



Position Specification

Director of Innovation and Engagement

Hudson Valley Farm Hub

March 2025

Our client

The Hudson Valley Farm Hub is a nonprofit agricultural center dedicated to resiliency in the regional food system

Since the Farm Hub's founding, they have converted the approximately 1600-acre farm operation to a multi-year rotation of organically grown grains, cover crops, and vegetables with an intensive focus on soil health. Along with machine-scale crop production and improved on-farm infrastructure, they have developed a suite of programs and practices to align with their mission of fostering an equitable and ecologically resilient food system – one that meets the economic and social needs of local communities while working in partnership with natural systems. To this end, they host and support research, provide farmer training, demonstrate on-farm practices, and support food distribution channels that prioritize people and planet.

The land, previously Gill Farms, was purchased in 2013 with funding from NoVo Foundation as part of a broader commitment to sustainable agriculture, natural resource conservation, and thriving local communities. Now a subsidiary of NoVo, the Farm Hub collaborates with an ever-growing number of partners working in food and agriculture across the region, in nearby Kingston, and in the neighboring communities.

In 2021, the Farm Hub formally became a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) certified organic operation through NOFA-NY. All farm products carry the USDA Certified Organic label. The Farm Hub has been managing its 1600 acres organically since 2014.





The Role

Hudson Valley Farm Hub is seeking a **Director of Innovation and Engagement**. The Director will inspire the development of innovative initiatives and strategies that amplify the Farm Hub's impact across three areas: 1) learning "lab" for research and risk taking; 2) hub for training and infrastructure; and 3) catalyst for community resiliency. This role will lead, steward, and provide financial oversight over the Farm Hub's work across applied farmscape ecology, agronomic research, and seed growing, in collaboration with external partners. The role also oversees education and public engagement which have through lines across all of the Farm Hub's work, fostering engagement with farmers, neighbors, and nature and bridging the gap between risk taking and supporting others to test, refine and use growing practices that improve soil health, enhance biodiversity, and contribute to resiliency.

The Director will be a member of the Farm Hub's leadership team, collectively and creatively stewarding the organization to be an impactful anchor organization in fostering a resilient local food system in the Hudson Valley. The leadership team currently includes the following functional areas: Farm Production; Construction and Facilities, Grounds, and Special Projects; Finance; and Organizational Development, People, and Culture. The Director of Innovation and Engagement will report directly to the Farm Hub's Managing Director. Of utmost importance, the person in this role will work in partnership with all Farm Hub staff to uplift all the existing wisdom and experience on the farm as they collectively shape and bring forward its long-term vision and strategic direction.

The Role

Responsibilities include the following:

Farm Hub Innovation and Engagement Leadership

- Direct overall operations of the Farm Hub's research, innovation, ecology, seed growing, public engagement, and educational programming
- Assess research and innovation needs of local region – both crops and skills – and advise, coach, and lead organization on meeting those needs on a mid-term and long-term basis
- Partner closely with Director of Farm Production to support all aspects of farm production and its connection to research and innovation – including crop selection, crop rotation, and systems planning
- Work with and advise fellow Leadership Team members to support an integrated set of activities and priorities that advance the organization's vision and mission
- In partnership with the rest of the Leadership Team, responsible for mindful stewardship of the land and facilities in which the Farm Hub operates
- Foster a physically and psychologically safe workplace for all team members

Organizational Leadership

- Be a proactive, trusted partner in shaping and carrying the vision for the Farm Hub, in alignment with the Managing Director's vision and to meet the needs of partner organizations and the local community
- Lead the innovation and engagement components for the Farm Hub Leadership Team and staff to continue to articulate long-term direction and goals for the organization, developing programmatic innovation strategies, systems, and practices that support the overall achievement of stated goals
- In partnership with others, serve as a representative of the Farm Hub to the public, government agencies, and others – supporting the organization's needs, profile, and visibility in the region
- Lead team budgeting and work planning to ensure resources are responsibly stewarded and leveraged for the greatest impact
- Approve and monitor expenditures related to Innovation and Engagement work and provides quarterly cash flow projections and budget changes

