

Urban Conservationist - Miami/Johnson Counties, Kansas

This new position, funded for a minimum of one year, serves as an urban conservationist on the staff of the Miami County Conservation District (MCCD). MCCD's mission, for nearly 80 years, has been to promote and install soil and water conservation practices, in partnership with landowners and land managers in Miami County. In recent years, MCCD has partnered with Johnson County Conservation District, to coordinate the four-county Hillsdale Watershed Restoration and Protection effort. This position will work at the urban/suburban/rural interface that characterizes the area, with regard to conservation and environment, to advance principles of green infrastructure planning and implementation, low-impact development and strategic conservation. This position is located remotely, highly independent and collaborative, and supervised by the MCCD Manager.

The ideal candidate will have a minimum of three-five years demonstrated success, working in a growing metropolitan community or region, performing similar or related work. This position will require advanced communication and networking skills to navigate a complex, established partnership that includes federal, state and local governments, private and public landowners and land managers, advocacy groups, nonprofits and others. The focus of this position is results-oriented implementation, as there are a plethora of plans and policy frameworks developed to guide actions and effort. These include the Hillsdale Watershed 9-Element Plan, Southwest Johnson County Area Plan, Johnson County Stormwater Watershed Master Plans, KC Metro Green Infrastructure Policy Framework, and others.

Historically, partners (NRCS, KFS, KWPT, K-State and others) provide technical assistance to watershed organizations and conservation districts for traditional best management practices. These partners are less familiar with best management practices associated with developing/urbanizing areas, which Hillsdale watershed and cities in both counties, increasingly need. Practices such as parking lot bioswales, residential rain gardens, native plant landscaping, green site design, treatment wetlands and other green infrastructure require a different focus, that we hope to provide with this position.

Examples of specific tasks include the following:

Provide technical assistance to landowners, local government and others to apply best management practices for water quality and soil conservation. These might include enhancing public and private gardens/landscaping with treatment features (native plants and/or rain gardens) and soil testing, urban forestry, green roofs, native planting and stormwater treatment systems.

Plan and host meetings and workshops for landowners, residents, local governments and others for the purpose of exploring/expanding soil and water conservation opportunities and practices in urban areas.

Establish and maintain positive working relationships with other federal, state and local agencies to identify areas of mutual interest and opportunities for collaboration in the area of urban conservation. Quickly learn about available cost-share/ financial incentive programs available to support installation of practices.

Engage volunteers and partners to build community and create stewardship opportunities throughout Johnson and Miami counties. Maintain regular outreach and communications via print and digital materials, targeted mailings, blogs and articles, social media and in person talks.

Complete all necessary financial and grant reporting, with attention to detail and timelines. Assist with drafting of grant proposals for future projects, and communicate with current funders, as needed.

Qualifications:

This is a demanding role that requires initiative, drive and follow-through, and a minimum 3-5 years demonstrated success in urban/ community conservation. Ability to work with minimal supervision.

Knowledge of a variety of conservation fields such as soil science, hydrology, biology, water quality, soil and water conservation and other related fields. Familiarity with local, state and federal laws applicable to implementation of BMPs in urban/suburban/rural areas. Requires a minimum of a bachelor's degree in natural resources or a related field.

Professional knowledge of wide range of natural resource and environmental conservation concepts, principles, methods and techniques. Ability to analyze, interpret, evaluate and devise strategies to address environmental problems and to assess impacts of various practices.

Confidence and competency with basic computer programs - spreadsheets, word processors, presentation and electronic communications. Social media and mapping program fluency desired.

Knowledge and skills to develop, discuss with clarity, and promote solutions to environmental problems via writing, speaking and visual communication to individuals, groups and governing bodies.

Fluency in written and spoken English is required. Additional language skills also beneficial.

Compensation:

Starting salary range is \$53,000-\$55,000 and includes a full benefit package (health coverage and paid leave). This is a one-year, grant-funded position, with potential for renewal and expansion.

Miami County Conservation District is a division of state government, governed by a locally elected board and is an equal opportunity employer. We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees.

Application Instructions:

Please submit resume and cover letter to lesley@miamicountycd.com by 5:00 PM Friday, September 11, 2020. Initial interviews to be held the week of September 14, with desired starting date no later than October 5, 2020.