



Executive Director Search: Organizational Profile & Vision

Introduction

During the last 30 years under the leadership of Enid Wonnacott, the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT) has grown to become an active, thriving organization deeply woven into the fabric of Vermont agriculture, with a **\$2.6** million operating budget encompassing many diverse programs managed by a team of 20 talented full-time staff. NOFA-VT has a devoted Board of Directors, and a passionate and committed membership. Upon Enid's retirement in Spring of 2019, our transition to new leadership comes at a time when NOFA-VT has a well-developed partnership between staff and Board, and a strategic plan that provides a solid sense of operational and strategic direction. Our new Executive Director (ED) will build on Enid's strengths of vision, creativity, management, eloquence, and joy, while bringing new skills and ideas to the table.

The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont promotes organic agricultural practices to build an economically viable, ecologically sound and socially just Vermont food system that benefits all living things. Since 1971, NOFA-VT has served as the Vermont voice for organic agriculture for commercial producers, homesteaders and gardeners. Today, we are proud to serve 1100 members and certify more than 715 farms and processors to the USDA National Organic Program Standards.

NOFA-VT works to support local, organic farmers and gardeners to increase certified organic land in Vermont, and make healthy food more accessible to all Vermonters, while building strong, agriculture-based communities. By developing public awareness, we grow markets for organic food. Through organic certification, technical assistance, research, policy and advocacy, we work to grow organic agriculture in Vermont.

The ideal Executive Director will continue to build an inclusive tent for Vermont's agricultural community. The Executive Director (ED) will embody NOFA-VT's mission and values and be able to convey complex and nuanced policy matters in clear and compelling ways to the general public. The ED will lead a staff of seasoned professionals, and lead a movement of farmers, gardeners and consumers. We're looking for the next ED to operate successfully at different scales, inspiring the general public while also understanding the bigger picture of the organization in order to prevent mistakes and problems, ensure accuracy, and help build a positive culture. The Executive Director will foster a work environment where all colleagues are respected, trained, supported and held accountable to do their best work.

As a membership association, NOFA-VT serves the needs and elevates the voices of all members, including commercial farmers, processors, gardeners, homesteaders and consumers. To do this, NOFA-VT operates several key programs, as follows:

Advocacy

At the local, state and federal levels, NOFA-VT advocates for policies and practices that strengthen our food system, support sustainable farming practices, improve economic opportunities for farmers, and expand access to local and organic foods for all Vermonters.

Community Food Access

NOFA-VT believes all people, regardless of circumstance, should have access to local, organic food that is nourishing and supports our working landscape. Our nationally recognized community food security programs support the many farmers and farm businesses that are committed to feeding everyone in their communities.

Market Development

To strengthen the relationships between food producers and consumers, NOFA-VT supports direct farmer-to-consumer markets by providing technical support and assistance to farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture (CSA) farms, and local wholesale markets.

Farmer Services

NOFA-VT supports farmers as the foundation of our working lands, local economies and agricultural heritage. We conduct technical, financial and beginning farmer programs to help farmers improve their production systems and business management practices throughout the agricultural sector.

Farm to School

NOFA-VT works to improve the diets and eating behaviors of school-aged children by reconnecting students and school communities to local agriculture and the food they eat. NOFA-VT is a founding partner of the nationally recognized Food Education Every Day (VT-FEED) program that brings together educators and farmers to forge field to classroom and cafeteria links.

Farm to Institution

NOFA-VT is a collaborative partner with the Farm to Institution New England (FINE) Network, a six-state regional network of organizations working to increase the amount of local food sourcing that takes place on college and university campuses, within K-12 schools, and at hospitals. We believe that the regional market will benefit our Vermont producers and provide consistent access to affordable, healthy, regionally-grown foods for institutional facilities.

Organic Certification

NOFA-VT operates Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC (VOF), an accredited certifier of the USDA National Organic Program. NOFA-VT believes that organic production enhances soil, plant, animal, and human health to protect the environment for current and future generations. Organic certification is needed to verify these production practices and to ensure that organic products are produced with integrity and transparency. VOF has a reputation for integrity and high standards, and providing consumers with a process and label they can trust.

Job Description

Executive Director

Reports to: NOFA VT Board of Directors

Status: Salaried

Prepared Date: September 2018

Job Summary

The Executive Director is responsible for providing leadership and direction toward the achievement of NOFA-VT's mission and goals; administering the operations and programs of NOFA-VT; executing the policies established by the Board of Directors; overseeing the preparation of meaningful reports reflecting the financial health of the organization; providing human resources leadership/supervising staff; and representing the goals and work of the organization to the wider community. Reporting to the NOFA-VT Board of Directors, the Executive Director will help accomplish goals set towards positive operating results for the organization.

Supervisory Responsibilities

The Executive Director is the direct supervisor of the organization's Management Team: the Food Systems Education Director, Farmer Services Director, Organic Certification Director, Market Development Director, and Finance Director. The Executive Director indirectly manages all staff reporting to these Directors. In addition, the ED supervises the Educational and Events Outreach Coordinator, Marketing and Communications Coordinator, and Membership and Advocacy Coordinator.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Support NOFA-VT's mission by working collaboratively with board and staff to strategically advance the organization through effective programs, campaign development, and organizational partnerships. Implement the priorities and vision articulated by the NOFA-VT Board in the organization's strategic plan. Oversee the development and delivery of NOFA-VT programs. Serve as the central visionary for new program development.