Team Leadership

- Manage the Innovation and Engagement team in ways that develop alignment across the areas of farmscape ecology, agronomic research, seed growing, engagement, and education
- Ensure consistent accessibility to all staff and develop a strong rapport with, interest in, and trust of the organization's staff
- Actively commit to developing the leadership expertise of others
- Champion and maintain ongoing staff collaboration, bolstering ways to develop formal and informal channels of communication, candor, inspiration, and ongoing feedback
- Provide thought partnership to all staff, including across the Leadership Team, to examine and evolve our existing work to be more impactful and aligned towards a shared orientation

Professional Experience and Background

The ideal candidate brings the following qualifications:

- Extensive agricultural knowledge and diversified agronomic research experience
- Demonstrated passion and experience in addressing food systems issues such as land access, food access, and ecology
- Committed to building resilient local agriculture and food systems that strengthen the local economy
- Experience in public or community engagement and/or education
- Strong social, emotional, and relationship management skills; ability to develop and nurture positive working relationships with people across different backgrounds
- Strong sense of self-awareness, humility, cultural competence and sensitivity to power dynamics
- Embodies integrity and respect in all interactions
- Demonstrated ability to foster a work environment of mutual respect, team building, and collaboration; committed to a culture of continuous learning
- Creative and flexible strategic thinker with a commitment to fostering innovation
- Excellent verbal and written communications skills
- Willingness to travel, with occasional weekend work
- Bilingual (English/Spanish) strongly preferred
- Minimum of 10 years leadership and management experience



Competencies and Qualifications

In terms of the competencies and qualifications required for the position, we would emphasize that the ideal candidate bring:

Visionary, Mission-Driven Leadership

- Demonstrated record of setting priorities and leading teams
- Strategic thinker who will empower the Innovation and Engagement team to achieve their goals in alignment with the strategic direction of the organization
- Demonstrated body of work that signals an interest in results-oriented, creative thinking
- Ability to identify areas for change, create consensus and buy-in, and lead through consistent evolution and in partnership with others

Operational Experience

- Proven ability to lead a diverse team to align on a collective vision, driving a culture that recognizes performance, trust, respect, and values individual insights
- Ability to set priorities decisively, delegate responsibilities, assure and value accountability, and allocate resources appropriate to achieving desirable results
- Delegates effectively, is confident, and leads from the front, setting stretch goals, overcoming obstacles, and holding self and others accountable
- Self-reflective and aware of limitations; leads by example, drives performance with an attitude of continuous improvement by being open to feedback and self-improvement

Community and Relationship Building

- Drives a collaborative culture that maximizes engagement and partnership by working collaboratively with others; follows through on promises and steps out of the spotlight to recognize others.
- Experience working effectively with diverse constituencies, including staff, external partners, funders, and the broader community
- Relating openly and comfortably with diverse groups of people and building an inclusive culture.
- A strong listener, able to build consensus and navigate complex situations with grace and flexibility and have the credibility to influence the sector and provide critical thought leadership

Collaborative and Inclusive Leadership Style and Interpersonal Acumen

- Gains the confidence of others through humility, honesty, empathy, integrity, and authenticity
- Exhibits self-awareness, high emotional intelligence, and an understanding of others that enhances interpersonal communication and management abilities.
- Ability to collaborate effectively while earning trust and confidence from the Managing Director, staff, partners and external stakeholders
- Displays cultural competence while operating in an environment with a wide range of constituents and communities

Commitment to Mission and Shared Values

- Demonstrated passion and experience in addressing food systems issues such as land access, food access, and ecology
- Committed to building resilient local agriculture and food systems that strengthen the local economy
- Extensive agricultural knowledge and diversified production management experience

Compensation

The compensation available for the Director of Innovation and Engagement role considers a variety of factors including, but not limited to, work location, individual skill set, previous/applicable experience, and other organizational needs. The estimated salary range for this role is \$150,000 to \$175,000. This range represents the Hudson Valley Farm Hub's good faith and reasonable estimate of the possible base salary range at the time of posting and is one part of the total rewards the Farm Hub provides to employees.



Contact

Russell Reynolds Associates has been exclusively retained for this search. Given the need for confidentiality throughout this process, prospective candidates are invited to reach out directly to the team at **HudsonValleyFarmHub@russellreynolds.com** with a CV and brief explanation of interest.

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