

# Earth Day 2012



## Career Profile

**Name:** Dr. Pamela J. Higgins  
**Job Title:** Special Assistant to Laboratory Operations  
**Location:** Bureau of Laboratories  
**Years with DEP:** 8 months

### **What kinds of activities do you perform on a daily basis?**

I assist in developing and testing new analytical methods, research potential grant opportunities and unique environmental inquiries from other parties, and prepare technical reports and presentations related to Bureau of Labs activities.

### **What kind of educational background do you have?**

I have a bachelor's degree in chemistry and biology from DeSales University as well as a doctorate degree in biochemistry from University of Notre Dame.

### **What is the most challenging part of your job?**

The complexity of determining efficient and effective methods to analyze the health of the environment and its potential impact on the public is very challenging.

### **What got you interested in working in an environmental field?**

I became interested in working in the environmental field due to the importance of applying sound science to provide accurate information about the multiple environmental issues that are discussed in the media and by governing bodies.

### **What is the most rewarding part of your job?**

This job is never boring. There is always something new on the horizon regarding analytical techniques or emerging environmental contaminants.

### **What advice do you have for someone thinking about a career in environmental science?**

Concentrate on building observational, analytical and critical thinking skills. Be open to learning new techniques outside of your field, as environmental science often involves the integration of chemical, physical, biological and mathematical fields to different degrees.

I would also recommend continuing technical training through courses in radio-analytical methods and spectroscopy software application as well as webinars regarding elemental analysis and water quality standards.