



Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon, Governor

Sara Parker Pauley, Director

## DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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### MEMORANDUM

2016-012

DATE: December 29, 2015

TO: All Soil and Water Conservation Districts

FROM: <sup>JB</sup> Jim Boschert, District Assistance Section  
Soil and Water Conservation Program

SUBJECT: Intern Program

The Soil and Water Districts Commission, at their December 1, 2015, meeting, voted to continue to provide each Soil and Water Conservation District a \$3,500 maximum stipend to hire a college student intern(s). The Commission also agreed to make the intern program available throughout the year. Beginning immediately each district will be allowed to hire an intern anytime throughout the year with a maximum stipend of \$3,500 per fiscal year. Allowing the Intern Program throughout the year was a recommendation from the Plan for the Future Program Delivery and Operations Subcommittee.

An intern 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 the district boards, staff and conservation partners. An intern can help fill gaps in the district's workload and strengthen public relations with younger generations. Several districts have hired former interns as full-time district employees as positions became available.

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. Establish rate of pay (intern expenditures above \$3,500 annually must come from local funds).
5. Determine daily and weekly schedule.
6. Establish duties and responsibilities for the intern.



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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 or a student that has completed their college degree. Placement offices and career services for colleges in your area are useful resources to identify and advertise for potential candidates. If the district workload does not require a full-time intern consider sharing one intern between districts. Please be mindful of a potential conflict of interest or nepotism during the selection process.

District boards hiring interns will need to follow standard protocol for new employees working within our federal partner's facilities. Interns who are hired by the district boards to solely perform district work will only be required to complete Information Security Training per Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) policy. Please realize that if an intern will be required to access an NRCS computer or files, a background check and additional permission will be required. (Note: Background checks and other permissions access 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 an intern position, expenses associated will be tracked in fund 10. Intern expenditures will no longer be on a reimbursement method. Each district will receive \$1,750 in fund 10 with their third quarter allocation. These funds are provided to support an intern in your district. Districts will then continue to receive half (\$1,750) of their intern funding with their first quarter and third quarter allocations. 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.

Please complete the electronic Incoming Staff Form located at <http://swcd.mo.gov/internal/form-incoming-staff.xsn> upon board selection of an intern and e-mail to the Soil and Water Conservation Program Office at [soil&waterconservationprogram@swcd.mo.gov](mailto:soil&waterconservationprogram@swcd.mo.gov). If you have any questions, please contact your district coordinator. Thank you.

JB:djs