

Agriculture Technician

The Agriculture Technician serves to assist agricultural operations in identifying and remediating pollutant sources and environmental risks. The technician can expect to work with a diverse array of clients, commodity types, and business structures on a range of projects such as emergency plans, composting facilities, and grazing management. Clients will work with the technician to ensure they comply with the Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices and be evaluated through the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) verification process. Once verified, the technician continues to serve as a contact point for the operation for pollution events, other environmental concerns, or for continued participation in other conservation programs.

This position is currently funded through a grant from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) to carry out MAEAP activities. While funding for this grant is contingent upon annual renewal, the Allegan Conservation District intends to continue funding this position in the case that grant funding lapses.

WORKING LOCATION AND CONDITIONS

The position will be based in the Allegan Conservation District Office in Allegan, Michigan. Workdays are generally Monday-Friday, 8:00am-4:30pm and time is split between office work and field work. Occasional evenings or weekends will be required for workshops, meetings, or major events. The incumbent will frequently be on farms, which may involve traversing uneven terrain or wetlands, working around livestock, manure, and farm waste, and working in a wide range of weather conditions. The incumbent may work in the vicinity of crews using hand tools, power equipment, and heavy machinery.

COMPENSATION

The MAEAP Technician is a full time, hourly position starting at \$21/hour with increases dependent on experience and completed trainings. Benefits include paid federal holidays, paid time off, retirement, healthcare, and hybrid work schedule.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

- Coordinate all aspects of MAEAP in Allegan County and be fully familiar with, and adhere to, relevant grant agreements and guidelines for conducting the program.
- Conduct environmental risk assessments for agricultural lands.
- Assist clients in identifying, planning, and implementing mitigation measures to reduce risks and meet MAEAP verification requirements.
- Plan and conduct field days and other educational events that promote conservation practices, highlight MAEAP and other environmental assistance programs, and promote farmer-to-farmer learning.
- Assist producers in responding to Right to Farm complaints if they arise, to bring them into conformance with Michigan's Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPS).
- Maintain accurate records, in an online database as well as on paper, and a well-organized filing system for those records.
- Work closely with the United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) and other partners to leverage federal, state, and local resources for farmers.

- Collaborate with Conservation District staff and external partners to promote MAEAP and educate diverse audiences on the importance of resource protection.
- Promote conservation practices and programs through displays and booths, newsletter articles, group presentations, demonstrations, public service announcements, news releases, radio programs, social media, and other means.
- Perform other essential activities as required by the MDARD grant agreement or as assigned by the Executive Director or Board of Directors.

QUALIFICATIONS

Required:

- A minimum of a bachelor's degree in agriculture or natural resources management from an accredited college or university. Relevant experience working in on-farm crop or livestock production may be considered in lieu of a bachelor's degree.
- Strong understanding of farm operations and issues.
- Proficiency with Microsoft and Google office programs.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Excellent social and interpersonal skills; able to work effectively with diverse clientele.
- Ability to independently plan and work towards program goals.
- Selected candidate must pass a federal background check, must have a reliable personal vehicle to get to work and use for work activities when a District vehicle is unavailable.

Preferred:

- Experience working on farms.
- Proficiency in ArcGIS or other GIS software.
- Technical writing experience, especially project proposals.

TO APPLY

Provide a single PDF containing cover letter highlighting relevant experience, resume, and transcripts (if using education to qualify, unofficial are acceptable). Applications may be emailed to Brian Talsma at Allegan.admin@macd.org or mailed to 1668 Lincoln Rd. Allegan, MI 49010.