



National STAR

Research Associate Job Description

Position Location: Remote

Position Term: 6-month contract; part time, 15-20 hours per week as an independent contractor

Required for Consideration: Interested applicants should send a tailored cover letter describing their interest and qualifications for the role and annualized compensation requirements, together with a resume and possible start date to info@STARconservation.org. We will only consider applicants who provide all requested information.

Position Posting Close Date: Position posting will remain open until filled. Applicants will be considered on a rolling basis.

National STAR Overview

Saving Tomorrow's Agriculture Resources (STAR) was launched in 2023 to build on the successful development of state-level STAR programs designed to promote and recognize the conservation efforts of farmers in addressing local environmental challenges and natural resource concerns. STAR is a national, non-profit organization that helps farmers and ranchers adopt, evaluate, and benefit from voluntary conservation practices on their agricultural lands. Through its network of state Affiliates and partners, the organization collaboratively tailors its innovative STAR framework to connect producers with tools, resources, markets, and incentive programs to grow conservation implementation at scale across all kinds of agriculture.

Created for producers by producers, the STAR Tool is a simple, free, and confidential resource that generates a 1-to-5 STAR rating to evaluate conservation progress on individual fields and provides tailored recommendations and resources to enable conservation progress. STAR ratings are guided by science and expertise to address local resource concerns. The nationally standardized 1-5 scale gives producers, conservation partners, and supply chain partners a clear and credible pathway to incentivize and reward conservation practice adoption – no matter where producers are on their conservation journey. There are currently 17 states that are implementing or interested in implementing the STAR tool. The national STAR Program will lead the coordination, development, alignment, and expansion of the STAR Program through Affiliate organizations across the US.

Research Associate Overview

The national STAR Research Associate will be responsible for supporting the research components of the National STAR Program and STAR Affiliate programs with a focus on conducting foundational research to evaluate, identify, and document scientific evidence, data sources, and other information regarding the state of conservation in Affiliate states. The Research Associate will support the credibility and standardization of the National STAR Program and Affiliate STAR programs and work to explore and document developing science and evaluation methodologies to inform the continued improvement and development of STAR.

Research Associate Responsibilities

- Serve as research support to the national STAR Science and Research Director
- Support execution of the research and evaluation tasks that are included in the Affiliate science development pre-work activities, focused primarily on IA, MO, IN, MN, WI, OH, and possibly KY, KS, and NE
- Ensure standardized documentation of scientific findings obtained through literature reviews, desktop research, interviews with key stakeholders and local scientific experts, and surveys
- Support the translation of pre-work results into a draft report for Affiliate Steering Committee and Science Committee review
- Support the review, development, and ongoing improvement of current and new STAR rating methodologies for states and appropriate sub-regions for use by STAR Affiliates
- Support standardization and credibility of rating methodologies across all STAR Affiliate programs
- Assist with the exploration of STAR rating correlation with measurement and quantification tool outcomes used in supply chain ecosystem service programs
- Other duties as assigned