



The Western New York Land Conservancy is an accredited, regional not-for-profit land trust that permanently protects land with significant conservation values in Western New York for the benefit of future generations. We envision a future in which forests, farms, meadows, and waterways are connected, cherished, and protected in Western New York. Our clean air, clean water, and fertile soils will equitably support the health and well-being of future generations of every living thing.

Position Title: Farmland Protection Specialist

Reports to: Acquisitions Director

Employment Type: Full-time, Exempt (1.0 FTE)

Location: Hybrid position, based out of East Aurora office

Salary: \$58,500-68,500 annually, commensurate with experience

Overview:

The Farmland Protection Specialist will primarily support the Western New York Land Conservancy's farmland protection program through the identification, development, and advancement of agricultural conservation easement projects in Western New York. This position is intended to expand organizational capacity to permanently protect working farmland across Western New York through direct landowner engagement, project development, and grant-supported conservation transactions. This position will also support natural land protection projects that advance the organization's broader conservation mission. The position will work closely with landowners, farmers, municipal partners, consultants, attorneys, and internal staff to advance projects from initial inquiry through closing and stewardship transition.

Responsibilities:

Under the direction of the Acquisitions Director, the Farmland Protection Specialist will:

Farmland Protection Project Management (70%)

- Assist in managing a portfolio of agricultural conservation easement projects in accordance with WNYLC policies and LTA Standards and Practices
- Conduct outreach to farmers and landowners regarding farmland protection opportunities
- Manage relationships with farmers and landowners engaging in conservation projects through transition to stewardship
- Evaluate potential projects based on agricultural viability, conservation value, and organizational priorities
- Conduct preliminary site visits and assist with project intake, ranking, and feasibility review
- Prepare maps, project summaries, and acquisition materials
- Coordinate due diligence activities, including appraisals, surveys, title review, environmental assessments, and baseline documentation
- Coordinate with consultants, attorneys, municipalities, and funding partners to maintain project schedules, contract adherence, and facilitate closings
- Assist with grant writing and securing funding for farmland protection projects
- Maintain accurate files and reporting documentation in accordance with LTA Standards and Practices

Natural Land Protection Support (20%)

- Provide support for selected natural land conservation projects, as needed
- Assist with project evaluation, mapping, due diligence, and closing coordination of strategic natural land protection initiatives

- Complete first-year tax exemption paperwork for newly acquired fee-owned conservation properties and coordinate transition to stewardship staff
- Participate in broader organizational conservation planning and project support activities

Outreach and Organizational Support (10%)

- Build relationships with farmers, agricultural organizations, municipal officials, landowners, and conservation partners
- Respond to land protection inquiries and maintain project tracking systems
- Participate in external meetings and regional land protection initiatives
- Assist with grant applications, reimbursement documentation, project reporting, and compliance tracking for publicly funded conservation projects
- Support Conservation Committee meetings and related materials
- Coordinate with communications staff on outreach materials, educational programs, volunteer events, and community engagement activities
- Assist with Land Trust Alliance accreditation and organizational compliance efforts
- Ensure reporting deadlines and project documentation are completed accurately and on schedule

Desired Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in environmental studies, natural resources, planning, agriculture, geography, conservation, or a related field, or equivalent professional experience
- Experience or demonstrated interest in farmland protection, land conservation, real estate transactions, land use planning, agriculture, or natural resource management, specific experience with farmland conservation easements and state programs preferred.
- Strong organizational and project management skills with exceptional attention to detail
- Ability to manage multiple projects and deadlines simultaneously
- Strong written, verbal, and interpersonal communication skills
- Ability to work collaboratively with diverse landowners, partners, consultants, and community stakeholders
- Experience with GIS mapping, Microsoft Office, and database management preferred
- Ability to conduct field visits on rural properties and travel throughout Western New York
- Valid driver's license and reliable transportation required

Preferred Characteristics

The ideal candidate will demonstrate:

- A strong commitment to farmland protection and conservation
- Initiative, professionalism, and sound judgment
- Strong relationship-building and communication skills
- Ability to work independently and as part of a high-functioning team
- An ability to navigate complex projects involving multiple stakeholders
- A collaborative and mission-driven approach to conservation work
- A sense of humor and desire to build community

Position Impact

This position is intended to increase the Western New York Land Conservancy's capacity to identify, develop, fund, and complete agricultural conservation easement projects across the region. The role will directly support the organization's strategic farmland protection goals by expanding outreach to landowners, accelerating project advancement, strengthening regional partnerships, and increasing the number of permanently protected farmland conservation projects completed. The position will directly increase organizational capacity to complete agricultural conservation easement transactions funded through state and federal farmland protection programs.

Benefits

The Land Conservancy offers competitive and progressive benefits including but not limited to: • Comprehensive health coverage • Generous paid leave • 37.5-hour work week • 401k retirement plan with up to 4% employer match • Paid sabbatical leave of up to two months after every seven years of employment

To Apply

Please submit a single PDF that includes a cover letter, resume, and two references with “Farmland Protection Specialist” in the subject to jobs@wnylc.org. Applications are only accepted electronically. No phone calls, please. Review of applications begins October 30, 2026. The WNY Land Conservancy is accepting applications until the position is filled.

The WNY Land Conservancy is an equal-opportunity employer and is committed to enhancing diversity and inclusion in our organization and in land conservation. Multiple perspectives and experiences help strengthen our work as an organization and enhance our relevance throughout communities currently underrepresented in the land conservation sector. People of color, women, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and people with disabilities are encouraged to apply.