



Biochar Soil and Agriculture Program Director

Job Details

Level: Mid / Senior

Job location: Remote

Travel: Monthly

Position type: Full time

Salary Range: \$90,000 - \$110,000

USBI Background

The United States Biochar Initiative (USBI) is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization focused on increasing the production and use of biochar in North America by developing markets for biochar. USBI is the leading biochar-focused organization in North America.

USBI was formed in 2009 and has been supporting the growth of the North American biochar industry through technical support, education, demonstrations, and conferences.

Job Summary

The Soil and Agriculture Program Director will lead the development and implementation of the USBI Soil and Agriculture Program including:

Program Development and Management

- Work closely with the Executive Director to develop the Soil and Agriculture Program including developing a Soil and Agriculture market development plan focused on growing markets for biochar as a soil amendment, as a component of biochar-enhanced fertilizers, as a component of horticultural growing media, and potentially additional soil and agriculture sub-markets. The Soil and Agriculture Program is anticipated to have an annual budget of at least \$400,000, with the potential for significantly greater funding.
- Identify high priority funding opportunities and then leading the development and submission of proposals. Potential funding sources include US Department of Agriculture, US Department of Energy, State grant programs, and philanthropic funding opportunities.
- Build the Soil and Agriculture team by hiring and supervising staff to support the Soil and Agriculture Program.
- Manage all aspects of the Soil and Agriculture Program including planning, contracting, budget management, and reporting.

Project and Technical Leadership

- Develop and publish informational resources for biochar in soil and agriculture including white-papers, peer-reviewed articles, fact sheets, guidance manuals, technical notes, video content, and more.
- Lead and manage data collection, data analysis, and reporting related to all USBI soil and agriculture projects.



- Develop and lead on-site, classroom, and field-based training sessions focused on biochar in soil and agriculture applications.
- Prepare project reports and invoices, as required for contracted projects.
- Develop, coordinate, and implement a nationwide “Train-the-Trainer” program to increase awareness and understanding of biochar among USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff, and staff at organizations that facilitate NRCS funding (e.g. Conservation Districts, Cooperative Extension, State Departments of Agriculture, etc.), to increase the use of NRCS cost share programs that provide funding for farmers to purchase biochar (e.g., NRCS CPS 336).
- Develop projects at all levels of the technological development pathway including basic research, applied research, pilot project, and commercial demonstrations, depending on market readiness, and in collaboration with partners, to focus on:
 - Biochar as a soil amendment
 - Biochar as a component of biochar-enhanced fertilizers
 - Biochar as a component of horticultural growing media
 - Other high priority soil and agricultural markets for biochar
- Lead existing and proposed USBI projects including:
 - An existing project with Washington State University focused on assessment of biochar as a soil amendment and as a component of biochar enhanced fertilizers.
 - An existing collaborative project with USDA Agricultural Research Service to develop, publicize, and maintain the Biochar Atlas decision-support tool.
 - Existing projects led by American farmland Trust including two Climate Smart Commodities projects and one Conservation Innovation Grant project.
 - Proposed NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Projects (RCPP).

Communications, Outreach, Thought Leadership

- Represent USBI at regional and national conferences by presenting about the USBI Soil and Agriculture Program and specific projects in the program.
- Serve as the USBI representative on external efforts related to biochar use in soil and agriculture.
- Submit comments to RFIs and other comment solicitations from state and federal government agencies and other organizations.

Stakeholder and Partner Engagement and Management

- Lead collaborations with stakeholders related to USBI projects and the use of biochar in soil and agriculture generally, including with NRCS, conservation districts, cooperative extension, academic researchers, biochar producers, and state and federal agencies.

Qualifications

Technical Experience in Soil, Agriculture, and Biochar

- Deep understanding of technical aspects of soil and agriculture, including soil health, on-farm operations, and fertilizer application and use.



- Demonstrated experience planning and conducting laboratory and/or applied research on soil, agriculture, and/or biochar.
- High proficiency conducting literature reviews and summarizing research in easy-to-use materials tailored for diverse target audiences such as researchers, farmers, and conservation professionals.
- Experience planning and conducting on-farm, or on-site, applied research.
- Preferred experience related to basic and/or applied research in biochar and its use in soil and agriculture.

Program Management

- Demonstrated success in identifying grant funding opportunities and then developing winning proposals.
- Experience managing project budgets and schedules.
- Experience planning large, multi-year projects, ideally in collaboration with multiple stakeholders and ideally in the soil and agriculture space.
- Exceptional organizational skills including the ability to clearly identify project timelines and action items.

Stakeholder and Partner Management

- Demonstrated success in developing and/or working within partnerships of various stakeholders.
- Committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in agriculture and food systems.

Training and Outreach

- Experience holding in-person trainings, such as grower field days, or other similar training events.
- Proficient and confident presenter and speaker under a variety of contexts including virtual and in-person at conference and field events.
- Ability to deliver highly technical content to a variety of audiences including farmers, NRCS staff, and other professionals working in soil and agriculture.

Education and Work Experience

All applicants must have the following education and work experience:

- A degree in soil science, agronomy, agriculture, crop science, horticulture, or similar field related to the use of biochar in soil and agriculture.
- A Master's or PhD degree plus at least eight years of directly relevant experience.

Additional Preferred Qualifications

- Significant experience in the science, application, and benefits of using biochar as a soil amendment.
- Working knowledge of NRCS programs and conservation practice standard 336: Soil Carbon Amendment.



- Experience in the science and assessment of soil carbon including biochar and soil health practices.

Compensation and Benefits

- The salary range for this position is \$90,000 to \$110,000 depending on experience and qualifications.
- Sick leave: Up to 10 days per year
- Vacation: 20 days per year
- Twelve holidays per year: New Year's Day, MLK Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after, Christmas, and four floating holidays.

Application Details

- All applications should be submitted via Indeed: <https://www.indeed.com/job/program-director-soil-and-agriculture-09f155cef3040b92>
- Applications will be initially reviewed on September 30, 2024 and will be accepted until the position is filled.
- Applicants should submit a cover letter and resume that clearly presents that the applicant meets the minimum requirements listed above.