Job Title: LOAN ASSISTANT (AGRICULTURAL)  
Department: Department Of Agriculture  
Agency: Farm Service Agency  
Job Announcement Number: FSA-14-0580-LA-SG  

**SALARY RANGE:**  
$31,628.00 to $50,932.00 / Per Year  

**OPEN PERIOD:**  
Thursday, September 11, 2014 to Wednesday, September 24, 2014  

**SERIES & GRADE:**  
GS-1165-05/07  

**POSITION INFORMATION:**  
Full-Time - Permanent  

**PROMOTION POTENTIAL:**  
11  

**DUTY LOCATIONS:**  
2 vacancies - Alexandria, LA  

**WHO MAY APPLY:**  
US Citizens and Nationals; no prior Federal experience is required.  

**SECURITY CLEARANCE:**  
Public Trust - Background Investigation  

**SUPERVISORY STATUS:**  
No  

**JOB SUMMARY:**  

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is an exciting and rewarding place to start, build and/or continue your career. Be part of our team and support the well-being of American agriculture and the American public. Take part in delivering these essential and critical programs as an Agricultural Loan Assistant/Specialist by making and servicing agricultural loans, evaluating financial factors and credit risks, and providing advice, guidance, and credit counseling. As a team member located in one of our USDA/FSA Offices, you will receive both classroom and on-the-job training intended to further develop your talent, skills, and abilities to successfully administer farm loan programs.  

FSA's diverse culture and benefits allow for a healthy balance between your career and home life. In addition to a generous salary, FSA offers a friendly and professional working environment with a diverse workforce, flexible hours/work schedules, and other family-friendly benefits such as: paid vacation and sick leave, paid holidays, retirement and supplemental savings plan, a wide array of health, dental, vision, and life insurance plans, flexible spending accounts, and long-term care insurance.  

PLEASE READ ALL THE INSTRUCTIONS UNDER "HOW TO APPLY" BEFORE YOU BEGIN.  

The closing date of this announcement has been extended to September 24, 2014.  

**TRAVEL REQUIRED**  
- Occasional Travel  
- Occasional travel may be required.  

**RELOCATION AUTHORIZED**  
- No  

**KEY REQUIREMENTS**  
- You must be a U.S. Citizen or National to apply.  
- Required to pass a background investigation and fingerprint check.  
- Registered for Selective Service, if applicable.  
- Successful completion of a one year probationary period.  
- Meet education and/or experience requirements.  
- Complete the Occupational Questionnaire/submit resume/supporting documents.  
- Financial disclosure will be required.
DUTIES:

This position is assigned to the Farm Service Agency, Louisiana State Office, Farm Loan Team, Alexandria, LA. The exact duty locations(s) of these positions will be determined upon selection.

Farm Loan Officer's (FLO's) are required to successfully complete all of the requirements of the Farm Loan Training Program. FLO's may be reassigned to another training office during their training program. In addition, upon completion of training program, FLO's may be reassigned, at any time, to a different duty station if workload activity changes or vacancies occur.

This position assists the Farm Loan Manager in administering farm loan programs in a USDA Service Center serving one or more Counties.

Major responsibilities include:

- Making, servicing, and supervising loans;
- Providing technical advice, guidance, and credit counseling to loan applicants and borrowers;
- Has delegated loan approval authority to approve loans within a specific limit;
- Has knowledge of agency farm loan programs and eligibility requirements;
- Has knowledge of the technicalities of farm financing and credit, financial management concepts and practices, farm operations, land use and value, production and marketing of various crops and livestock, and prices and markets in the serviced farming areas.

QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED:

Applicants must meet all qualification requirements by 11:59 p.m. EST on the closing date, as defined below:

You may start at the GS-5 level if you have one of the following qualifications:

- A 4-year course of study leading to a bachelor's degree or a bachelor's degree in finance, business administration, economics, accounting, engineering, mathematics, banking and credit, law, statistics, or another field related to the position, such as agriculture, agricultural economics, farm, livestock or ranch management, or rural sociology from an accredited college or university; OR
- Three (3) years of progressively responsible general experience, 1 year of which was equivalent to at least the GS-4, that required (1) gathering and analyzing facts and figures, and presenting the information or conclusions in clear oral and written language; or (2) that provided a knowledge of the principles of financial analysis or of insurance laws, such as contract, property, life, casualty, or marine insurance; OR
- A combination of education and experience as listed above.

