USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency

County Operations Trainee (COT) Program

County Operations Trainees (COTs) who successfully complete the 36-52 week training program are considered for County Executive Director (CED) positions. Each FSA County Office is managed by a County Executive Director.

The Mission of the FSA County Office:

County Offices are the direct link between the Farm Service Agency and local farmers and ranchers. County Offices are responsible for administering Agency programs at the local level, for providing guidance and assistance to program participants and others, and for leading outreach efforts to explain and promote Agency programs through public events and media presentations.

County Executive Directors:

- report to the farmer elected local County FSA Committee
- administer and interpret policies established by the Agency and by the County FSA Committee
- direct and manage program and administrative operations to carry out permanent and emergency commodity production, commodity/facility loan, conservation, environmental quality, indemnity, disaster, emergency and defense programs as well as crop insurance operations under policies established by the Risk Management Agency (RMA)
- provide basic farm loan program services
- issue newsletters or other informational materials and conduct meetings to inform the farming community of the availability of such programs as well as program requirements and benefits
- manage all day-to-day operations of the county office and hire and supervise subordinate non-Federal county office and field employees
- manage and direct all administrative and fiscal functions in the assigned office(s).

How to Qualify:

Applicants for CO-5 COT positions must meet one of the sets of qualifications listed below:

- a 4-year degree
- at least one year of specialized* experience equivalent to the grade 5 level or above, or
- a combination of education and experience described above.

Applicants for CO-7 COT positions must meet one of the sets of qualifications listed below:

- a 4-year degree (GPA 3.0 or above on a 4.0 scale)
- at least one year of specialized* experience equivalent to the grade 6 level or above, or
- a combination of education and experience described above.

Advancement Opportunities:

CO grade levels are fully equivalent to GS grade levels. COTs who successfully complete the training program qualify for CED positions. The grade progression for COTs/CEDs is CO-5/7/9/11/12. Most employees are eligible for advancement to the next higher grade after one year.

Benefits:

- 13 days paid vacation per year for the first 3 years with a limit of 240 hours carryover per year; vacation days increase after 3 years and 15 years of service.
- 13 days paid sick leave per year with an unlimited carryover per year
- 10 paid Federal holidays per year
- on the job and formal training
- health insurance, life insurance, retirement benefits and Thrift Savings Plan



*Specialized Experience: for more information please call the California State Office at 530-792-5520