



Center for an Agricultural Economy

Home of the
**Vermont Food
Venture Center**

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Job Description VFVC Production Advisor

POSITION SUMMARY

The Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE) is a not-for-profit organization which works to build a local, healthy, regenerative food system. CAE owns and operates the Vermont Food Venture Center (VFVC): a food-processing facility, value added food business incubator, and regional food hub. The VFVC provides food businesses with processing space and equipment, allowing them to scale a value added food business without investing in all the equipment necessary to start their business. Alongside the infrastructure provided, clients access technical support on recipe development, labeling, equipment use and business planning support. The VFVC Production Advisor supports development of food safety plans and provides the training and expertise to these producers to successfully, safely operate and fully utilize the resources of the VFVC.

This position includes day-to-day management responsibilities of the VFVC which include compliance with food safety procedures and State and Federal standards. The building is a hub used for storage and aggregation of local food alongside its food processing function. The Production Advisor will also support and facilitate some work with vendors and contractors who provide assistance maintaining the building. Facilities and the maintenance of the physical infrastructure and equipment are supported by other CAE staff.

This position works regularly with other CAE staff, and maintains a commitment to CAE's mission of local economic development through a revitalized agricultural system in a non-profit setting. The Production Advisor will serve as primary support staff to **production clients** and **storage clients** in the facility. The VFVC is a dynamic work environment. The ability to pivot as situations arise and a penchant for creative thinking are keys to success in this position. Applicants are encouraged to view VFVC's [Meet the Maker Compilation](#) for visual stories of VFVC's work with production clients.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Position: VFVC Production Advisor

Reports to: Farm & Food Business Specialist

Schedule: Full time 40 hours/week on site. Available during facility hours of operation

Compensation: Minimum salary \$47,000/year, full time, exempt. Compensation in line with qualifications and experience

Benefits: Generous paid time off, SIMPLE IRA, Qualified Small Employer HRA, Employer-paid short-term disability and life insurance, professional development compensation

GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS: This job could be great for you if you have skills or experience in:

- Direct communication, spoken and written
- A willingness to support people in a stressful environment
- Excitement around supporting others and their business dreams
- Respectful and responsive customer service
- The ability to work under pressure, efficiently, and to multi-task
- The ability to provide clear constructive feedback to producers
- Interest in teaching people how to use machines and equipment with patient support throughout the learning process

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND ESTIMATED DISTRIBUTION OF TIME:

35% One-on-one Production Coaching of **production clients** (food entrepreneurs) using VFVC, including production logistics, food safety training, and troubleshooting challenges in the early production phase.

35% Coordination of business advising between CAE's Business Services Team (Production Advisor and our Farm & Food Business Specialist) and **advising clients**– this process includes but isn't limited to client scheduling, co-facilitating an initial consultation, resource sharing and follow-up correspondence.

15% Support for the financial accounting for the VFVC program and facility, by (1) tracking facility usage (production & storage) on a weekly basis in support of monthly billing for that usage; (2) tracking facility needs and expenditures as they are incurred; and (3) Working with the CAE finance team to ensure timely payment of bills to and from the VFVC program budget.

15% Provide a supporting role in managing operation of infrastructure and equipment, including coordinating maintenance and service visits, routine facility cleaning and other incidental facility needs. Ensuring that building operations align with food safety needs of CAE and production clients.

Qualifications:

- Some experience in food production or food service is required. (More than 3 years of experience in these areas is preferred.)
- Familiarity with general business principles (costs of production, marketing basics) is preferred.
- Some experience or accreditation in food safety, or a readiness to pursue this as an important part of your role.
- Passion for food and knowledge of the marketplace that will translate to compassionate but objective coaching for food entrepreneurs.
- Creative approach to tracking down resources and information for production clients.
- Collaborative attitude that includes both patience and a sense of humor as you work in support of food business development.
- Attention to detail and organization, including consistency with email correspondence.
- Familiarity with Google Suite, basic spreadsheet designs.

