VERMONT HOUSING & CONSERVATION BOARD
Job Description

Position: Agricultural Program Director
Reports to: Conservation Director
Classification: Regular, full-time, exempt

Position Description

The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board’s Farmland Conservation Program continues to be a national leader in protecting Vermont’s working landscape, conserving more than 750 farm parcels. The Agricultural Program Director leads VHCB’s multi-partner strategies and purchase of development rights programs to conserve Vermont’s farmland, improve environmental stewardship of those lands, invest in and support the economic viability of Vermont’s working landscape, and facilitate transitions to new farmers. The Agricultural Program Director is responsible for VHCB’s agricultural land protection work and implementing the organization’s overall farmland conservation programmatic priorities. The position manages state and federal farmland conservation funding and oversees ag related external relations and stakeholder initiatives.

Key Responsibilities

1. Management of VHCB’s Farmland Conservation Program
   o Oversees partner application process for farmland conservation funding and manages farm project pipeline.
   o Manages, with support from other staff, funding requests to NRCS for federal farmland conservation dollars. Responsible for federal grant compliance, reporting and program evaluation. Serves on Vermont’s NRCS State Technical Committee.
   o Coordinates use of Act 250 9(b) offsite mitigation funds and works with legal staff on related policy issues and processes.
   o Primary staff for VHCB’s environmental stewardship and ag water quality conservation work and partnerships, including the Regional Conservation Partnership Program and the Vermont Ag Water Quality Partnership.
   o Leads access to farmland work through VHCB’s ag conservation program.
   o Manages contracts for services, organizational support and technical assistance for partners engaged in farmland protection activities.
   o Facilitates, with VHCB’s Farm & Forest Viability Program Director, communication and collaboration between VHCB Agricultural and Viability programs.

2. Farmland Conservation Application Underwriting and Project Awards
   o Oversees, and participates in, analysis of farmland conservation project applications, including budgets and conservation easements.
Assists applicants in identifying other resources and alternatives to make projects feasible.

Prepares recommendations for Board action, including associated conditions.

Reviews post-award commitment letters and grant agreements.

3. Farmland Conservation Project Closings

Manages farm project closing process in coordination with VHCB legal and project staff and partners.

Reviews legal and other project closing documents.

4. Policy Development

Lead staff for developing and implementing VHCB agricultural policies and guidelines and assists Conservation Director as needed with other policy development.

Maintains communications with grantees and conservation representatives to ensure their input and comment on VHCB policies and actions.

Other Duties

Represents organization, as appropriate, to non-profit organizations, community groups, municipalities, and state agencies.

Provides technical assistance to non-profit organizations, municipalities, and individuals seeking to use the fund, including directing potential applicants to other appropriate resources for technical assistance.

Participates in evaluation of Organizational Capacity Grant applications.

As requested by the Executive Director or Conservation Director, assists in program development and legislative issues.

Qualifications:

The Agricultural Program Director should have prior experience and training in one or more of the following: agriculture and/or land conservation and natural resources as well as a proficiency in financial analysis. Working knowledge of agriculture and an ability to understand the state’s farming sector is required. Experience and ability to work and communicate effectively across Vermont’s farm community is strongly desired. Demonstrated success in a program leadership role and working as a member of a team, and effectively collaborating with outside partners as well as colleagues is essential. Position requires strong organizational and written and oral communication skills. Experience and proficiency in program and grants tracking, data analysis, document management systems, dissemination of program outcomes and compliance and reporting for federal grants is strongly preferred. Experience working with non-profit organizations, municipalities, and state and federal agencies is important. A valid driver’s license is necessary as some travel is required. Candidate should have a commitment to the broad mission of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.

Compensation:

Starting salary range of $65,000-$73,000 plus very competitive benefits package.