

# Environmental Planner I - Tompkins County

## Tompkins County

**Department:** Department of Planning and Sustainability

**Classification:** Competitive

**Labor Grade:** White Collar Grade M (13)

**Approved:** 4/22 by RP

**By:** RP, Commissioner of Human Resources

### **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

(a) Graduation from, or current enrollment with an understanding that the degree must be obtained within 3 months of appointment in, a master's degree program at a regionally accredited or New York State registered college or university in planning, public administration, public policy, landscape architecture, ecology, environmental studies, natural resources, geography, engineering, sustainability, or closely related field; **OR**

(b) Graduation from, or current enrollment with an understanding that the degree must be obtained within 3 months of appointment in, a bachelor's degree program at a regionally accredited or New York State registered college or university in planning, public administration, public policy, landscape architecture, ecology, environmental studies, natural resources, geography, engineering, sustainability, or closely related field **AND** 1 year of full-time paid (or the equivalent part-time and/or volunteer) experience working for municipal governments, community organizations, regional/state entities, or businesses to address community planning issues such as natural resources, water resources, agriculture, sustainability, climate change, comprehensive planning, or transportation; **OR**

(c) Any equivalent combination of training and experience equal to or greater than that defined in (a) and (b) above.

**Tompkins County is committed to equity and inclusion. We encourage those with similar values to apply.**

### **DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS**

This position is responsible for helping to implement the Tompkins County Conservation Strategy and the pursuit of programs to achieve the natural resources, water resources, climate change, and sustainability principles as expressed in the County Comprehensive Plan. The incumbent of this position participates in preparing detailed planning reports, conducting planning studies, proposing policies, plans and projects, administering grant funding, and identifying the probable impacts to the development of the county that will result from proposals. This is an entry-level position focused on environmental issues; however, the position is also responsible for participating with teams on complex studies that require the coordination of efforts by other members of the department. The position may be assigned as needed to specialty program areas within the department, including land use, housing, tourism, energy, community development, sustainability, adaptation, rural development, water resources, land conservation, or the environment. The position helps to identify and lead pursuit of relevant grant-funding and grant-making opportunities to further environmental goals in Tompkins County and manages some grant projects and programs. The incumbent is also responsible for providing professional assistance to boards and committees. Work is performed under the general supervision of senior professional staff with allowances for a considerable degree of independent judgment and autonomy in executing assigned tasks. Supervision is not a responsibility of this title. The incumbent will perform all related duties as required.

### **TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:**

- Assists in efforts to protect natural resources through such programs as the locally funded Natural Infrastructure Capital Program;

- Provides guidance and support to the County and wider community in methods to address flooding and other natural hazards, including impacts of climate change and in implementing, evaluating, and improving initiatives supporting these priorities;
- Helps identify and administer grant-making and grant-seeking activities to support County planning-related goals and policies;
- Helps develop and manage County planning-related programs focused on the environment;
- Reviews draft laws, policy proposals, regulations, and funding opportunities from New York State, as well as federal and local governments and provides guidance and support to the County and wider community regarding environmental implications from those proposals;
- Develops recommendations regarding proposed policies, plans and projects;
- Prepares minutes and agendas, and performs other tasks in support of advisory boards and committees;
- Makes formal and informal presentations to inform and advise citizen advisory boards, legislative bodies, and public officials on planning projects;
- Prepares complex reports and studies in conjunction with senior staff;
- Assists in managing grant funds from federal and state agencies and/or local sources often involving selection and oversight of professional consultants, multiple community partners, and substantial budgets;
- Helps prepare applications for grant funds for the department, local governments, and interested agencies;
- Helps draft and oversee contracts that advance planning efforts;
- Helps evaluate and advise on development projects consistent with local and state policies, including General Municipal Law §239-l and -m, and the State Environmental Quality Review Act and assists in such reviews of other municipal projects;
- Uses geographic information systems to prepare maps and statistics to illustrate planning concepts and perform analysis of data or directs others in preparing such information;
- Collects statistical data and prepares reports and maps on topics such as census information, land use, housing, infrastructure, and demographics;
- Provides timely responses to requests for information from the general public, members of advisory boards and committees, and appointed and elected government officials;
- Attends external training programs as needed.

#### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES, AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:**

- Ability to demonstrate initiative as a self-starter exercising autonomy and critical thinking to provide informed recommendations regarding community development and housing;
- Good written and verbal communication skills to work effectively with County staff, community members, technical consultants, developers, and elected officials;
- Ability to build good working relationships with others to coordinate efforts and move actions forward;
- Good computer skills, including use of spreadsheet, database, desktop publishing, and word processing software, and ability to learn new software as needed;
- Ability to implement and achieve data-driven solutions that lead to measurable outcomes;
- Understanding of project management skills, strong organizational abilities, and outstanding attention to detail.
- Strong background in planning-related research methods and techniques, working knowledge of current data collection, analysis, and interpretation methods, and creative problem-solving skills.
- Working knowledge of effective methods of addressing environmental planning challenges;
- Working knowledge of the purposes, principles, terminology and practices employed in planning;
- Working knowledge of the legal, sociological, economic, environmental, infrastructure, and legislative facets of planning;
- Ability to work on several projects or issues simultaneously, deal with tight deadlines, and manage competing requests;
- Ability to work independently or on teams with department staff, other County staff, representatives from other agencies, and/or interested citizens;
- Ability to prepare concise, well-constructed oral and written communications and reports that convey complex planning topics to the public;
- Knowledge of group facilitation skills to gather public comment at meetings and a commitment to inclusive and equitable public outreach and engagement;
- Ability to manage departmental and grant resources on a project or programmatic basis;
- Ability to understand and to give complex oral and written instructions;
- Ability to travel, as required to fulfill the demands of the position in Tompkins County; and
- The employee's physical and mental condition shall be commensurate with the demands of the position, either with or without reasonable accommodations.

**PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS:**

The employee must be able to sit for extended periods of time within a standard eight-hour work day. Other types of physical effort are minimal with the exception of the occasional requirement to lift boxes of office supplies and paper goods up to twenty pounds. The incumbent's visual acuity must be sufficient to see and accurately work with information on a computer screen. The employee's hearing must be sufficiently acute to hear, understand and carry out verbal instructions. The employee must have the physical ability to manipulate a computer keyboard and other types of office equipment. These fine motor skills include adequate hand/eye coordination to perform the essential functions of this job. Environmental factors include the ability to work closely and cooperatively in close physical proximity with others. Incumbent may occasionally be required to work alone. Almost all work is performed indoors in a temperature controlled environment, so excessive heat, cold, humidity, noise, etc., are not factors that are significant to this job. There may be minimal exposure to disagreeable conditions. The employee may at times be asked to drive to remote locations, or otherwise demonstrate the ability to meet the limited transportation requirements of this job. If an individual has limitations, the employee has the right to request reasonable accommodations in accordance with the ADA and as amended.

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