



Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon, Governor • Sara Parker Pauley, Director


DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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MEMORANDUM 2015-009

DATE: January 2, 2015

TO: All Soil and Water Conservation Districts

FROM:  Colleen Meredith, Director
Soil and Water Conservation Program

SUBJECT: 2015 Internship Program

The Soil and Water Conservation Program (SWCP) is pleased to announce continuation of the intern program available to each Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) during the summer of 2015. The Soil and Water Districts Commission (Commission), at their December 18, 2014 meeting, concurred to again provide each district a \$3,500 maximum stipend to hire a college student intern(s) from May 1, 2015 to September 1, 2015. The internship can be a benefit to all parties involved. Students will gain work experience in a hands-on learning environment that will promote personal and professional growth while mentoring with SWCD boards, staff and conservation partners. An intern can help fill gaps in the district workload and strengthen public relations with younger generations.

This intern program was developed from a recommendation from the Plan for the Future Program Delivery and Operations Subcommittee (subcommittee). The intern program was available to all districts during the summer of 2014, with 43 districts choosing to hire an intern. To evaluate the 2014 intern program, an anonymous questionnaire was available to all 114 districts to provide feedback regarding the intern program experience, regardless if an intern was hired. Another questionnaire was available to hired interns to identify the professional skills and knowledge acquired by the students from the internship. Responses to both questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive and supported the continuation of the intern program in 2015. The questionnaire responses were presented to the Commissioners at their December meeting. The questionnaire is also available on the SWCD Intranet.

Interns are district employees and the following are some steps that may assist district boards interested in hiring an intern:

1. Advertise the position.
2. Identify professional qualifications desired for the position.
3. Interview and select a candidate.
4. Designate a start and end date within the May 2015 and September 1, 2015 time frame.
5. Establish rate of pay (intern expenditures above \$3,500 must come from local funds).
6. Determine daily and weekly schedule.
7. Establish duties and responsibilities for the intern.

Applicants must be a higher education (college, university, technical school, etc.) student within any degree major. The intern cannot be a high school senior transitioning into a higher education student. Placement offices and career services for colleges in your area are useful resources to identify and advertise for potential candidates. If the district workload would not require a full-time intern during the designated timeframe, consider sharing one intern between two districts. Please be mindful of a potential conflict of interest or nepotism during the selection process.

District boards hiring interns for the summer will need to follow standard protocol for new employees which will work within our federal partner's facilities. Interns which are hired by the district boards to solely perform district work will only be required to complete Information Security Training per NRCS policy. Please realize that if an intern will be required to access an NRCS computer or files, a background check and additional permissions will be required. **(Note: Background checks and other permissions accesses typically take over 30 days to process. Each district board should work with the appropriate NRCS District Conservationist to seek required training materials and procedures).**

If your district decides to take advantage of the intern program, expenses associated with the intern program will be tracked in fund 10 (reimbursement fund). Eligible expenses include gross salary, district portion of Social Security and Medicare, workers compensation and travel expenses. If your district needs assistance with developing account numbers, please contact your district coordinator. The program office will reimburse the district once the expenses have been incurred.

Attached is the SWCP Internship Program Form to be completed by the board upon selection of an intern and emailed to Deanna Smith, deanna.smith@dnr.mo.gov at the Soil and Water Conservations Program Office. If you have any questions, please contact your district coordinator. Thank you.

CM:tm

SWCP INTERN PROGRAM FORM

SUMMER 2015

SWCD: _____

Individual Information

Intern Name: _____

School (college, university, tech school, etc.): _____

Major/Focus Area: _____

Year/Semester: _____

Internship Information

Timeframe (start and end dates): _____

Work Schedule: _____

Assigned Work: _____

Hourly Rate of Pay: _____

Policies

_____ I have read the DNR Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

_____ I have read the SWCD Personnel Policy.

Signature Approval

Intern Signature

Board Member Signature