(Qualifications continued on next page)

Employee Responsibilities:

- Teaching – Ongoing coaching of **production clients** in production efficiency and other best practices.
- Primary contact for CAE with all production clients – handle these situations on a timely basis and keep good records on all substantive client interactions, including complaints.
- Maintain a learning relationship with **advising clients** (inquiring food businesses) and Farm & Food Business Specialist.
- Archive positive and negative feedback for the purpose of improving client outcomes, continuous improvement, food business and organizational storytelling.
- Maintain a high food safety standard- including training of clients, routine cleaning of food production areas, tracking food safety logs and protocols, as well as developing new protocols as needed.
- Work collaboratively with the production and storage clients to ensure that kitchens are scheduled well in advance, clients have appropriate expectations and communication, and that all CAE staff and clients are informed of any changes in facility or equipment well in advance.
- Collaborate with CAE's Just Cut team to ensure efficient and safe usage of the facility. Assist minimal processing work crew as needed and available.
- Reconfigure and prepare production kitchens with clients.
- Help to oversee smooth operations of the facility and regular maintenance and repair of equipment, in coordination with other staff.

(Employee Responsibilities continued on next page)

Qualifications (continued)

- Ability to think spatially in configuring efficient production set ups in collaboration with production clients.
- Equal comfort with a desk based work environment as well as a production environment.

Employee Responsibilities (continued)

- Share coverage of receiving duties on loading dock with facilities manager and other staff as available. Help coordinate the shipping and receiving of client and anchor tenant products.
- Ensuring quality, quantity, and any other general shipping information is properly executed.
- Ensuring client and staff compliance with VFVC Policies including a working familiarity with:
 - ServSafe, VT Dept of Health & Agency of Agriculture Standards
 - Facility Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)
 - Standard Sanitation Operating Procedure (SSOP)
 - FSMA- Preventive Controls for Human Food (Planning food safety, tracking, batch logs, registration, risk-based analysis)

EOE STATEMENT

Building community leadership, investing in relationships, and listening to the needs of the community are core principles CAE applies to all our work. We strive to foster an inclusive and supportive staff culture where learning and growth are supported. CAE is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Qualified applicants are considered for employment without regard to age, race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetics, disability, or veteran status.

BACKGROUND ON CAE

CAE is a food systems hub in Hardwick, VT whose reach extends statewide and beyond. Our work touches all aspects of the food system in support of rural food businesses, farms, and communities. We work alongside our neighbors and partners to cultivate interdependence, take risks, and initiate change. CAE operates a full-service food hub at the Vermont Food Venture Center, and business advising and technical assistance to farm and food businesses. Our enterprises include Just Cut, a farm to institution program; Farm Connex, a local food delivery service; and Vermont Farm Fund, a revolving farm fund. Our community programs are focused in the greater Hardwick area and include a community greenspace and gardens at Atkins Field; Grow Your Own, a food independence collaboration with the Hardwick Area Food Pantry and others; Place-Based Education partnerships with our local schools; and community organizing for food sovereignty. We invite you to participate in our work to create a rural food system in which everyone has agency, support, and access to local food.

HIRING PROCESS

A hiring team of CAE staff will lead the process. Interview questions will be shared ahead of time. CAE is committed to the full inclusion of all qualified individuals and will provide support in any way to assure everyone's best experience in the hiring process. CAE will take the steps necessary to assure that people with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations during the interview process and, if hired, subsequent employment. For accommodation inquiries, please contact our Admin Operations Coordinator at jobs@hardwickagriculture.org.

TO APPLY

Email jobs@hardwickagriculture.org with a resume and cover letter with 'VFVC Production Advisor' in the email subject line. We're interested to hear about any life or work experiences as it relates to this position. Applicants who go on to interview with us will be asked to provide references. Application deadline is January 23, 2023. Let us know if you have any questions!