You may start at the GS-7 level if you have one of the following qualifications:

- Superior Academic Achievement: A bachelor's degree in finance, business administration, economics, accounting, engineering, mathematics, banking and credit, law, statistics, or another field related to the position, such as agriculture, agricultural economics, farm, livestock or ranch management, or rural sociology from an accredited college or university with either: 1) a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 based on a 4.0 scale; 2) a 3.5 GPA based on a 4.0 scale for required courses completed in a major field of study during the last two years of undergraduate study; 3) class standing of upper third of the graduating class in the college, university, or major subdivision of the college; 4) membership in a National Scholastic Honor Society certified by the Association of College Honor Societies, excluding freshman honor societies; OR
- One year of specialized experience equivalent in difficulty and responsibility to the GS-5 level in the Federal service or private sector equivalent that demonstrates basic knowledge of loan examining and/or servicing principles, procedures and techniques as they apply to investigation, analysis, and evaluation of financial factors and credit risks in relation to granting and servicing of agricultural loans. Experience may have been gained in such work as assisting in reviewing and passing upon applications for agricultural loans; servicing an agricultural loan portfolio of a bank or other loan association; or similar work. In addition, this experience must demonstrate basic knowledge of farm operations, land use and value, production of various crops and livestock, and prices and markets in the farming area where loans are made and serviced; OR
• One year of graduate education from an accredited college or university with a major in finance, business administration, economics, accounting, engineering, mathematics, banking and credit, law, statistics, or another field related to the position, such as agriculture, agricultural economics, farm, livestock or ranch management, or rural sociology; OR
• A combination of graduate education and experience as listed above.

College Transcript: If you are qualifying based on education, submit a copy of your college transcript that lists college courses detailing each course by the number and department (i.e., bio 101, math 210, etc.), course title, number of credit hours and grade earned. You must submit with your application package evidence that any education completed in a foreign institution was appropriately accredited by an accredited body recognized by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education as equivalent to U.S. Education standards. You may submit an unofficial copy of the transcript at the initial phase of the application process; however, if selected, you will be required to submit official transcripts prior to entering on duty. Please refer to the “How to Apply” section for instructions on submitting the transcript.

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION AND FINGERPRINT CHECK: Selection and retention in this position is contingent upon a successfully adjudicated FBI National Criminal History Check (fingerprint check) and a background investigation.

CONFIDENTIAL FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE REPORT: If selected for this position you will be required to submit an Annual Financial Disclosure Report within 30 days of your initial appointment date, and annually thereafter.

HOW YOU WILL BE EVALUATED:
Applications will be evaluated in accordance with Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Delegated Examining Procedures using category rating. Applicants who meet basic minimum qualifications will be placed in one of three categories: Best Qualified, Well Qualified, or Qualified. Within these categories, applicants eligible for veteran's preference will receive selection priority over non-veterans. Category placement will be determined based on applicants’ quality of experience and the extent they possess the following knowledge, skills and abilities (or competencies):

• Knowledge of credit principles, farm loan program policies and regulations to make and service loans;
• Ability to research, interpret and apply agricultural or lending regulations, policies and procedures to attain objectives;
• Ability to communicate orally;
• Ability to communicate in writing;
• Skill in analysis and problem solving;
• Knowledge of agricultural production practices to service customers;
• Skill in negotiation and conflict management;
• Customer service skills;
• Ability to be innovative and demonstrate creativity;
• Ability to train and develop others.

We will review your application, including the online Occupational Questionnaire, to ensure you meet the job requirements and assess your ability to perform this job. Before any certificate can be issued to the selecting official, the resume and supporting documents are reviewed by an HR Specialist to ensure that (a) minimum qualification requirements are met and (b) the resume supports the answers provided to the job-specific questions. Your rating in this occupational questionnaire is subject to evaluation and verification based on the documents and references you submit. Be sure your resume clearly supports your responses to all the questions addressing experience and education relevant to this position. If a determination is made that you have rated yourself higher than is supported by your description of experience and/or education OR that your application is incomplete it may result in receipt of a lower or ineligible rating. Errors, omissions, or providing inaccurate information on federal documents may affect your eligibility. If selected, providing inaccurate information could also be grounds for dismissing you from the position/agency. Please follow all instructions carefully.

To view the application form, visit: https://fsa.usda.nts.gov/cp/?event=jobs.previewApplication&jobid=14b51f51-fd1c-44bc-b5f2-a3a000cd66e0

BENEFITS:
The Federal service offers a comprehensive benefits package. To explore the benefits offered to most Federal employees click here. Permanent employees are eligible to elect life and health insurance coverage and will be covered by a Retirement System. Employees will earn annual and sick leave.

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OTHER INFORMATION:
Reemployment Priority List (RPL), Career Transition Assistance Plan (CTAP) or Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP): If you are claiming RPL/CTAP/ICTAP eligibility, provide a copy of your most recent annual performance appraisal (at least "fully successful" or equivalent), and proof of eligibility, i.e., a RIF separation notice or Certification of Expected Separation, and SF-50 noting current position, grade level, and duty location. RPL/CTAP/ICTAP eligibles will be considered well-qualified if achieving a rating of 85 or above excluding veterans points.

Selective Service: If you are a male applicant born after December 31, 1959, you must certify that you have registered with the Selective Service, or are exempt from having to do so under Selective Service law. See www.sss.gov.

