



# AISWCD

CLEAN WATER,  
HEALTHY SOILS.



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, have for decades over played 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](https://www.facebook.com/ILSWCDs)).

## ILLINOIS STAR COORDINATOR POSITION

To meet Illinois' aggressive water quality goals and sustainably feed a growing world population, agricultural conservation practices need to work at the individual farm and field level. Communicating how conservation solutions solve real issues farmers face, while also providing environmental benefits, will be key to long term adoption.



The IL STAR Coordinator will help implement and grow STAR in Illinois, as well as promote and encourage participation in USDA programs, i.e. EQIP, CSP. This will be accomplished by working closely with STAR's Steering Committee to assist landowners in ultimately increasing conservation on the ground, by working to increase participation in STAR and connect growers and county licensees with information to raise their fields' STAR 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, reduce nutrient losses, and reduce GHG emissions.

The IL STAR Coordinator position is funded via a one-year grant (with the possibility for extension), through a collaborative partnership between the AISWCD and Saving Tomorrow's Agriculture Resources (STAR). 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 December 2021.

## OVERVIEW OF STAR

STAR was created by the Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District in 2017 to help meet goals in the state's Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy plan. That plan, developed by the state's Department of Agriculture and Environmental Protection Agency, aims to ensure Illinois' agricultural sector continues to feed the world while better managing water quality and other environmental challenges it creates. Learn more about STAR by visiting [www.STARFreeTool.com](http://www.STARFreeTool.com).

## POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

### **STAR IMPLEMENTATION (75%)**

- Statewide Program Facilitation including but not limited to:
  - Training material development (including webinars, online tutorials, and print resources) for multiple target audiences including farm advisors/retailers, SWCD employees, NRCS/IDOA/NACD staff, conservation partners, etc.
  - Speaking engagements to promote the initiative, report out on progress, and solicit new partners
  - Identify partnership opportunities and follow-up with current partners to promote and report program activities
  - Annual reporting and practice tracking

- Sub-committee leadership and coordination, including but not limited to:
  - Assist in setting meeting agendas and scheduling for sub-committees
  - Provide leadership for verification sub-committee
  - Participate in ongoing conversations between sub-committees and partners, provide regular updates to the STAR Steering Committee, and prioritize program needs on a day-to-day basis
- Individual Licensee communication/training including but not limited to:
  - Onboarding, license agreement issues, and maintenance
  - Monthly program updates including up-to-date training opportunities and protocols
  - Communicate and assist Licensees to use STAR as a tool for conservation planning

### **STAR TECHNICAL SERVICES (25%)**

- Provide technical resources to farmers interested in improving their STAR Rating, including following up with NRCS/SWCD staff to identify cost-share opportunities
- Identify farmers interested in conservation, inventory current practices, and recommend new practices
- 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**

- BA/BS degree along with 1-3 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/nutrient management certification is appreciated
- Experience in training farmers and ag industry professionals
- Established relationships with members of the agricultural community in Illinois.

#### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

- Managing projects with a wide variety of partners, both internal and external.
- Convening, communicating, and negotiating effectively with partners and stakeholders.
- Developing partnerships and leading collaborations within the private and public sectors.
- Completing tasks independently with respect to timeline(s).
- Experience using common software applications such as Word, Excel, web browsers, etc.
- 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. The salary range is \$35,000-45,000 and 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 "STAR Coordinator Position". Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.