8 Tips for an Effective Position Description

1 Remember The Purpose

Hosting a GeoCorps project is meant to help you meet needs at your location, and also to give an early career geoscientist an opportunity to gain skill and valuable experience. Keep what students and early career professionals are looking for in mind when writing your position description, and make sure you address those needs.

Applicants are focused on:

- Exploring career potential,
- Professional growth,
- Opportunities to gain marketable skills, and
- Building professional networks.

2 Create a Clear and Descriptive Title

Participants want to easily pin point how your position would fit into their professional development.

An effective title:
- ♦ Describes the position in a few words,
- ♦ Is searchable,
- ♦ Easily used on a resume, and
- ♦ Avoids buzz words, or lesser known technical language.

3 Be Specific About the Work Ahead

"The duties of the job include evaluating soil conditions in future timber sale areas, hydrologic evaluations of forest roads, surveying streams, and assisting with watershed restoration projects."

Clearly and concisely describe the work that the participant is going to be focused on. One sentence can provide a lot of information about what the participant will do, learn, and gain. Make the information easier to find by putting it at the beginning of the description.
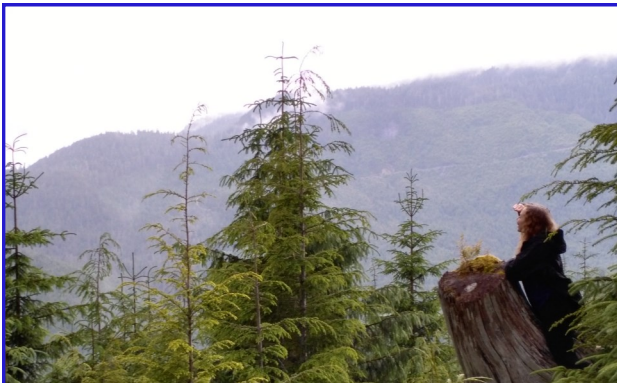
4 Show the Big Picture

Applicants want a sense of purpose and knowledge that they are making a difference. Highlight how your project ties into an important focus of your agency or helps to address an important issue. This adds value to participating in your project.

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Unrelated training counts!

Have fire mitigation training coming up? Need the participant to learn to use a unique piece of equipment?

Include these in the description, get the participant involved, and encourage them to include it on their resume.

Alumni have given feedback that unique skills, like being able to fix an outboard motor, have helped them find positions after their project.

5 Plan For Professional Development

Applicants are focused on developing their professional life and career. Give specific examples of training participants will receive, skills they will learn, experience they will gain, and networking connections that they will make throughout the project.

6 Outline The Applicant's Contribution

Be specific about how the participant's work is making a contribution to the project and its goals by mentioning specific work products and how they will be used long term.

7 Know What You Need

Be specific about what skills and experience a participant needs to get the project done, what would make an applicant more competitive, and what training you can provide. Examples of specific types of courses and/or field experiences required are always helpful.

80% of applicants are current undergraduate students, or have finished their undergraduate degree but not started masters study. If you are asking for a senior level student, or an applicant with graduate level work, make sure you actually need that level of expertise. Otherwise, you might be missing out on some great applicants!

8 Highlight Special Features

Some locations attract a large number of applicants because their reputation precedes them. This does not mean that smaller or less well known locations cannot attract the same level of interest, and our data on applicants per location proves that. If there is something unique about your location or your project be sure to highlight it in your position description. Examples: Opportunities to walk sled dogs, weekly staff monster movie night, the free housing has a spectacular view, located in path of totality for the next eclipse.