- Write articles for NOFA Notes and other outreach publications, and contribute to NOFA-VT's social media presence. Edit all outreach pieces including press releases, quarterly NOFA-Notes, e-news, grant applications and donor communication.
- Oversee fundraising planning and implementation, including funding research, communication with funders, submitting proposals, and grant reporting in collaboration with program staff. Develop annual fund appeal and donor cultivation.
- Effectively manage the human resources of the organization according to established personnel policies and procedures. Direct and monitor the work of permanent staff as well as contractors. Evaluate performance of staff on an annual basis, in collaboration with the NOFA-VT Management Team.
- Work with Finance Director and Program Directors to prepare annual budgets and manage the organization's resources within budget guidelines. Oversee the financial management in accordance with documented internal controls.
- Assure that the organization and its mission, programs, products and services are positively and consistently represented in the media (including intentional social media outreach) and at the political, community and citizen levels.
- Serve as the spokesperson for NOFA-VT at public gatherings, and as invited by other organizations, businesses and stakeholders.
- Work with local, regional, state, and federal government entities to promote awareness of NOFA-VT's programs and to participate in the design of public programs to advance organic agriculture. Work with NOFA-VT's Advocacy Coordinator to advise on policy positions and be one of the primary representatives for NOFA-VT in the Vermont state legislature and with the Vermont Congressional delegation.
- Support operations and administration of the NOFA-VT Board of Directors, by advising and informing Board members, and interfacing between the Board and staff. Work with the Board's Governance Committee to organize board meeting agendas and annual board retreats.
- Collaborate with NOFA-VT Board, Advocacy Coordinator and Management Team for unexpected changes due to shifts in state or federal policy.
- Keep abreast of industry knowledge and conditions of the local marketplace and trends, through self-education and attendance at relevant local, regional or national conferences. Be proactive with regard to creative self-learning and professional development. Attend all required meetings, trainings, seminars and workshops.
- Follow all NOFA-VT policies and procedures and ensure that the organization adheres to all state and federal regulations. Be responsible for a safe work environment for employees.
- Meet expectations of regular, predictable attendance, including evenings and weekends. Moderate statewide and out of state travel required.
- Serve as a delegate on the NOFA Interstate Council.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Qualifications

Education

- Master's Degree preferred or equivalent work experience with an emphasis on non-profit related management experience and development.

Experience

- Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the complexities and challenges within the organic food and farming industry; knowledge of organic farming in Vermont preferred, but not required.
- Minimum of 5 years related management experience with nonprofit management experience required.
- Demonstrated understanding of the issues impacting rural, agricultural communities.
- Knowledge of organic agriculture and food systems required.
- Experience managing staff and building an effective team.
- Experience managing managers required.
- Knowledge of Microsoft Office Suite

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to satisfactorily perform essential duties using the following knowledge, skills and abilities. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

- Previous experience with donor relations strategy, related fund-raising experience required.
- Transparent and high integrity leadership, with a commitment to organic agriculture.
- Nonprofit management and development experience. General understanding of non-profit organizational structure and principles.
- Budget management skills, including budget preparation, analysis, decision-making and reporting.
- Strong organizational abilities including planning, delegating, program development and task facilitation.
- Exemplary public speaking ability. Ability to interface and engage diverse organizational partners, volunteer and donor groups. Ability to communicate NOFA-VT's strategic goals to staff, board, volunteers and donors.
- Ability to maintain a strong workplace culture, and support an effective team of staff and board.
- Experience working with a board of directors in a nonprofit setting, including the development of a transparent and engaged relationship concerning strategy, finance, and basic organizational direction.
- Ability to demonstrate clear and expressive verbal and written communication skills, as well as genuine active listening skills. Ability to effectively present information and respond to questions from employees, contractors, stakeholders and general public.

- Ability to work well with others in a cooperative, collaborative environment where teamwork and constant communication are essential.
- Ability to write reports, business correspondence, and procedure manuals.
- Ability to handle multiple demands, remain calm, think quickly and problem solve.
- Proficiency with the Microsoft Office Suite, Google docs, and understanding of relational databases and detailed working knowledge of the following computer programs: Outlook, Word, Excel, and MS Access.
- Ability to read, analyze, and interpret general business periodicals, professional journals, technical procedures, or governmental regulations.
- Ability to define problems, collect data, establish facts, and draw valid conclusions. Ability to deal with a variety of abstract and concrete variables.
- Demonstrated ability to work independently within established guidelines.
- Demonstrated ability to follow through on commitments.
- Ability to work a flexible schedule including mornings, evenings, and weekends. Moderate statewide and out of state travel required.

Confidentiality/Discretion

- This position requires a high level of confidentiality and discretion with regard to confidential employee and business documents such as financials, salary and individual employee performance information, organizational projections, and strategies.

Work Environment

- NOFA-VT values a healthy work environment that supports the individual needs of staff, and promotes a healthy work-life balance. The position is a combination of office work (desk, computer, and filing-based), public meetings, events, and ‘in the field’ activities. Work may place physical demands on employee consistent with participating in site visits in a farm environment.