

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Chief Economist
Office of Energy and Environmental Policy
Climate Change Program Office**

**GS-0110-11 Economist
GS-0401-11 Agricultural Project Coordinator
GS-1301-11 Physical Scientist**

Working Title: *Resource Management Specialist*

Introduction

This position serves within United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Office of the Chief Economist (OCE), Office of Energy and Environmental Policy (OEEP), Climate Change Program Office (CCPO). 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. 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. CCPO ensures that USDA is a source of objective, analytical assessments of the effects of climate change and proposed response strategies both within USDA and for our partners.

This position is supportive of the USDA's Climate Change Fellows Program (CCFP) initiative. Climate change presents real threats to U.S. agricultural production, forest resources, and rural economies. Producers and land managers across the country are experiencing climate impacts on their operations through shifting weather patterns and increasingly frequent and severe storms, floods, drought, and wildfire. At the same time, there are opportunities for farmers, ranchers and forest landowners to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon. The USDA's mission is to deliver lasting solutions to climate crisis through research, conservation practices and partnerships while enhancing economic growth and create new streams of income for farmers, ranchers, producers, and private foresters.

Program Description

The Climate Change Fellows Program (CCFP) provides the authority to hire highly talented individuals in the sciences into developmental positions to gain exposure to careers in the mission areas of USDA, while developing talent to fill specialty areas as a Tier I employee in grades from GS-5 to GS-11. The CCFP is a time-limited appointment in the Excepted Service

under “Schedule A” hiring authority, as specified in 5 CFR 213.3102(r). Employees can apply and be hired without going through the lengthy traditional hiring process.

The length of time for the initial CCFP appointment is determined based on completion of projects, exposure to diverse program areas, the nature of a developmental assignment, and/or the duration of assignments that meet workforce planning objectives. Initial appointments for candidates may be for up to a 2-year period. Additional 1-year extensions may be made; however, the appointment cannot exceed a total of 4-years.

Projects will involve working with USDA employees on climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts across the Department. Employees will assist with carrying out climate change work within various USDA Agencies and offices. Employees facilitate climate change partnerships, analysis, and assessments. Employees develop tools for use in decision-making; communicate and deliver information within and outside USDA.

This is the full performance level for this interdisciplinary position under Tier I. The GS-11 is not granted until all eligibility requirements are met at the lower GS-09 grade level.

Incumbents using this PD can be classified under a number of occupational series including, the 0110 Economist Series, the 0401 General Natural Resources Management and Biological Sciences Series, and the Physical Science Series, GS-1301.

MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Resource Management Specialist works with CCPO staff to plan and carry out a wide variety of tasks focused on writing climate change assessments, conducting outreach, and education activities at the national level. The incumbent gathers, analyzes, synthesizes, and communicates complex scientific, technical, environmental, and economic and other information and data on climate impacts from different sources into easily interpreted information and products. Specifically, these duties require the incumbent to determine data and information sources, make inquiries, analyze content, and present material in a concise and usable format, working with members of the team.

Works with CCPO staff to prepare scientific, technical, and other data that requires a high level of scientific, technical, and economic understanding and analytical ability. Provides analysis of the gap between the needs of USDA and relevant stakeholders and the availability of current tools and information services. Works with senior staff to synthesize technical information into a variety of forms e.g., reports, web pages, publications, popular articles to serve different audiences. Reviews products to ensure consistency across the program and accuracy of technical content.

Assembles background data as needed and contacts officials within and outside USDA. Reviews data and works with senior staff to provide advice to USDA leadership on quality, timeliness, follow-up on items, etc. Personally, communicates with internal and external customers. Organizes meetings and/or conferences involving ARS, FS, NRCS, other USDA and federal agencies, private industry organizations, etc.

The incumbent will be responsible for working with CCPO staff to provide technical and scientific coordination of climate change-relevant topics. This could include convening panels of experts, managing the development of reports and analysis, commissioning and overseeing work on decision

support tools, identifying options for improving access and consistency in the use of regional climate forecasts and projections.

The incumbent may work with CCPO staff to perform technical analysis to assist USDA in implementing the agriculture and climate provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act. This could include scientific or economic assessment of mitigation options in the agriculture and forestry sectors, including recommendations on implementation for USDA.

The incumbent may be responsible for the 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 may also work with CCPO staff to perform analysis on carbon and biofuel markets as they apply to the agriculture and forest sectors. The incumbent will provide insight as the most effective opportunities for incentivizing greenhouse gas mitigation on U.S. farms, forests and ranchlands. The employee may perform 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.

Working with senior staff, communicates regularly with various stakeholders to exchange information regarding the Department of Agriculture policies, regulations, and business process. Writes correspondence, reports, or other documents related to work assignments or developmental activities conducted with broad supervisory guidance.

