

# Senior Director, Climate & Agriculture Policy and Strategy

**Team:** Practice Group

**Reports to:** Heather Lair, Partner

**FLSA Status:** Exempt

**Salary Grade:** 27 | Starting salary range: \$157,560 - \$212,706

**Location:** Washington, D.C. (greater metro region)

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## Primary Objective of Position

The Senior Director, Climate and Agricultural Policy and Strategy is a widely recognized leader in the dynamic intersection of climate and agriculture and the top level of mastery in Meridian's practice areas, including facilitation, strategy, and project management. This position will spearhead strategic initiatives, drive collaborative processes to address complex and controversial issues, and provide invaluable leadership within the Practice group. This position uses their extensive networks and relationships to drive project development and program design at Meridian.

The Director will play a pivotal role in shaping the direction of Meridian's impactful projects and contribute to the organization's commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) principles. This position serves as Project Director and is responsible for the direction and management of project teams and providing professional growth opportunities for practice staff.

The successful candidate will have extensive experience working effectively with the U.S. Congress and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Specific experience working with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is desirable. A track record of establishing and maintaining trusted relationships with diverse stakeholders working on federal level food and agriculture policy issues is essential.

All Meridian positions require individuals to be self-starters with exceptionally strong written and verbal communication skills, a high level of organization, and attention to detail. Working at Meridian requires the ability to excel in a team environment and juggle multiple deadlines and project teams.

## Essential Areas of Accountability

### Strategic Project Leadership and Process Design:

- Lead and independently manage intricate projects, demonstrating expertise in dealing with diverse funding mechanisms and multiple reporting structures.
- Oversee project activities, ensuring alignment with timelines, and proactively engage with clients and participants to address progress and implement necessary adjustments.

- Foster a collaborative team environment, skillfully navigating conflicts, and providing strategic guidance to optimize project effectiveness, efficiency, and desired outcomes.
- Provide strategic direction to clients and project teams, maximizing outcomes and impacts through the design of effective meetings and collaborative processes.
- Develop and implement a variety of process types, including consensus building, strategic planning, collective impact initiatives, and workshops, considering stakeholder engagement and power dynamics.

**Expert Facilitation:**

- Facilitate complex and potentially controversial discussions with artful skill, catering to groups of all sizes, including senior- and director-level participants.
- Support meaningful engagement within discussions, integrating interpersonal dynamics, group dynamics, and issues of power, inclusion, and equity.

**Project Development and Financial Management:**

- Lead project development efforts by cultivating professional relationships and networks, resulting in new project opportunities.
- Manage complex project budgets and subcontracts within defined budgets and timelines and in collaboration with the Finance Team, ensuring financial milestones are met and projects remain on track.

**Team Management and Mentorship:**

- Supervise and coordinate project teams, fostering a healthy, results-oriented team culture.
- Coach and mentor junior project staff, contributing to their professional growth and a culture of continuous learning and open feedback.

## Knowledge and Skills Required

- Recognized leader with 15+ years of experience in conflict resolution, collaborative processes, strategy, or significant experience as a leader in another field.
- Advanced degree or equivalent professional experience in agricultural sciences, environmental sciences, climate science, politics, or sustainable development.
- Substantial experience working effectively with government stakeholders, including the U.S. Congress, USDA, and/or NRCS.
- Proven track record in managing large, complex programs involving diverse partners; significant expertise in food and agriculture, with a focus on sustainability and/or regenerative agriculture.
- Political savvy with significant experience navigating political dimensions, identifying opportunities and risks, and managing relationships and coalitions.
- Well-developed network of clients, partners, and relationships beneficial to the project portfolio.

- Demonstrated commitment to justice, equity, diversity, inclusion (JEDI) principles and ability to work effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds with humility, ease, and enthusiasm.
- Strong analytical, evaluative, and problem-solving abilities in high-pressure environments.
- Exceptional written and oral communication skills, with proficiency in Microsoft 365 tools including but not limited to: Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Teams, OneNote, and SharePoint.
- Fluency in English; professional proficiency in a foreign language is highly valued.

## Additional Requirements

- Required to attend to business related to projects outside of normal working hours, due to the location and nature of the project.
- Required to travel domestically or internationally dependent upon project needs.
- Must be able to conduct themselves in a courteous and professional manner at all times.

**Note:** *This job description is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all duties, responsibilities, or qualifications associated with the job.*