

FRESHWATER

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We are on a mission to inspire and empower people to value and protect water – join us!

Program Assistant – Southern Minnesota

Full-Time, Non-Exempt, Grant-Funded Position

Position Term: September 2026 – December 31, 2027 (15 months)

40 hours/week, with benefits

Location: Hybrid and in-person in south-central Minnesota

About Freshwater

Freshwater Society is a nonprofit organization that seeks to inspire and empower people to value and protect water. Founded in 1968, Freshwater focuses on public education, water research, and water policy. We work cross-sector through a variety of programs that align to build community, professional, political, and science leadership and capacity.

Freshwater is located in the Court International Building just off Hwy. 280 between University Avenue and Franklin Avenue in St. Paul. The preferred candidate for this position will be located near the project location in south-central Minnesota (Rice, Steele, Freeborn, Waseca, Faribault, Blue Earth, Watonwan, and Martin counties).

In alignment with our mission, we strive to activate our organizational values in our internal and external operations:

- **Collaboration.** We connect across communities, institutions, and public and private sectors to build consensus, increase capacity, and create impact.
- **Equity.** We value diverse and well-rounded perspectives, with everyone having access to safe and clean water.
- **Trust.** We build trusted relationships across sectors to be a resource for advancing impact and collective action.
- **Evidence-Based Decision Making.** We value scientific evidence and ecological knowledge as a basis for our advocacy and action.

With a well-known and trusted brand, an experienced and networked staff, a strong Board of Directors, and a growing base of support, Freshwater is well-positioned to continue to lead action for water as a convenor, collaborator, and innovator across sectors and throughout the region.

The Position

This position will directly support Freshwater's effort to implement arsenic testing and education for the [Rural Health and Drinking Water project](#) focused on private wells in the eight southern Minnesota counties: Rice, Steele, Freeborn, Waseca, Faribault, Blue Earth, Watonwan, and Martin.

The Program Assistant strengthens Freshwater's network in southern Minnesota by building meaningful relationships with local partner organizations and private well users, specifically among our priority audiences of families with young children who rely on private drinking water wells, and physicians and school health professionals caring for families with young children. This position leads in-person project partnership development, community outreach, and engagement-focused events that drive participation in private well testing and strengthen regional understanding of the health impacts of arsenic. This role serves as the organization's primary community-facing engagement coordinator in this region and supports communication and storytelling efforts that connect people to the importance of completing well testing.

Reporting to the Program Manager, the Program Assistant serves as a key member of the Rural Health and Drinking Water project team in collaboration with other staff at Freshwater and external partners.

Please note: This position is non-exempt and fully funded by a grant through December 31, 2027.

Responsibilities

Partnership and Education Material Development (25%)

- Identify and build relationships with community partners to support meaningful opportunities for collaboration on private well testing
- Work with the project team to develop educational material on arsenic and pathways for treatment.

Community Events & Outreach (50%)

- Collaborate in planning and facilitating seven community-focused events/clinics that strengthen regional engagement with well testing
- Coordinate educational gatherings and community outreach opportunities
- Represent Freshwater through tabling and public outreach at community events as identified

Communications & Brand Engagement (25%)

- Coordinate with Public Affairs Director on social media content, mailings, and other community-facing communications
- Assist with storytelling, photography, event promotion, and member engagement campaigns
- Help maintain project identity and public presence

Experiences and Qualifications

We are looking for an energetic leader with an eye for detail as well as the ability to complete project goals.

Necessary Experiences:

- Strong interpersonal and community engagement skills
- Experience organizing events, volunteers, or community programs
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to manage multiple tasks and relationships simultaneously
- Passion for clean drinking water and community-based work
- Access to reliable transportation
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively
- Proficiency with Microsoft tools, Canva, basic digital communication tools

Personal Qualities:

- Ability to develop tools and systems for development programs
- Ability to think creatively and strategically
- Able to effectively use and analyze data to support strategic decisions
- Exhibit a high level of personal integrity
- Exhibit innovation and flexibility
- Work well with and be responsive to the needs of internal staff and external partners
- Manage multiple and simultaneous priorities effectively to meet deadlines and demonstrate multi-tasking skills

Preferred Experiences:

- Experience with grant-funded projects or nonprofit engagement work
- Experience with event coordination or volunteer management
- Familiarity with rural communities and private wells or groundwater systems
- Experience with community outreach and relationship building
- Graphic design, photography, or storytelling experience

Salary & Benefits

The Program Assistant position is a full-time temporary position with an hourly rate of \$23.13 - \$26.67 dependent on experience (benchmarked against the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits Salary & Benefits Survey). Benefits include health and dental insurance, a 401(k) plan, a 125 plan, paid time off, and the ability to work in a hybrid role. This position is open to candidates currently residing in or near Rice, Steele, Freeborn, Waseca, Faribault, Blue Earth, Watonwan, and Martin counties, noting that travel to in-person events will be required. The anticipated start date is September 2026.

How to Apply

Please submit a cover letter, resume, and contact information for three professional references (emails and phone numbers) to: Ali Nesler at freshwater@freshwater.org. Applications are due by end of day Monday, July 20, 2026. We welcome requests for accommodations during the application or interview process. Applications submitted through automated job boards will not be reviewed. Incomplete applications or those not following submission instructions will not be considered.

Initial resume reviews will begin on Tuesday, July 21, 2026, and the position will be open until filled.

Freshwater Society is an equal opportunity employer. We strongly encourage applications from individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color, LGBTQIA+, disabled, veterans, or who bring other diverse perspectives to our work. We value an inclusive workplace where everyone belongs and can contribute to protecting and preserving water for all.