Develops background information on programs, policies, and internal/external issues to maintain continuity of operations within the office. Works with senior staff to brief USDA leadership and others on vital issues of interest to insure up-to-date information and program accomplishment. Plans and facilitates executive meetings; provides records of key agreements and decisions.

Develops operational/communication systems to ensure that informational requests from Congress, USDA, and other sources are responded to in a timely manner. Analyzes data on communications technology, telephone briefings, video-teleconferencing, etc. Ensures staff takes advantage of all capabilities of the system.

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

Knowledge of and skill in applying a wide range of concepts, principles, practices, and methodology of the field, agency regulations, policies, procedures, and applicable Federal statutes governing individual programs, related disciplines, and state, local, and/or tribal laws, customs, and economic interests sufficient to resolve complex problems.

Knowledge of the major environmental and policy issues surrounding climate change, adaptation, economics, and mitigation.

Knowledge of and ability to participate in matters such as developing and implementing multiple-use resource management plans or covering diverse resource management issues sufficient to modify or adapt standard processes and procedures, assess, select, and apply remedies suited to the assigned problem or situations.

Ability to perform complex tests and/or procedures that require using highly specialized methods or techniques or occurrences, and procedures in response to test or study findings.

Skill in oral and written communication to include a highly developed sense of tact and diplomacy for use in dealing with individuals representing opposing viewpoints to sensitive issues.

Knowledge and skill is sufficient to independently perform recurring, well preceded projects using standard methods and techniques; identify and resolve problems; evaluate requests and prepare routine reports and make presentations.

Professional knowledge of biological practices, principles, and techniques sufficient to assist in the recommendations of planning and implementing environmental, and natural resource management activities for assigned projects.

Knowledge of related disciplines such as wildlife biology, soils and plant science, agriculture, forestry, rangeland conservation, soil conservation, etc. sufficient to assist in recommendations that impact or direct or daily activities.

Knowledge of natural resource management and related laws, policies, and regulations as it pertains to climate change, agriculture, biodiversity, environmental protection, cultural resources, and agricultural conservation programs.

Factor 2 – Supervisory Controls

The supervisor issues general administrative guidance relative to work assignments, target dates, and program objectives. Incumbent independently accomplishes assignments by determining and utilizing applicable professional techniques, working with senior team leaders when appropriate. Technical guidance is received from supervisor or designated Leads on complex and controversial problems. Work is reviewed for conformance to policy, and accomplishment of program objectives.

Factor 3 – Guidelines

Guidelines include agency policy and regulations, approved management and long-range functional resource plans, and professional journals and publications. Incumbent uses judgment and ingenuity in developing and implementing plans and programs, as the guides do not provide adequate or specific coverage of the range of variable conditions. Independently adapts or extends the guidelines or chooses from alternative procedures in achieving optimum multiple use and protection of the ecosystem.

Factor 4 - Complexity

Incumbent prepares, executes, and oversees the implementation of the natural resources management for the appropriate assignment, e.g., climate change adaptation or mitigation strategies using data from various sources, and assures that the plans are consistent with the requirements of other resource plans and programs and with the overall approved management plans. Incumbent must consider many variables in preparing and executing natural resources plans such as short- and long-term objectives, cost of proposed actions in relations to projected returns and benefits, biological implications other affected resources, the purpose of particular actions that may have detrimental effects on a complex ecosystem. The incumbent oftentimes must utilize knowledge that is standard or not applicable without modification or experimentation. Some areas are controversial and have high interest from various groups; maximizing the use of some resources would deter or threaten the existence of others; trade off type decisions having long-term effects must be made frequently.

Factor 5 – Scope and Effect

The purpose of the position is to provide Climate Change experience and collaboration in support of program functions, to analyze and resolve problems in the effectiveness and efficiency of staff activities, and to communicate critical information to USDA staff and stakeholders. The resulting work contributes to progress of the Staffs responsiveness with other staff and industry groups, and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

The incumbent analyzes and evaluates major administrative aspects of substantive, mission-oriented programs. The work has an effect on the Department (USDA) and its agencies' organizational levels and can have a marked influence on other Departments and external groups and individuals.

Factor 6. Personal Contacts

Personal contacts include agency and USDA top management officials, officials of other federal, state, and private agencies and groups, Universities, and other units of government and media representatives. The incumbent must interact with various stakeholders and customers, providing climate information and soliciting feedback on information needs on climate and agriculture.

Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts

Contacts are primarily for providing and explaining significant information, analyzing, and evaluating issues, and coordinating activities. The incumbent must apply significant skill and knowledge in determining the purpose and extent of each contact is different and the role and authority of each party that is identified and developed during the course of the contact.

Factor 8. Physical Demands

The work is sedentary; however, slight physical effort may be required to carry books, computer products, files, etc. Work may require standing and walking in conjunction with travel to and attendance at meetings and conferences away from the worksite.

Factor 9. Work Environment

Work is performed in an adequately lighted, ventilated, and heated office. The work environment involves everyday risks or discomforts that require normal safety precaution.