Client:

The Economic Research Service (ERS) serves as the research and policy arm of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). With 400 employees and a budget of approximately $80 million, ERS conducts research that informs decision-makers on public programs and policies involving agricultural commodities, food, farming, natural resources, and rural development; a spectrum that ranges from biotechnology to food stamps, from farmland protection to meat inspection, and from commodity policy to global inter-sectoral trade.

The Farm and Rural Business Branch (FRB) develops, interprets, and disseminates current analyses and longer term perspectives on the financial structure and performance of farms, the farm sector, and rural areas. Notably, the Branch produces USDA’s estimates and forecasts of farm income. The Branch plays a key role in development of the survey data that underpin the farm income estimates and the research program (the Agricultural Resource Management Survey or ARMS). Research themes include analysis of farm business formation to understand how ownership and operating structures affect access to resources, financial performance, and the distribution of income and wealth. Farmer’s choices regarding input procurement, market channels, work, and investment are examined and linkages between farm and non-farm businesses and rural communities are analyzed. The Branch monitors rural industry structure to assess changes in economic base, income, and employment. Sources and processes of rural economic growth are examined, with an emphasis on such factors as amenities, creative capital, and entrepreneurship. Rural development strategies are examined with a primary focus on assessing access to, and use of, information and communication technologies in rural areas, tourism and recreation, and energy and renewable fuels.

Duties and Responsibilities:

A. Scope of Assignment

Reporting to the Director, Resource and Rural Economics Division (RRED), the Branch Chief is responsible for planning, directing, and managing the Branch's program of agricultural economic research, analysis, and information dissemination. This includes the coordination and integration of this Branch's program of research and analysis with those of other branches within ERS.

The Branch Chief is responsible for serving as the Agency's reference point to provide economic advice and counsel relating to the Branch's area of responsibility. This includes providing
technical information and advice to other U.S. government agencies, and serving on various Department-level committees, as well as interagency and interdepartmental task forces.

B. Technical Responsibility

The Branch Chief is responsible for defining research studies and analyses to be undertaken within the Branch and allocating resources, and is also responsible for the validity and integrity of the economic results produced. This includes the oversight of data collection, economic analysis and research; publication of results and findings; and selecting appropriate methods for dissemination of the results of research including working papers, agency publications, professional journals, and magazines.

The Branch Chief is responsible for providing the overall management of a number of technically-complex projects which involve selecting or developing the most appropriate and current research methodologies, often of great complexity, and applying them to extremely complicated economic problems. He/she is responsible for maintaining a high degree of expertise in the subject-matter areas of technical concern to the Branch and in the process of adapting and modifying methods of economic research and analysis and/or developing and designing new methods as necessary to provide solutions to technical problems.

The Branch Chief represents the Branch within the Department, with responsibility for oversight, or coordination of, the preparation of briefings/working papers for the Secretary of Agriculture or the Under Secretary for Research, Economics, and Education, and of position papers for national and international meetings.

C. Administrative Responsibility

The Branch Chief is responsible for the development of program and product plans for the Branch. This includes work plans, as well as development and justification of a budget. The incumbent is responsible for identifying promising and pertinent areas of research, providing technical advice to develop and expand research activities, and thus helping to plan the ERS research and analytical program as well as its related product/publication portfolio.

The Branch Chief rates performance of, and approves sick and annual leave for, all Branch employees. The incumbent selects new employees for the Branch and recommends current employees for promotion. He/she hears and resolves major grievances and employee complaints and makes recommendations concerning more serious disciplinary actions. The incumbent consults with employees regarding training needs and submits final recommendations. He/she also keeps employees informed regarding personnel and other administrative programs, and maintains morale, discipline, and constructive employee relations.

Requirements:

A minimum of 10 years sophisticated economic and/or financial research. A Ph.D. in Economics, Agricultural Economics, or Finance is highly preferred.

Technical Qualifications (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs)): (Please develop a written response, of no more than one page, to each KSA.)

1. Demonstrated ability to plan, develop, and manage a program of economic research and outlook, and its dissemination. Expertise in the economics of business or farm finance a plus.
2. Ability to lead and accomplish work through others (includes conflict management, cultural awareness, team building, and integrity/honesty).

3. Demonstrated skill in communicating economic concepts and research results to a variety of audiences including peer-reviewed publications, and making presentations to high-level policy officials, academics, and other audiences.

4. Ability to communicate with individuals or groups from diverse backgrounds in a variety of situations (including oral and written communication, influencing/negotiating, partnering, interpersonal skills, and political savvy.)

**Location:** Washington, DC

**Compensation:** to $153,200

**EEO:** All candidates will be considered without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, or disability. The ERS provides reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities.

**Deadline:** To be considered, applications must be received no later than midnight, November 30, 2009.

**Citizenship:** U.S. Citizenship required. You may be required to obtain a security clearance.

**Contact:**

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JDG Associates, established in 1973, is a leading provider of executive recruiting services to the federal government, non profit organizations, associations, Fortune 1000 corporations, and a variety of government contractors.