



Farm Service Agency
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FSA to Implement Pilot Hiring Program in Iowa

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DES MOINES, Iowa – December 12, 2022 – Iowa Farm Service Agency (FSA) is offering a new approach to recruiting agricultural leaders who want to become County Executive Directors (CED). Iowa FSA, with support from the Biden-Harris Administration, will open job announcements later this month to the County Office Executive Director Training (CEDT) Pilot Program. The goal of the pilot is to incentivize more candidates to compete for positions in the training program by reducing the relocation distance someone might have to accept compared to if they graduated from the traditional CEDT program.

Under the CEDT Program that is currently used nationwide, candidates are expected to relocate within their state when the training program is complete. In Iowa that could mean needing to relocate up to six hours away from an applicant's current location. The new Iowa CEDT Pilot Program breaks Iowa into four quadrants allowing candidates to apply for positions that are closer to home and not requiring potential relocation across the entire state.

"There are a lot of talented people out there that are interested in entering our CEDT program but have never applied due to the risk of being relocated anywhere across the entire state of Iowa," said State Executive Director Matt Russell.

"For decades we've hired internal FSA staff and external candidates into our training program. But as part of the program candidates agree to take a job anywhere in the state of Iowa. We know we've left really great potential leaders behind because the risk of having to move across the entire state is too great. While we aren't eliminating the risk of needing to relocate, we are dramatically reducing the geographic area of that risk."

Russell says he's excited that USDA under the leadership of Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack is encouraging state leaders like himself to work with local leadership to try new approaches to recruit and hire employees into the local field offices. He also sees the approval of this pilot project as a commitment by the Biden-Harris administration to invest in leadership opportunities for our current employees.

Under this pilot program, Iowa USDA Farm Service Agency is seeking to fill multiple positions with individuals who will train to become FSA CEDs. A CED is responsible for directing and managing program and administrative operations for the counties served by the Service Center. The CED supervises and works with staff to carry out permanent and ad hoc programs and policies established by USDA to help farmers, ranchers, and rural landowners in the local agricultural community. The CED is responsible for promotion of programs through outreach efforts with groups, businesses, educational institutions, and other area organizations and leads communication functions for the office.

“We’re excited about this pilot program and the opportunities it will create for people interested in public service, agricultural leadership, and living in rural Iowa,” says Karen Rawson, Chief Administrative Officer at Iowa FSA.

Successful applicants to the CEDT Pilot Program will complete a yearlong training program. Once the applicant has completed their training course, they will be expected to apply for County Executive Director (CED) positions that are announced throughout the quadrant(s) in which they applied.

The application process is an online process through usajobs.gov. To learn more about the Iowa CEDT Pilot Program, to see a map of the quadrants and to get more information about how to apply, please visit <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/iowa/programs/iowa-cedt-pilot-program>. Questions may be directed to Administrative Specialist, Tammy Zanoni, at 515-331-8422.

Farm Service Agency:

1400 Independence Ave.
SW Washington, DC 20250

Contact:

FPAC Press Desk
FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov