

Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD)
PACD Certified Planner Program

Detailed Project Description

PACD will hire six conservation planners or nutrient management specialists, who will work toward conservation planning certification (“PACD program staff”) for a two-year period to assist in conservation efforts across the Commonwealth. PACD program staff will improve water quality by helping landowners complete and update conservation plans, volunteer Act 38 Nutrient Management Plans (excluding Concentrated Animal Operations and Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations), Manure Management Plans, and Agricultural Erosion & Sediment Control Plans. Where necessary, PACD program staff will obtain the necessary training to meet these qualifications. To provide these services as cost-effectively as possible, PACD program staff will work out of NRCS field offices in Dauphin, Erie, Bucks, Indiana, Lackawanna/Wayne, and Franklin Counties and will be technically supervised by NRCS Supervisory District Conservationists.

In addition, program staff will assist with finding available funds for landowners to complete conservation projects when a conservation or other agricultural plan is required. The planners will advocate utilizing federal and state cost-share together to maximize financial contributions to the participant. They will also work with landowners to develop alternatives and identify strategies for implementing on-farm solutions. These solutions may include preparing agricultural plans and addressing regulatory requirements. All work must meet state and federal requirements, and all conservation plans will be completed using the NRCS-CPA-52 Environmental Evaluation Worksheet and entered into Conservation Desktop.

In addition, program staff will assist county farmland preservation boards with completing plans that are necessary for applicants to receive funding under the state and Federal easement purchase program. Also, to complete updates to plans for farms that are already preserved.

This program will be similar to the PACD Engineering Technical Assistance Program. The knowledgeable certified planners and technicians will work locally to develop relationships to successfully administer this program. By helping to ensure landowners have the appropriate plans in place, this program makes more funds available to landowners for conservation projects. For example, the USDA NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) requires a conservation plan to be eligible for funds. Similarly, the SCC Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) will fund projects that implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) from a conservation plan, Agricultural Erosion & Sediment Control Plan, Nutrient Management Plan, or Manure Management Plan.

Applicants will be asked to submit program requests to their technical NRCS supervisor and copy their local conservation district. The conservation district and NRCS will work to prioritize projects in their area. Any required landowner agreements, local land use planning approval, or other documents and approvals are the responsibility of the landowner and will be addressed on a project-by-project basis.

This project will fund certified planners and nutrient management specialists to provide planning assistance. Project funds will not directly fund construction projects.

Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD)

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT CERTIFIED CONSERVATION PLANNER

Position Title: Conservation Planner

Number of Positions Available: 6 (one per county)

Salary Range: \$45,000 to \$50,000 per year

Location: Dauphin, Erie, Bucks, Indiana, Lackawanna/Wayne, and Franklin Counties

Duties:

As the Conservation Planner or technician for the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD), the individual will provide planning assistance to the State Conservation Commission (SCC), the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and local conservation districts. This position will also work closely with other representatives of the state government, various county officials, watershed organizations, and landowners.

Qualifications:

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

A qualified candidate should have the following:

- Agricultural background or experience preferred.
- (you are not going to get certification right away) Strong communication skills to discuss and explain conservation plans with landowners. Knowledge of soil properties and characteristics sufficient to interpret land use potential and deficiencies and advises landowners or agricultural operators of sound resource conservation techniques.
- Knowledge of federal, state, and local laws and regulations pertaining to natural resource management.
- Knowledge of the requirements of various Farm Bills to advise agricultural producers and rural landowners on participation in Farm Bill conservation programs.
- Candidate must possess a valid PA driver's license.

Education

College or technical training required.

Work Schedule:

This is an at-will, full-time, temporary year-by-year, grant-funded position.

Conditions of Employment:

Work is performed indoors and outdoors, often under adverse weather conditions. The conservation planner is required to drive a personal vehicle (mileage will be reimbursed). A reliable form of transportation is a must.

Salary/Benefits:

Salary Range: \$45,000-50,000. Benefits include health insurance, 401k retirement plan, and accrued PTO leave. No relocation expenses will be provided.

How to Apply:

Candidates must submit a resume and cover letter to PACD:

Please apply by e-mail with subject heading “Conservation Planner” to: jobs@pacd.org

Deadline for Application:

All application materials must be received by 4:00 PM on November 3, 2023.