POSITION DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE: Program Officer, Regional Food Economies

LOCATION: Arlington, VA

UNIT: Wallace Center

GROUP: Enterprise & Agriculture Group

REPORTS TO: Executive Director, Wallace Center

BACKGROUND:

The Wallace Center at Winrock International is a national leader in sustainable regional food systems development. Our mission is to develop partnerships, pilot new ideas, and advance solutions that strengthen communities through resilient farming and food systems. The Center both builds and strengthens the links in the emerging chain of business and civic efforts focused on making good food—food that is healthy, green, fair, and affordable—an everyday reality in every community. Our work is guided by our organizational values:

• Honoring community knowledge and leadership
• Protecting ecological integrity and resiliency
• Centering diversity, equity, and inclusion
• Fostering authentic partnerships and collaborations
• Prioritizing local and regional economic solutions
• Strengthening market transparency and integrity
• Cultivating a supportive and optimistic work environment

The Regional Food Economies (RFE) team leads the Center’s work developing a business environment within the food system that enables the success of mission-based farm and food enterprises as they balance financial performance, environmental sustainability, and community impact. The RFE team implements a broad portfolio of programming that works across the food system, with technical expertise in a diverse set of areas including food business planning and financial management, aggregation and distribution operations, food safety and risk management, wholesale market development, value chain coordination, access to capital, and food/farm-oriented economic development strategies.

POSITION SUMMARY:

The RFE Program Officer will lead the RFE team and the Center’s work implementing market-based strategies for sustainable and equitable food systems development. The Program Officer is responsible for leading program design, day-to-day project management and implementation, evaluation and reporting, and representing the Center and its values to broader food system stakeholders. They will lead and manage a collaborative team of several Program Associates and a Technical Advisor and will have a significant role in securing ongoing funding for this work and other strategies as part of the Wallace team.
This position offers the opportunity to have national impact in sustainable food systems, as well as inclusive rural and urban economic development. The Center is actively building strategies for centering racial and economic equity in our food systems work and seeking candidates eager to forward that mission. The Center is committed to building a diverse staff and strongly encourages applications from candidates of color.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

Specifically, the Program Officer will:

• Lead the strategic development and growth of the RFE project portfolio with the support of the RFE team and the Center’s leadership

• Manage a diverse portfolio of programs with multiple budgets, spending forecasts, overlapping timelines, interrelated milestones, and varying funder terms and requirements

• Engage the RFE team and the broader Wallace Center in ensuring that programming, communications, and team development are anchored by a deeply rooted commitment to racial and gender equity and inclusiveness

• Lead and develop a team of Program Associates and Technical Coordinators, as well as overseeing external contractors and advisors

• Stay abreast of trends, best practices, gaps, and opportunities in the field and adapt programmatic strategies and tactics to deliver the most impact to constituents

• Lead new business development efforts to support the initiative and the Center’s mission

• Develop strong working relationships with current and potential program partners

• Facilitate collaboration among public and private sector funders and agencies

• Develop and deliver targeted communications and presentations for various stakeholders and act as a representative of the RFE team, the Wallace Center, and Winrock International

• Travel domestically on a regular basis

QUALIFICATIONS AND BACKGROUND:

The Program Officer will be a highly motivated individual who is exceptionally talented at overseeing multifaceted responsibilities. The right individual will have the knowledge and communication skills to engage diverse audiences, including practitioners, academics, regulators, financiers, and subject matter experts in fields including sustainable food systems, philanthropy, government, financial services, and economic development.

This position requires exemplary interpersonal skills, as well as the ability to learn quickly, take initiative, and work well independently as well as part of a team. The Wallace Center values experience in addition to academic success and is committed to building a staff that brings diverse perspectives and approaches. Candidates of color are encouraged to apply.

Experience: At least 5-7 years of relevant professional or lived experience in areas including:
• Sustainable Food Systems: Experience that demonstrates an understanding of local food systems, sustainable agriculture, and/or farmer support and advocacy

• Value Chain Development: Experience that demonstrates an understanding of social enterprise development, community and economic development, and/or financial services and access to capital

• Leadership: Experience leading, managing, and developing a diverse team including local and remote personnel

• Project Management: Nonprofit project management experience that includes designing projects, developing funding requests, managing multiple budgets and overlapping timelines, preparing financial forecasts, and overseeing monitoring and evaluation

• Relationship Management: Experience creating and managing personal relationships across sectors and including individuals, organizations, state and federal agencies, and institutions

Education: MS/MBA/MA preferred in economic development, agricultural economics, rural development, business development, or other fields relevant to the position’s responsibilities; OR, professional or lived experience that demonstrates the capacity to fulfill the position’s responsibilities.

Knowledge/Skills:

• Strategic thinking & creative problem-solving qualities

• Exceptional organizational and information management, with an attention to detail and accuracy

• Ability to meet deadlines and manage multiple concurrent tasks

• Exemplary written and verbal communication skills

• Developed and practiced interpersonal skills for working with staff, external partners, and a wide range of stakeholders and demographics; training in facilitation and mediation preferred

• Collaboration and network-building

• Able to work effectively independently as well as on a team

• Experienced and comfortable with Microsoft Office Suite, including Excel and Skype

• Must not require sponsorship to work in the U.S.

HOW TO APPLY:

Qualified candidates are encouraged to apply online at:
https://www.appone.com/MainInfoReq.asp?R_ID=2321917