Direct Deposit: Per Public Law 104-134 all federal employees are required to have federal payments made by direct deposit to a financial institution of their choosing.

E-Verify: Federal law requires agencies to use E-Verify system to confirm the employment eligibility of all new hires. If you are selected as a newly hired employee, the documentation you present for purposes of completing the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Form I-9 on your entry-on-duty date will be verified through the DHS "E-Verify" system. Under the system, the new hire is required to resolve any identified discrepancies as a condition of continued employment.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact: USDA’s TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

If you are selected for a position with further promotion potential, you will be placed under a career development plan, and may be non-competitively promoted if you successfully complete the requirements and if recommended by management. However, promotion is neither implied nor guaranteed.

This announcement may be used to fill multiple vacancies.

HOW TO APPLY:
Please read the entire announcement and all the instructions before you begin.

The following instructions outline our application process.

- You must complete this application process and submit all required documents electronically by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) on the closing date of this announcement.
- We are available to assist you during business hours (normally 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Monday - Friday). Applying online is highly encouraged. If applying online poses a hardship, please contact our office during business hours well before the closing date for an alternate method. All hardship application packages with supporting documents must be submitted no later than noon on the closing date of the announcement in order to be entered into the system prior to its closing.
- This agency provides reasonable accommodation to applicants with disabilities on a case-by-case basis; contact us if you are requesting this.

Step 1: Create a USAJOBS account (if you do not have one) at www.usajobs.gov. It is recommended that as part of your profile you set up automatic email notification to be informed when the status of your application changes. If you choose not to set up this automatic notification, then you will have to log into your USAJOBS account to check on the status of your application.

Step 2: Create a resume with USAJOBS or upload a resume into your USAJOBS account. Customize your resume to ensure it documents duties and accomplishments you have gained that are directly related to this position in order to verify that qualifications are met. Your resume must support your responses to the online questionnaire (you may preview the online questionnaire by clicking on the link at the end of the How You Will Be Evaluated section of the job announcement).

Step 3: Click "Apply Online" and follow the prompts to complete the Occupational Questionnaire and attach any additional documents that may be required. You can update your application or documents anytime while the announcement is open.

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Log into your USAJOBS account and click on "Application Status." Click on the position title, and then select "Update Application" to continue.

NOTE: Verify that uploaded documents from USAJOBS transfer into the Agency's staffing system. Once in the Agency's staffing system you will have the opportunity to upload additional documents. Uploaded resumes must be less than 3MB and in one of the following document formats: GIF, JPG, JPEG, PNG, RTF, PDF, or Word (DOC or DOCX).

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:
A resume must be provided. It should include relevant work experience (start/end dates stated in month/year, description of duties and salary), applicable education at a minimum, and your contact information. For current or previous Federal employees, it should also include the Pay Plan, Series and Grade for each work experience entry. Failure to do so will result in an ineligible rating.
In addition to your Occupational Questionnaire and Online Resume, other documents may be required.

1) If this vacancy announcement has a basic education requirement and/or you are substituting education for specialized experience, you must submit a copy of your college transcripts. Failure to do so will result in an ineligible rating.

2) If you are a veteran and you are claiming veterans' preference, you must submit a DD-214, Certificate of Release from Active Duty which shows dates of service and discharge under honorable conditions (Member 4 Copy). Veterans claiming 10 point preference based on service connected disability, in addition to the DD-214, must also submit an SF-15 Application for 10-point Veterans' Preference, plus the proof of entitlement of this preference which is normally an official statement, dated 1991 or later, from the Department of Veterans Affairs certifying to the present existence of the service-connected disability and indicating the percentage of your disability (VA letter). Click here for more information on Veterans' preference. Current active duty members expecting to be discharged or released from active duty service in the armed forces under honorable conditions within 120 days may be granted tentative preference by submitting a "certification" document in lieu of DD-214.

3) If you are a current or former Federal employee, please provide the most current Notification of Personnel Action (Form SF-50) that verifies career-conditional/career status, position title, series and grade (do not submit an Award SF-50). FSA County employees please provide the most recent Notification of Personnel Action (Form SF-50-B or FSA-50) that verifies permanent status. Also provide the SF-50 that reflects the highest grade level held on a permanent basis or the full performance level of your current position, whichever is higher.

AGENCY CONTACT INFO:
Sandra Gibbs
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Fax: (xxx)xxxx-xxxx
TDD: (800)735-2966
Email: sandra.gibbs@kcc.usda.gov

Agency Information:
Farm Service Agency
9240 Troost Avenue, Beacon
Facility, Mail Stop 8398
Kansas City, MO,
64131
United States
Fax: (xxx)xxxx-xxxx

WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT:
Once your online Occupational Questionnaire and resume has been received, you will receive an acknowledgment email that your submission was successful. After a qualification review of your complete application package has been made, you will be notified as to the status of your application. If further evaluation or interviews are required, you will be contacted. We will notify you, via your USAJOBS account of the outcome after each of these steps has been completed.

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