



MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
From: Patrick L. Mauney, Executive Director
Date: April 20, 2021
Subject: Regional Farm to School Liaison Position

Last February, the Commission approved a position description for a Farm to School Liaison and work with potential funders to develop Memorandums of Agreement to support the position. With the COVID-19 pandemic, staff and school system partners held off on implementation in 2020, but are seeking approval for the position in 2021 following discussions with the same partners and funding organizations as in 2020. The position description is attached and funding agreements with PATH Foundation and No Kid Hungry Virginia are also in process.

Staff anticipates grant funding will cover 80% of position costs, with the remaining 20% sourced from local per capita dues and other unrestricted funding sources.

From February 2020: Over the past year, RRRC staff has convened multiple meetings with public school Food Service Directors and related stakeholders to explore opportunities for regional partnerships in farm to school programs. These partners identified a need for coordinated technical assistance with outreach and education, menu development, data tracking and procurement. A regional Farm to School Liaison, similar to an existing position in Loudoun County, was proposed to fulfill this need. The Liaison would focus on increasing local food procurement and participation in school reimbursable meals. For the first year, the position's workplan would use the framework of Virginia's Harvest of the Month program.

REQUESTED ACTION: Provide approval of the attached Farm to School Liaison position description, and for RRRC staff to work with partner funding organizations on Memorandums of Agreement to be agreed to prior to hiring a candidate for the position

Job Title: Regional Planner – Farm to School Liaison

Reports to: Executive Director

FLSA Status: Exempt, Salary

Summary

The Farm to School Liaison is a coordinative planning position that will assist local school districts in the region with their farm to school efforts. The position will also allow the selected candidate to gain experience in related areas of mutual interest, including food systems planning, tourism, and environmental and natural resources planning. The selected candidate will possess a combination of education, experience, and willingness to contribute time and expertise to an organization committed to regional collaboration, professionalism, and creative approaches and solutions to issues common to RRRC's member jurisdictions and regional partners.

Essential Responsibilities include the following, together with other projects and duties as assigned.

- Work with local food service directors to implement, and overcome barriers, in their farm to school programs.
- Create and implement farm to school programming to improve school meal quality and participation through:
 - Local procurement
 - Menuing local foods in school meal programs, both breakfast and lunch, using the Harvest of the Month Program as the framework.
 - Outreach and education
- Plan and implement outreach programs and events to highlight local foods and school nutrition.
- Recruit and mobilize community volunteers, parents, and teachers to improve programs and understanding of school nutrition programs and local food systems.
- Conduct online communication and outreach, including social networking.
- Assist school districts in developing local purchasing protocols that are in compliance with federal guidelines.
- Coordinate farm to school and food systems promotions such as cafeteria tastings, farmer visits and farm field trips.
- Perform research, data collection and analysis in support of local and regional farm to school efforts and other planning initiatives
- Track program performance across all 5 counties and timely report to the Regional Commission, school districts, funders and government agencies as needed.
- Develop and implement farm to school-related education programs for K-12 classes, with the goal of increasing student participation in school meal programs
- Research and write timely and effective grant proposals and complete all relevant grant reporting.
- Assist the Executive Director and other Commission staff in coordinating and managing regional and local projects
- Participate on agency and applicable outside committees

- Identify and capitalize on opportunities to further partnerships between the Commission, applicable state and federal agencies, and member jurisdictions
- Regularly apprise manager and fellow staff of findings, ongoing and proposed activities
- Preparation of visual displays to support effective public outreach and communications

Education and Experience

- Bachelor's degree in agriculture, nutrition, education or other related field from an accredited secondary institution; or an equivalent combination of education and experience is required.
- Master's degree preferred
- 1-2 years previous experience in agriculture, nutrition, education, food system planning or a related field is preferred. Previous experience in school nutrition is a plus.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Knowledge or experience with local, regional, and state government planning principles, especially related to food systems and sustainable agriculture.
- Knowledge of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) regulations and guidelines as they pertain to local procurement and the federal nutrition programs
- Knowledge of community, regional, state, and federal Farm to School resources;
- Ability to collect, analyze, and present financial and statistical data for multiple audiences in support of local and regional planning projects
- Experience in grant writing, reporting and research.
- Capacity to focus on multiple tasks with effective time management and prioritization to meet deadlines.
- Ability to work independently, and as a contributing member of the regional planning team, under deadlines, and within established budget constraints
- Ability to effectively communicate verbally and in writing, in a respectful and professional manner with a wide audience, both children and adults
- Ability to maintain meticulous records and manage program tracking, including assisting school districts in development of tracking databases.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office software suite

Physical Conditions and Nature of Work Contacts

Work is typically performed at the Commission offices located in the Town of Culpeper as well as local schools in the five-county region. Position responsibilities require periodic travel throughout the region, and occasional out of area trips. The position requires moderate physical effort including, but not limited to, computer operation, sitting, speaking, listening, operating a motor vehicle, and lifting up to 25 pounds. The worker is not subject to adverse environmental conditions. Must possess valid drivers' license and own means of transportation to meetings, training programs and other travel within, and occasionally outside of, the region. Mileage accrued is reimbursed at the prevailing rate set by the Internal Revenue Service. Must be willing to work occasional weekends and evenings. Must also be able to pass a background check.