetings; provides records of key agreements and decisions.

Incumbent will assist with many aspects of USDA's climate change strategy, including one or more of the following:

- Working on economic, technical and scientific issues of current and immediate importance to all aspects of USDA;
- Interacting with counterparts in USDA agencies including all mission areas, and with other government agencies including NOAA, DOI, EPA, DOT, DOE, etc.;
- Traveling to professional conferences, meetings, etc.;
- Undertaking projects relevant to USDA's climate change objectives;
- Undertaking climate vulnerability assessments;
- Synthesizing peer-reviewed science;
- Making oral presentations regarding project work;
- Building relationships with academic institutions and other professional or advocacy groups, which may include professional societies and associations.

The incumbent applies knowledge of and adheres to Departmental civil rights policies, goals, and objectives, with a philosophy of valuing diversity in performing everyday duties and responsibilities. The incumbent contributes to a productive and nondiscriminatory work environment through written and oral communications and interpersonal relations.

Performs other duties as assigned.

FACTOR LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS

FACTOR 1 – Knowledge Required by the Position

Mastery of a wide range of qualitative and quantitative methods sufficient to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the agency's climate change program and to determine the need for improvements.

Knowledge of the agency's programs, policies, procedures, regulations and standards applicable to climate change implications, sufficient to perform broad studies of climate change and to analyze programs related to agriculture, forest management and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Knowledge of greenhouse gas sources and sinks from the agriculture and forestry sectors, quantification techniques for measuring these emissions, and environmental market incentives and markets for 'climate-smart' agricultural commodities and their relationship to USDA conservation, forestry, and rural development programs.

Knowledge of the changing dynamics of climate change in order to evaluate newly issued guidance and regulations. Knowledge of the effect policy changes may have on existing climate change protocols.

FACTOR 2 – Supervisory Controls

The supervisor makes assignments in terms of broad administrative and policy direction concerning overall project priorities and objectives. The employee, in conjunction with senior team leaders, is delegated complete responsibility and authority to plan, schedule, and carry out major projects concerned with the analysis and evaluation of programs or organizational effectiveness.

The employee's work is reviewed only for potential influence on broad agency policy objectives and program goals of the assigned program, i.e. climate change and its effect on forestry and agriculture. Analyses, evaluations, and recommendations developed by the employee are usually accepted without significant changes. The employee is considered an authority in his/her area of expertise.

FACTOR 3 – Guidelines

Guidelines consist of Federal laws, USDA regulations, general administrative and operations manuals, policy statements and management and organizational theories which require considerable adaptation and interpretation for application to issues and studies. Most guidelines are not directly applicable to the changing dynamics of the climate change program. The incumbent is expected to use judgment and independent research to select, interpret, adapt and apply guidelines for necessary work. Within the context of broad regulatory guidelines, the employee may refine or develop more specific guidelines such as implementing methods for the measurement and improvement of effectiveness and productivity in the administration of operating programs.

FACTOR 4 – Complexity

Projects and studies assigned require analysis of interrelated issues of effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity of substantive mission-oriented programs. The incumbent must develop detailed plans, goals, and objectives for the long-range implementation and administration of the program.

The employee's decisions on how to proceed in planning, organizing and conducting studies and analysis are complicated by the volatility of the issues that drive climate change initiatives. Assignments are further complicated by the need to deal with subjective concepts such as the fact that the quality and quantity of actions are measurable primarily in predictive terms and finding and conclusions are highly subjective and not readily susceptible to verification through replication of study methods or reevaluation of results. Current measurements of program effectiveness may be ambiguous and susceptible to widely varying interpretations.

FACTOR 5 – Scope and Effect

The purpose of this position is to assess the major administrative aspect of the mission-oriented program for mitigating climate change effects on forestry and agriculture. This involves the development of long-range plans to address the issues and to evaluate the effectiveness of USDA's climate procedures and programs. The work involves identifying and developing ways to resolve problems or cope with issues which directly affect the accomplishment of principal program goals and objectives.

The work affects the efficiency and effectiveness of USDA's climate change initiatives, involving studies of climate change. Procedures and programs, recommendations, and decisions of the employee reduce and mitigates the adverse effects of climate change on the productivity of farms and forests throughout the agency and beyond.

FACTOR 6 – Personal Contacts

The incumbent regularly contacts persons both within and outside of the agency which may include consultants, contractors, or business executives, high level managers within the agency and the agency headquarters as well as counterparts and managers in other agencies.

FACTOR 7- Purpose of Contacts

Purpose of contacts is to influence managers and other officials to accept and implement findings and recommendations on organizational improvement or program effectiveness. There may resistance due to organizational conflict or non-compliance with proposed changes.

FACTOR 8 – Physical Demands

The position is primarily sedentary.

FACTOR 9- Work Environment

The work is performed in a typical office setting.