



## **Rural Community Development Apprentice**

January – June 2022

The Sierra Institute for Community and Environment seeks a full-time Rural Community Development Apprentice to work with rural communities throughout California. The position is based in the very rural northern Sierra town of Taylorsville, which was recently impacted by the 2021 Dixie Fire that destroyed several neighboring towns and impacted much of the surrounding environment. The duration of this position is six to nine months, based on the candidate's availability, but successful apprenticeships can result in full-time, regular employment with us.

### **Job Duties**

The apprentice will be involved in a variety of projects focused on rural community development, forest industry workforce development, forest and watershed health, environmental justice and the well-being of rural communities. The position involves substantial research, writing and collaboration with community partners

Along with providing support to the range of projects in Sierra Institutes rural development program, the apprentice will primarily work on a rural community decadal survey to understand issues of rural change in Westwood, a former logging company town. Previous surveys were conducted in 1990, 2000, and 2010, and informed issues of relevance to the community. Parts of the survey will focus on the impacts of the 2021 Dixie Fire on the community, while other parts of the survey will focus on community change more generally. Most of the work involves working with community partners to administer the survey, collecting data, analyzing data, and communicating survey results.

Working with the Rural Development Team, the apprentice will primarily:

- Work with Sierra Institute supervisors and community partners in the town of Westwood, CA, to refine survey methodology and data collection tools, including survey instrument and code book;
- Develop a data collection protocol and work with community partners to administer the survey to all households in the community;
- Input survey results into a database, clean data, and analyze results, including by integrating results from previous surveys to understand change over time; and
- Communicate results, including through formal write-ups, short research briefs, and meetings with key stakeholders and community members to ensure results are widely communicated and provide a pathway to rural community development.

In addition to working on the Westwood survey, the apprentice will have the opportunity to learn about and support other aspects of work at the Sierra Institute, based on the apprentice's interests and the Institute's needs. This may include:

- Contribute to planning and implementation of community workshops that measure socio-economic conditions in Sierra Nevada forested communities;

- Support program planning efforts centered on workforce development in forest restoration;
- Conduct outreach, project support, and assessment efforts with programs supporting forest restoration crews working in rural areas of the state as well as with Tribally-run forestry crews;
- Draft reports on water related needs in tribal communities and under resourced communities across the Sierra Nevada;
- Conduct background research on issues related to environmental justice and rural community well-being; and/or
- Participating in rural youth enrichment activities, assisting with administrative duties in the main office, or other organizational support activities.

### Qualifications

- Interest in environmental justice issues in rural communities;
- An undergraduate degree or other related experience in the social science, natural resources or related field;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills;
- Experience with qualitative and/or quantitative social science research methods;
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office (Word, PowerPoint, Excel);
- A willingness to work and live in a rural, mountainous area that receives snow and ice in winter;
- A team-oriented perspective with a productive level of self-guidance and initiative;
- An ability to bring critical thinking skills, creativity, and laughter to the workplace;
- A personal vehicle for transportation outside of work;
- Experience living and/or working in a rural setting and a strong desire to learn about rural issues.
- **Candidates of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply. Skills or experiences that can fill in for desired qualifications may be considered.**

The Apprentice will have a commitment to environmental stewardship and promoting economically vibrant and equitable rural communities.

### More Details

#### About the Sierra Institute

The Sierra Institute promotes healthy forests, watersheds, and communities by investing in the well-being of rural communities and strengthening their participation in natural resource management. Our work is grounded by the concept of triple bottom line values, supporting initiatives that simultaneously benefit the environment, economy, and equity within a given landscape.

The Sierra Institute strives to cultivate innovative projects through a collaborative office culture—staff often work on interdisciplinary projects both internally and with external partners. Sierra Institute staff must be adaptable as their role expands to fit the needs of specific projects and partnerships. The diversity of our work provides opportunity to think critically about how communities engage with natural resource management—from workshops to assess community

capacity, field trips with high school students, and marking timber in the forest. Staff routinely draw on the expertise and background of others to improve our collective work, and the Apprentice should expect to be an integral member of this team. In addition, Sierra Institute supports a flexible work schedule and staff are close-knit, providing a sense of community.

### **Location**

Sierra Institute is located in Taylorsville, CA (pop. 154) and lies within a large mountain meadow referred to as “Indian Valley,” that includes the communities of Greenville and Crescent Mills. Taylorsville is an historic small town, with a long history dating back to the construction of the first flour mill in the Pacific Northwest in 1856. Downtown Taylorsville is home to two historic establishments: the Taylorsville Tavern, a favorite watering hole for loggers; and Young’s Market, a revitalized country store and sandwich shop that first opened its doors in 1862 that is – debatably – home to the oldest working cash register in the nation manufactured in 1914. Taylorsville is a blended community of long-time residents, ranchers, loggers, and newcomers, drawn to the area for its scenic beauty and cultural richness. Taylorsville offers unique, rural community events that bring the community together, such as the Silver Buckle Rodeo held over the 4th of July, the Holiday Light Parade the Saturday after Thanksgiving; and New Year’s Eve fireworks in the fields across from the Tavern. Taylorsville is surrounded by many outdoor recreation opportunities such as Lake Almanor, Plumas and Lassen National Forests, and Lassen Volcanic National Park. Although much of the forest was burned in the 2021 Dixie Fire, many areas remain accessible and safe. These adjacent public lands feature backcountry routes in winter, and endless, empty dirt roads to explore in summer. Adventure lies just out the back door of the office!

### **Compensation**

The apprentice will receive approximately \$2,000/month, plus shared housing and the option to participate in the organization’s health insurance benefits. The Sierra Institute will provide fully furnished, utilities-paid accommodation within a 15-minute drive of the Sierra Institute office.

### **COVID-19**

Sierra Institute staff are currently working fully in-person at the office and expect the apprentice to work out of our office in Taylorsville. Our staff are following COVID-19 safety protocols informed by the latest research and evidence.

### **How to Apply**

Please send your cover letter, resume, and contact information for three references as **one PDF** to [jobs@sierrainstitute.us](mailto:jobs@sierrainstitute.us) with “Rural Community Development Apprentice” in the subject line. Review of applications will begin on **December 20, 2021**, but the position is open until filled. Start date is negotiable, but the apprentice would ideally begin work by January 10, 2022. Please call (530) 284-1022 with questions.