

# SOUTH DAKOTA CHAPTER SWCS SCHOLARSHIPS IN CONSERVATION

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

### Applicants must:

1. Be willing to participate in job shadowing for 2 days (16 hours).
2. Be currently enrolled in a South Dakota educational institution.
3. Have completed at least one full year of study (two semesters) in an accredited university, college (including tribal colleges), or technical school in South Dakota. For example, if the student graduates from high school in May of 2022 and enrolls in college in the fall of 2022 as full-time student for the 2022-23 year, the student could apply in the spring of 2024. For students enrolled in a 2-year technical school, the scholarship may be awarded post-graduation, based upon the time of application review and monetary disbursement.
4. Have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.8 (on a 4.0 scale).
5. Be an undergraduate enrolled in an agricultural or natural science conservation related major/curriculum.
6. Show reasonable need for financial assistance.
7. Have been involved in extracurricular and/or volunteer activities.
8. Not have received a prior SD SWCS scholarship.

Past applicants have majored in agronomy, soil science, precision ag, agricultural systems technology, agricultural engineering, range science, forestry, ag journalism, ag education, biology, botany, environmental management, horticulture, and wildlife and fisheries science. Other majors related to conservation also qualify.

### Selection Criteria

1. Demonstrated commitment to natural resource conservation (30%)
2. Scholarship/academic record (20%)
3. Written student narrative on application (20%)
4. Extracurricular and/or volunteer activities (10%)
5. Financial need (10%)
6. Quality and completeness of application (10%)

## Scholarship Program Guidelines

Scholarship recipient (student) enters into agreement with SD SWCS to job shadow with a mutually agreeable conservation professional(s) for a minimum of 2 days (16 hours), to be completed within 6 months of signed agreement, in exchange for a total scholarship payment of \$1000. When the student is selected, he or she will be contacted by the Scholarship Committee Chairperson to arrange a job shadow location, with consultation with conservation professionals, to tailor the experience to the student's interests. The 16 hours may be completed in full or partial days, as mutually agreeable to the student, host location, and on-site supervisor.

Examples of potential job shadow experiences include:

- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- SDSU Extension
- Conservation Districts
- South Dakota Soil Health Coalition
- South Dakota Grasslands Coalition
- South Dakota Voices for Soil Health

If an extension to the 6-month requirement is needed due to medical or family emergency, or due to a prior academic commitment such as studying abroad, the student can request an extension at their earliest convenience by contacting the Scholarship Committee Chairperson prior to the end of the 6-month period. The Chairperson will consult with committee members to determine if an extension is warranted.

All payments will be credited to the student's financial aid account at their higher education institution. If the student fails to complete the entire 16 hours within 6 months or the extended timeframe, the student will be granted a prorated payment of \$50/hour for every hour completed up to 16 hours. This agreement encourages students to complete the entire job shadow experience in a timely manner.

The goals of this program are:

- To introduce students to potential career opportunities
- To connect employers to future job candidates
- To educate students on current issues and evolving technologies in natural resources.

# SD SWCS Scholarship Program Agreement

Between Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
and South Dakota Chapter of Soil and Water Conservation Society

In exchange for a total scholarship amount of \$1000, student agrees to complete a total of 16 hours job shadowing with a conservation professional(s) mutually agreeable to both parties. Refer to Program Guidelines for details.

Student acknowledges that selected employer(s) or job site location(s) may require them to sign a waiver of liability or additional paperwork as required. For example, with NRCS, the student may be required to sign up as an Earth Team volunteer.

At the end of the job shadowing and before the scholarship payment is made, Scholarship Committee member(s) will conduct a phone interview with student to evaluate the experience and gain input for future job shadow opportunities.

Selected job location:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Student:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

On-site supervisor:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SD SWCS Scholarship Committee Chair:  
Michelle Burke  
520 Third Avenue, Brookings, SD 57006  
Michelle.burke@usda.gov  
605-692-2344

Technical point of contacts:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Signed agreement: \_\_\_\_\_

Date for 16 hours of job shadowing to be completed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of on-site supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of SD SWCS Scholarship Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date