



# AISWCD



ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

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## **ABOUT AISWCD**

Clean Water, Healthy Soils. The Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts (AISWCD), is a grass roots organization formed in 1948. It is made up and serves Illinois' 97-member Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs). Soil and Water Conservation Districts work to protect Illinois' greatest assets – the rich, fertile soils and water resources of the state through strategic conservation efforts. SWCDs, working in conjunction with agricultural as well as urban and environmental stakeholders, play a central role in efforts to protect and sustain the viability of Illinois' finite natural resources for future generations. To learn more about AISWCD, visit [aiswcd.org](http://aiswcd.org) or connect with AISWCD on social media (@AISWCD and facebook.com/ILSWCDs).

## **OVERVIEW OF S.T.A.R**



Saving Tomorrow's Agriculture Resources (S.T.A.R.) was created by the Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District in 2017 to help meet the water quality goals outlined in the Illinois' Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy. S.T.A.R. is a free tool that uses a simple field form to request information concerning field management and conservation practices, assign points to each practice, and provide a S.T.A.R. Rating ranging from one to five stars. The goal of the program is not only to evaluate the use of conservation practices, but also to educate participants about the benefits of additional management changes and encourage increased adoption. Learn more about S.T.A.R. by visiting [StarFreeTool.com](http://StarFreeTool.com).

## **S.T.A.R. COORDINATOR POSITION**

The S.T.A.R. Coordinator will help implement and grow S.T.A.R. in Illinois. This will be accomplished by working closely with S.T.A.R.'s Steering Committee to increase participation in S.T.A.R. and connect growers and county licensees with information to raise their fields' S.T.A.R. Ratings. The successful candidate will work with SWCDs, farmers, local businesses, and conservation partners to implement on-the-ground programs and projects that increase the use of practices to improve soil health and reduce nutrient losses and greenhouse gas emissions.

The S.T.A.R. Coordinator is a new full-time position, recently created and funded via a one-year grant (with the possibility for extension), through a collaborative partnership between the AISWCD and Saving Tomorrow's Agriculture Resources (S.T.A.R.). This position will be headquartered at AISWCD located in Springfield, Illinois and will require up to 25% in-state travel and a valid driver's license. The anticipated position start date will occur in September 2020.

## **POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **S.T.A.R. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION (75%)**

- Statewide Program Facilitation including but not limited to:
  - Training material development for multiple target audiences including farm advisors/retailers, SWCD employees, NRCS/IDOA/NACD staff, conservation partners, etc.
  - Speaking engagements to promote the program and report out on progress
  - Increase engagement and identify additional partnership opportunities
- Sub-committee leadership and coordination, including but not limited to:
  - Assist in setting meeting agendas and scheduling for all sub-committees
  - Provide leadership for communications and verification sub-committees

- Participate in ongoing conversations between sub-committees and partners and provide regular updates to the S.T.A.R. Steering Committee
- Prioritize program needs on a day-to-day basis
- Regular check-ins with partners inside/outside of IL
- Individual Licensee communication/training including but not limited to:
  - Onboarding, troubleshooting and maintenance
  - Monthly program updates
  - Activity tracking, including program participation summaries

### **S.T.A.R. PROGRAM TECHNICAL SERVICES (25%)**

- Provide technical resources to farmers interested in improving their S.T.A.R. Rating, including following up with NRCS/SWCD staff to identify cost-share opportunities
- Capture farmer success stories that highlight the value of the program at the field/farm level
- Assist in identifying and providing advanced training for farmers and conservation staff on improving soil health

### **DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS**

#### **EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE**

- BA/BS degree along with 3+ years of experience in conservation, agriculture or agronomy, similar field or equivalent combination of education and experience.

#### **KNOWLEDGE OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSERVATION**

- Knowledge of current trends and practices in conservation and agriculture – especially nutrient management, soil health principles, cover crops, and conservation drainage practices.
- Knowledge of state and federal cost-share programs - experience working with USDA programs and/or working with soil and water conservation districts
- A Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) certification or other agronomy certification is desired
- Experience in training farmers and ag industry professionals
- Established relationships with members of the agricultural community in Illinois.

#### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

- Experience managing projects, with a wide variety of partners, both internal and external.
- Experience convening, communicating, and negotiating effectively with partners and stakeholders.
- Experience developing partnerships and leading collaborations within the private and public sectors.
- Experience completing tasks independently with respect to timeline(s).
- Experience using common software applications such as Word, Excel, web browsers, etc.
- Experience in presenting to and communicating with business, governmental, and community leaders.
- Ability and willingness to apply science to decision-making and guide activities.
- Ability to interpret field data and communicate to non-scientific stakeholders.

#### **COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS**

Flexible work schedule. Salary will be commensurate with education and experience. A competitive insurance coverage package, along with paid vacation, sick, personal, and holiday time away will be offered.

#### **HOW TO APPLY**

Please send a cover letter, resume, professional references, and desired salary range to [info@aiswcd.org](mailto:info@aiswcd.org) with the subject matter "S.T.A.R. Coordinator Position". Application materials will be accepted until the position is filled.