

POSITION DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE Director of Agriculture
LOCATION Illinois, Central Illinois
JOB/#/ GRADE 250007 Program Director III / Grade 9
SUPERVISOR Director of Conservation
STATUS Salaried
START DATE March or April 2017



SUMMARY

The Director of Agriculture will lead The Nature Conservancy's agricultural initiatives in the State of Illinois, working closely with the agriculture sector on issues related to water quality, wildlife habitat, soil health, air quality and climate change. The Director will direct the Illinois Chapter's agriculture strategy through high-level engagement with members of the agricultural sector and also help to facilitate strategic alignment and integration by working with TNC's conservation, science, government relations, marketing, North America Agriculture, and other teams that interact with agriculture sector stakeholders. As the Illinois lead, the Director will also help shape TNC's regional and global strategy for agriculture.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Work with private and public sector partners to understand and address the challenges of adopting conservation practices in agriculture, and build a shared vision and direction to advance sustainable agriculture practices across the State of Illinois and beyond. Spearhead development of effective messaging and outreach to Illinois farmers, agribusiness and other members of the agriculture sector to provide accurate and relevant information about conservation practices. Build innovative partnerships with farm service providers such as seed, chemical and fertilizer retailers, land improvement contractors, producer groups, crop consultants, farm managers, agricultural lenders, and non-profits interested in agriculture to develop programs and provide products and services that lead to improved water quality, soil health and agricultural sustainability. With TNC's Government Relations team, influence and promote a strong Conservation Title in the Farm Bill. Cooperate with federal agency staff to target funds and administer programs with the aim of increasing participation and achieving high priority conservation outcomes. Represent TNC on the NRCS state technical committee and work groups and at conferences and field days to convey the importance of soil health to water quality, greenhouse gas mitigation, and agricultural productivity. Act as TNC's liaison to the Illinois Department of Agriculture and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to ensure timely implementation of the state's Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy. Function as the Illinois lead for the Midwest Row Crop Collective and the Soil Health Partnership. Potentially supervise staff responsible for water quality projects or agricultural outreach within priority counties and watersheds.

RESPONSIBILITIES & SCOPE

- Advance existing relationships with members of the agriculture sector, including producer groups and supply chain corporations, and develop partnerships to engage the sector to promote and increase the adoption of sustainable practices, including soil health and nutrient load reduction management.
- Facilitate and navigate external partnerships to scale up adoption of sustainable agriculture practices.
- In keeping with the outward nature of the role, work in partnership with producer groups, agribusinesses, agencies, academic institutions and other non-profits in a collaborative capacity.
- Position The Nature Conservancy as a respected voice in Illinois agriculture.
- Facilitate meetings, trainings, and outreach efforts.
- Design, implement and direct multiple complex projects, setting and meeting deadlines, and ensuring program accountability.
- Actively raise significant public and private funds to meet program needs; manage grants and funds accordingly.
- Work closely with other programs throughout the Conservancy (including North America Agriculture) for synergy, ensuring that Illinois' efforts support and complement the broader goals of the organization.
- Establish ambitious and realistic goals for the program while controlling costs and administering budgets.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- BA/BS degree and 7 years of experience in conservation or agricultural practice, or equivalent combination.
 - Proven experience managing complex or multiple projects, including managing finances, with diverse partners, both internal and external.
 - Experience working with the agricultural community.
 - Experience developing partnerships and leading collaborations within the private and public sectors.
 - Effective negotiation, communication skills, and convening skills.
 - Supervisory experience, including motivating, leading, setting objectives and managing performance.
 - Fundraising experience including identifying potential sources and cultivation.
 - Valid driver's license.
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**PREFERRED
KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS
& EXPERIENCE**

- BA/BS degree and 7-10 years of experience in conservation or agricultural practice, or equivalent combination of education and experience.
 - Experience influencing, developing and implementing conservation policy and plans with the public and private entities.
 - Established relationships with members of the agricultural community in Illinois.
 - Knowledge of current trends and practices in conservation and agriculture.
 - Outstanding track record as a skilled communicator leading to fundraising success with major prospects or equivalent success in sales.
 - Politically savvy and experience in presenting to and communicating with business, governmental, and community leaders.
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**ORGANIZATIONAL
COMPETENCIES**

Accountability for Outcomes	Pushes for excellence. Establishes challenging goals for self and others to drive performance in support of the Conservancy's mission. Rewards behavior that achieves these standards and is aligned with the organization's mission/values. Takes action to address performance problems in a timely and appropriate manner.
Builds Organizational Capability	Builds or adapts organizational structures to accomplish the mission and to improve performance. This includes reorganizing organizational systems, structures, processes, procedures, communication channels or reporting relationships. With the Conservancy's strategic filter in mind, determines who can contribute, gets the right people involved, and builds bench strength for the future.
Collaboration & Teamwork	Shows a willingness to put the needs and goals of a global organization before personal/local/departmental needs. Works with others across organizational boundaries. Makes decisions, sets priorities, and allocates resources to help the organization as a whole achieve results.
Communications	Effectively expresses messages verbally and in writing. Actively listens to others. Fosters open exchange of issues. Is timely with information.
Courage & Decisiveness	Makes decisions and stands by them. Makes timely decisions even under pressure and when lacking complete information. Has the courage to modify decisions and admit why and how they were wrong.
Flexibility & Innovation	Flexible to changing circumstances. Takes innovative approaches towards work. Takes calculated risks and makes dependable decisions in the face of uncertainty.
Influences for Results	Achieves results by persuading, convincing, or influencing others. Adapts approach to the individual or group and knows how and when to use complex influence strategies. Uses success stories and passion for the mission to generate enthusiasm and support.
Open to Learning	Versatile learner and committed to self-improvement. Employs strengths effectively. Willingly shares knowledge with others. Seeks coaching on areas needing improvement. Adjusts behavior/performance as needed. Views mistakes as learning opportunities.
Organizational Awareness	Understands the basics of our business. Knows how local job relates to the big picture & contributes to the overall strategy. Knows how/why things work inside TNC. Easily moves through internal networks and channels for success.

HOW TO APPLY

- **Application Deadline: February 17, 2017**
 - Please submit your resume, and cover letter as one document through The Nature Conservancy's online application system at nature.org/careers. All applications must be submitted in the system prior to 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on **February 17, 2017**.
 - If you are having technical problems with the site or application process, contact applyhelp@tnc.org and include the job opening ID. Any questions related to this specific position may be directed to georgie.geraghty@tnc.org.
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This description is not designed to be a complete list of all duties and responsibilities required for this job.

The Nature Conservancy is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Our commitment to diversity includes the recognition that our conservation mission is best advanced by the leadership and contributions of men and women of diverse backgrounds, beliefs and cultures. Recruiting and mentoring staff to create an inclusive organization that reflects our global character is a priority and we encourage applicants from all cultures, races, colors, religions, sexes, national or regional origins, ages, disability status, sexual orientations, gender identities, military or veteran status or other status protected by law.