
Associate Director Western Rural Development WRDC

Position Information

Posting Number	SP005113P
Position Title	Associate Director
Department	Western Rural Development WRDC
Division/College	College of Agricultural & Life Sciences
Location	Boise, Idaho

Posting Context Statement:

The Western Rural Development WRDC (WRDC) is one of four rural development WRDCs established by Congress's Rural Development Act of 1972. It is a collaborative effort between the United States Department and the University of Idaho. The core of its funding comes from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The WRDC works with public universities in the Western region to conduct research-based studies and educational outreach programs. It also partners with local communities, decision-makers, entrepreneurs, families, farmers, and ranchers to address various rural development issues. The WRDC's objective is to enhance the capacity of the region's land-grant universities and cooperative extension services to help rural communities thrive and become self-sustaining. The WRDC works in conjunction with the other three Regional Rural Development WRDCs in the country to achieve their shared mission.

Position Overview:

The Associate Director serves as a senior leader responsible for designing, managing, and independently leading a highly specialized and multifaceted research and Extension program. The position plays a key leadership role in advancing the WRDC's mission by supporting day-to-day operations, promoting collaborative multistate initiatives, and driving integrated research and outreach efforts across the western United States. This role combines advanced scientific expertise with strategic and administrative oversight. The Associate Director directs the work of junior research and Extension scientists, postdoctoral fellows, and professional staff, establishing priorities, performance standards, and accountability systems. The position ensures that scientific findings are translated into practical, evidence-based applications that strengthen rural communities and inform policy and practice. The Associate Director maintains an independent research and Extension portfolio while collaborating closely with the WRDC Director and institutional partners to guide programmatic initiatives and facilitate integrated teams spanning research, education, and Extension functions.

Duties may include:

- Lead the design, implementation, and evaluation of an independent research and Extension portfolio focused on rural community and economic development.
- Support the WRDC Director in strategic planning, day-to-day management, and coordination of Center programs and operations.
- Direct the work of research and Extension staff, postdoctoral fellows, and junior scientists, including hiring, training, supervision, and performance evaluation.
- Oversee technical and administrative aspects of funded projects, including budgeting, deliverable tracking, and reporting.
- Conduct original, applied research and perform complex analyses to inform community and regional development practices.
- Develop and disseminate research findings through peer-reviewed publications, Extension materials, and professional presentations.
- Review and provide consultation on scientific and Extension projects, proposals, or methodologies.
- Engage with partners, stakeholders, and community leaders to align research and outreach efforts with regional needs and priorities.
- Facilitate multistate and interdisciplinary collaborations that integrate research, education, and Extension functions.
- Other duties as assigned

Assigned Duties:

Extension & Outreach (38%)

- Design, implement, and evaluate Extension and outreach programs that translate research into practical applications for rural communities.
- Lead regional and multistate Extension initiatives addressing rural development, community resilience, and economic vitality.
- Develop curricula, training materials, and technical resources for Extension professionals and community partners.
- Deliver workshops, webinars, and technical assistance to stakeholders, policymakers, and local leaders.
- Integrate research findings into actionable tools, models, and best practices that strengthen rural decision-making and capacity building.
- Coordinate and facilitate collaboration among land-grant universities, Extension systems, and partner organizations.
- Engage with community stakeholders to identify emerging needs and ensure the relevance and accessibility of WRDC programs.
- Support Extension faculty and staff through professional development and mentorship in applied research and program evaluation.
- Evaluate the outcomes and impacts of Extension activities using established and innovative assessment methods.

- Represent the Center at regional and national meetings, committees, and professional associations related to rural development and Extension work.

Scholarship & Creative Activities (38%)

- Design, manage, and lead independent and collaborative research projects focused on rural community and economic development.
- Develop and refine scientific methods, analytical frameworks, and data collection tools for applied and interdisciplinary research.
- Conduct complex data analyses and interpret findings to inform programs, policy, and practice.
- Prepare and publish peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, technical reports, and applied research outputs.
- Translate research findings into Extension and outreach materials for professional and community audiences.
- Present research results at academic, professional, and stakeholder meetings.
- Collaborate with regional, national, and institutional partners on multistate research initiatives.
- Mentor graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and research staff involved in Center projects.
- Serve as reviewer or advisor on scientific proposals, manuscripts, and data-driven program documents.
- Lead or contribute to the development of metrics and evaluation frameworks to assess the impact of integrated research and Extension projects.

Service & Leadership (24%)

- Assist the WRDC Director in setting the Center's strategic direction and priorities.
- Plan, organize, and oversee Center operations to ensure efficient management of programs, budgets, and resources.
- Direct, supervise, and evaluate the performance of research and Extension staff, postdoctoral fellows, and professional associates.
- Establish work priorities, performance standards, and accountability systems for staff and projects.
- Manage budgets, track project deliverables, and ensure compliance with institutional, state, and federal requirements.
- Lead administrative planning for multistate and collaborative initiatives, ensuring alignment with Center goals and stakeholder needs.
- Hire, train, and develop staff to strengthen organizational capacity and team effectiveness.
- Facilitate coordination and integration across research, Extension, and education teams to achieve Center objectives.

- Serve as a key liaison with institutional leadership, funding agencies, and external partners.
- Provide guidance and consultation on programmatic, operational, and regulatory matters affecting Center activities.

Required Experience:

- Two (2) years of research and/or Extension experience in rural development.
- Experience with U.S. rural community development issues; demonstrated knowledge of issues facing U.S. rural community development may substitute for this experience.

Required Education:

- Ph.D. in applied economics, rural sociology, political science, or a closely related field.

Required Other:

- Ability to travel.
- Ability to work nonstandard business hours, including weekends and holidays.
- Must possess a valid driver's license and be able to meet policy requirements for driving university-owned vehicles.

Additional Preferred Qualifications:

- Demonstrate ability to work independently and with an interdisciplinary team.
- Demonstrated record of research and Extension achievement
- Experience serving as PI or Co-PI on extramurally funded projects.
- Knowledge of the U.S. land grant university system.
- Demonstrated ability to interact effectively with constituents, client groups, and the general public.

Physical Requirements:

- None

Degree Requirement:

Listed degree qualification is required at time of application

Posting Information

FLSA Status	Exempt
Employee Category	Exempt
FTE	1.0
Full Time/Part Time	Full Time
Funding	This position is contingent upon the continuation of work and/or funding.
Visa sponsorship	Uncertain

Posting Date	12/08/2025
Closing Date	
Open Until Filled	Yes

Special Instructions to Applicants

- Applications received by January 21, 2026, will receive first consideration.
- If you would like to receive a full position description that includes the position responsibilities, please email Angelica Reyes Perez at angelica@uidaho.edu and request that one be sent to you, or please go to this website for a copy.
<https://wrdc.uidaho.edu/job-announcements/>
- Unofficial transcripts can be uploaded to the posting documents section. In addition, please note the following documents are required and can be submitted under the appropriate document number:
 - Other Document 1 – Research Statement
 - Other Document 2 – Extension Statement
 - Other Document 3 – Management Approach Statement
 - Other Document 4 – 1 research paper

Applicant Resources

<https://www.uidaho.edu/human-resources/careers/applicant-resources>

Background Check Statement

Applicants who are selected as final possible candidates must be able to pass a criminal background check.

EEO Statement

The University of Idaho is an equal employment opportunity employer, including veterans and individuals with disabilities.