



Program Specialist (Grant-funded, Full-time, Temporary)

Immediate Supervisor: Grant Program Manager

Location: Dougherty or Upson County GA with travel within the county

Position Overview

The Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC) is seeking a highly motivated Program Specialist to implement a pilot initiative designed to enhance community and economic development in rural, distressed areas. This position is grant-funded and term-limited, with the possibility of extension based on future funding and the success of the program. If the program achieves its objectives, and depending on the performance of the Program Specialist, the position may transition into a full-time, permanent role.

As a key player in this initiative, the Program Specialist will support the administration, coordination, and evaluation of projects aimed at increasing local food production, enhancing workforce participation through childcare subsidies, and promoting sustainable farming practices. The position offers an exciting opportunity to make a lasting impact on rural communities while developing sustainable programs that could secure permanent federal funding.

Key Responsibilities

Program Management

- Align programs with strategic priorities, establishing objectives, performance indicators and metrics.
- Promote economic and community development with programming that aligns with State priorities.
- Use the established evaluation mechanisms that will be used to celebrate successes and to identify opportunities for program and process improvements.
- Collaborate with GA State Program Manager, City and County Administrators, and GA Regional Commissions/Local Development Districts to ensure timely completion of projects
- Deliver technical assistance to current and future grant applicants.
- Collaborate with staff in the creative development of new grant programs and the associated applications, grantee benchmarks, and reporting requirements.
- Ensure effective communication with grant applicants, grant recipients, and local leaders.

- Implement fair and transparent processes and procedures for evaluating grant applications.
- Coordinate or provide technical assistance to applicants and awardees throughout the grant lifecycle.
- Provide customer service and troubleshooting for projects, payments, processing, and other situations as needed.
- Evaluate availability of program and grant applications and implement strategies to increase accessibility of SCRC programs.

Compliance and Monitoring

- With guidance from the Director of Grants and Programs and Grants Program Manager, interpret and implement public law and guidance from the Office of Management and Budget, address compliance and reporting requirements as well as other agency needs related to grant administration.
- Collaborate with the Director to develop processes to remind awardees of reporting requirements and other compliance-related communications.
- Meet requirements for monitoring and compliance activities for awards, ensuring that progress and financial reports are complete and received when due, reimbursement requests are eligible, and funded projects are progressing and can be closed within the agreed upon period.
- Alert the Director of any issues or challenges that may impact task and/or project completion.
- Conduct research and prepare statistical reports on program successes, highlighting the impact on the economic and demographic status of the region.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation

- Track and measure program outcomes, including increased local food production, workforce participation, and sustainable farming practices.
- Collect and analyze data to evaluate program effectiveness, making adjustments as needed to improve project outcomes.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Educate and collaborate with local businesses, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations about the grant opportunity, forming public-private partnerships that support project objectives.
- Serve as a liaison between SCRC, USDA-Rural Development, and local communities to ensure seamless communication and program coordination.
- Coordinate or provide technical assistance to local food and childcare entities throughout the grant lifecycle to build future sustainability.

Reporting and Documentation

- Provide input to help prepare progress reports, including key data on milestones, expenditures, and program impacts for internal stakeholders and USDA-RD.

- Assist the Grants Program Manager in compiling quarterly and annual reports that summarize program achievements, lessons learned, and recommendations for future projects.
- Ensure accurate documentation of grant activities, including tracking project progress and compliance with grant terms, to support the preparation of final reports and evaluations.

Scalability and Sustainability

- Provide input to the Grants Program Manager to help identify opportunities to scale successful components of the pilot initiative, ensuring sustainability through additional funding sources and community support.
- Collaborate with food and childcare experts as well as the local entities to develop strategies for scaling and sustaining key program elements, including securing new partnerships and resources.
- Assist in gathering data and reporting on program success to support the advocacy for transitioning the position and program to full-time, permanent status based on demonstrated impact.
- Provide both qualitative and quantitative data to external evaluators to design an end of project report regarding successes and challenges in the program.

Skills and Abilities

- Display excellent verbal communication skills, to include the ability to speak publicly when needed.
- Display excellent written communication skills, to include drafting emails, memos and presentations.
- Ability to synthesize data and information, complete complex analyses, advise leadership, and coherently communicate recommendations to support organizational decision-making.
- Demonstrate data-driven decision making, conduct research, seek information, and connect with subject matter experts when faced with new or challenging issues where past experience or best practices may not be relevant.
- Demonstrate superior analytical ability and experience identifying and resolving difficult problems. Superior skills and ability to apply these techniques and resources to analysis of assigned areas.
- Be willing to adapt and be flexible when faced with changing priorities, tight deadlines, or rising issues.
- Possesses superior judgment and demonstrated ability to negotiate effectively with parties who often have different or competing interests and constraints.
- Handle high-stress situations in a calm, effective manner.
- Ability to communicate with diverse stakeholders and individuals with varying levels of sophistication and expertise with respect to the grant process.

Required Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher learning is desired but not required.
- Highly qualified candidates with a 2-year degree from an accredited institution of higher learning with exemplary and relevant qualifications will be considered.
- Two (2) to four (4) years of experience in program management, grants management, or a related field is required.
- Experience in economic development, community development, or related field is highly desired.
- Experience with the grant-making lifecycle is necessary, including experience with Federal grants.

Desired Qualifications

- Two (2) to four (4) years of experience in local advocacy, program design, or a related.
- Experience in professional learning design and delivery.
- Experience working with distressed communities, particularly in rural settings.
- Knowledge of USDA programs and federal grant management.
- Familiarity with sustainable agriculture practices and rural economic development initiatives.

How to Apply

- Prepare a one-page cover narrative addressing your qualifications for this position.
- Prepare a targeted resume which adds depth to the one-page cover narrative.
- Send both the one-page cover narrative and targeted resume to grants@scrc.gov.
- Only submissions received via grants@scrc.gov by **12-02-2024** will be considered.