

Position Description

JOB TITLE:	RURAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTOR		
Service Area:	Rural Development Services	Revision Date:	3/1/2024
Reports To:	General Manager	FLSA Class Status:	Exempt
Supervises:	Rural Development Assistant, Rural Development Specialist I, Rural Development Specialist II	Employment Status:	Full-time

Position Purpose/Summary

Manage and oversee various programs and initiatives related to rural development. Plan, budget and report on the work done, as well as coordinating with other organizations and entities to support rural development efforts.

Objective

- Responsible for managing expectations, developing solutions, plans, programs, and services to foster rural development in rural communities.
- Provides technical assistance to member electric and telecom cooperatives in the design and delivery of rural and community development programs.
- Leverages resources and programs offered by rural utility cooperatives with other private and public resources to start rural business ventures.
- Provides analysis on public policy choices in rural and general economic development at both the state and federal level.
- Responsible for directing and managing the rural development service area of NDAREC, including overseeing various programs, supervising personnel, advocating for the cooperative model, and maintaining relationships with stakeholders.

Essential Functions

1. Responsible for directing and managing the rural development service area of NDAREC.
 - a. Direct the Rural Electric and Telecommunications Development Center including development and implementation of an annual workplan, fiscal oversight, and reporting to funders, including tracking work product and outcomes.
 - b. Serve as executive director for the Rural Development Finance Corporation, a separately incorporated nonprofit development corporation with a focus on operating a revolving loan fund and providing grants.
 - c. Provide administrative oversight and implementation of the strategic plan for the North Dakota Rural Electric Cooperative Foundation.
 - d. Facilitate the contract between the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education and NDAREC to distribute the Agricultural Research Fund in accordance with established statutes.
2. Supervise and coach assigned personnel which includes providing work direction, managing performance, supporting training and development, and overseeing compliance of contracts.
3. Advocate and build awareness of the cooperative model, rural development programs available and services provided by NDAREC among member systems, local development corporations, local leaders, and government agencies.
4. Provide grantsmanship, contract management, and reporting services to support the development and expansion of rural businesses and for the continuance and growth of rural development services under the umbrella of NDAREC.
5. Establish and maintain good working relationships with stakeholders such as financial and business institutions and professionals, other cooperatives and associations of cooperatives, and local, state and federal economic development and community development professionals.
6. Maintain a working knowledge of local, state, and federal resources available to support rural development and access funding for planned businesses through those programs.
7. Seek and write USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program applications on behalf of NDAREC's members.

Position Description

8. Define the scope of feasibility studies – draft work descriptions and gain acceptance of the scope of work by the client group, lead client group through the process of selecting a consultant and conducting due diligence on the work product.
9. Provide direct technical assistance to emerging and expanding rural businesses, such as strategic planning, fundraising, selection of consultants, articles of association and bylaw development, market analysis and business design.
10. Provide guidance through the organizing committee phase of new businesses, including tasks such as taking minutes, identifying and corresponding with potential consultants, establishing meeting dates, places and providing for logistics.
11. Package resources of private business owners with those of utility cooperatives, the public sector and private lenders to spur new businesses in rural North Dakota.
12. Provide information to general managers, member co-ops, advisory committees and statewide board as to the implications of policy options being considered by local, state and federal governments.
13. Diagnose economic conditions, gather information and plan, coordinate and analyze research projects necessary to provide better economic development programming and services.
14. Provide presentations, reports, news releases and public information on rural development services and activities.

Competencies

- Strong planning and organizing skills.
- Time and staff management skills.
- Proven customer service and consensus building skills.
- Ability to network and link various organizations and individuals together.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills.
- Critical thinking and analytical ability.
- Decision-making skills.
- Project and meeting management skills including the development and management of a pipeline of projects.
- Financial packaging which includes accounting knowledge, cash and funds management acumen, forecasting skills, finance reporting skills, knowledge of corporate taxation, and knowledge of organizational budgeting processes.
- Understanding of the cooperative form of business and other business organization structures.
- Understanding of federal contracting requirements, state contractual compliance requirements and accounting and record keeping standards.
- Fluent in Microsoft Office tools, especially Outlook, Word and Excel as well as overall computer literacy to manage other platforms and handle tasks efficiently.

External Relationships

- Co-op employees, directors and members
- Direct contact with NDAREC directors and member managers
- Staff liaison to rural development advisory committee
- Direct contact with state director of USDA and the state Department of Commerce
- Direct contact with rural development specialists at USDA, SBA, EDA, private lenders and local development corporations
- Staff liaison to Economic Developers of ND (EDND) and Cooperation Works!
- Cooperatives and Association of Cooperatives
- Local, state and federal economic development and community development professionals
- Financial institutions and professionals
- Business institutions
- Public
- Stakeholders

Position Description

Job Specifications

Work Environment

The position is in an office setting with field work that includes, but is not limited to, frequent meetings with business and producer groups. The employee must be able to sit or stand for lengthy periods of time. While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to talk and hear. The employee is frequently required to stand; walk; use hands for dexterity; and reach with hands and arms.

Physical Demands

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job.

The overall level of work as defined by the "Dictionary of Occupational Titles," is medium duty. Medium duty is defined as exerting 20 to 50 pounds of force occasionally, and 10 to 25 pounds of force frequently, and greater than negligible up to 10 pounds of force constantly to move objects.

Position type/Expected hours of work

Some irregular hours may be required including nights, weekends, and holidays. Occasional overtime.

Travel

Frequent intra- and interstate travel is required in normal completion of duties. A valid North Dakota driver's license is required.

Education/Experience

Required

Bachelor's degree and at least three years' experience working with small business, cooperatives, rural communities, economic development, or business development related fields; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Preferred

Experience in business development/administration, financing, and community organization. Additional education or experience in related fields include law, accounting, business administration, economics, public administration, or communications. Preferably field experience with disadvantaged communities or in North Dakota at the local or state level.

Also, supervisory and board governance experience is desirable.

Other Duties

PLEASE NOTE THIS JOB DESCRIPTION IS NOT DESIGNED TO COVER OR CONTAIN A COMPREHENSIVE LISTING OF ACTIVITIES, DUTIES OR RESPONSIBILITIES THAT ARE REQUIRED OF THE EMPLOYEE FOR THIS JOB. DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES MAY CHANGE AT ANY TIME WITH OR WITHOUT NOTICE.

Responsibilities and Authorities of All Management Positions

1. Obeys a lawful, reasonable order within the terms of the personnel policy..
 2. Serves faithfully.
 3. Cooperates with the employer.
 4. Performs duties with proper care and diligence.
 5. Does not misuse the confidential information acquired while in service.
 6. Trains and appraises all reporting personnel.
 7. Develops and evaluates workplans and budgets for department.
 8. Authorizes expenditures within guidelines of policies.
 9. Approves time sheets and compensated absences.
 10. Represents NDAREC positively at meetings of membership and allied associations.
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