



**Local Food Coordinator
St. Croix Valley Food Alliance
Wisconsin Farmers Union**

Organization Summary

Wisconsin Farmers Union (WFU) is a progressive, grassroots membership organization committed to enhancing the quality of life for farmers, rural communities and all people through advocacy, education and cooperative endeavors. WFU works with individuals at the county, state, and national level to sustain economically viable family farms, support economic democracy and new farmers, reduce concentration in the market, protect ecological systems, increase transparency in the value chain, and ensure that the voices of family farmers and rural allies are heard by policymakers.

WFU has entered into an agreement with the St. Croix Valley Food Alliance to hire a full-time Local Food Coordinator to manage the day-to-day operations of an emerging grassroots organization that focuses on collective local food marketing for climate-conscious farmers in Polk and Burnett Counties. The Alliance's work is driven by three strategic ends: to make local food more accessible to local residents, bring more businesses and profit to the region, and build up local food connections. They do this work by developing relationships between farmers, community members/customers, and businesses/organizations in order to increase local food sales and create sustainable access to markets for farmers within the local foodshed.

Established in 2022, the St. Croix Valley Food Alliance (SCVFA) is a grassroots initiative formed out of the Polk/Burnett chapter of the Wisconsin Farmers Union. At our core, we are a growing network of 27 member farmers that focus on climate-friendly farming practices and direct market sales. We believe that a positive future for the St. Croix River Valley Region will rely on a strong and engaged consortium of food producers, providers, and eaters. For this we need thriving and independent producers, healthy and engaged citizens, and a focus on creating a place where people can lead healthy lives, regardless of income or identity. We believe that the cycle of a healthy culture begins and ends with food, what we eat, how it is grown, prepared and shared. Our mission is to strengthen and promote a thriving, resilient, and equitable local food economy in the St. Croix River Valley.

The Local Food Coordinator is employed with the Wisconsin Farmers Union and works alongside a dedicated core of volunteer board and committee members. The Local Food Coordinator will play a critical role in the continuation of established programming, such as the SCVFA Winter Farmers Market, the advancement of SNAP/EBT at local farmers markets and community engagement events. This position will also be responsible for managing new and existing relationships with farmers, community members, and local businesses through the SCVFA membership program, as well as developing relationships with key institutional

stakeholders, i.e. hospitals, school systems, local and state government, etc. in order to connect sustainable farmers with more markets locally, as well as with consumers in underserved communities in our region. The SCVFA is in a period of growth after an exciting three years of community engagement and organizational development; this role will anchor the organization administratively and logistically as we move into our next phase.

Our current food system forces our Polk/Burnett farmers to rely on a customer base outside of our region, where they currently sell more than 80% of their products in the Twin Cities Metro. Driving the majority of our agricultural products out of our region (and state!) has a substantial effect on our farmers and communities, impacting climate change and profit margins of farmers, and perpetuating a lack of access to healthy food in our community.

With the main goal to connect farmers to more market opportunities, the focus of this project is to build a robust marketing network. Under the leadership of a farmer-led working board and volunteer committees, we have built a recognizable brand for our farms, engaged the community with farm-focused events, established and managed the first successful, regional winter farmers market in Polk County with EBT/SNAP benefits, partnered with Polk County Extension to facilitate the Power of Produce (POP) program and initiated partnerships with several local institutions and businesses including food banks, universities, restaurants, food co-ops, local hospitals and other like-minded non-profits.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Act as a community liaison and build strong relationships with project partners and stakeholders (including farmer organizations, community and hunger relief organizations, consultants, and prospective local food buyers) to identify areas of need, promote project participation, and build local food system power
- Plan, facilitate, and manage local food events focused on building connections between farmers and the community (including an annual fundraising event and Winter Farmers Market)
- Coordinate local foods procurement among the participating farmers
- Build connections with institutional buyers in the region to create new demand for local products
- Work with the SCVFA team to identify barriers and challenges in market access and develop programming to aid farmer members in generating direct and wholesale opportunities
- Work with the SCVFA team to develop and engage in anti oppression and equity work within administration of the project.
- Identify and expand Food Access and Equity programming
- Provide leadership in project planning, implementation and evaluation
- Activate and help manage the membership program for farmers, community members and business owners.
- Manage social media, email account, and website updates
- Oversee volunteers at Winter Market and other SCVFA events
- Develop content for a Monthly Newsletter, email campaigns, and social media engagement
- Maintain and further SCVFA content and brand development
- Communicate with the public about the project to media, internal and external stakeholders
- Create a toolkit of resources for other regions seeking to do similar food systems work

- Report to the board at monthly meetings and present at three regional food conferences
- Research grant opportunities and identify and pursue durable funding beyond the project period

Required Qualifications:

- Excellent communicator and listener
- Passionate about food system work
- Background working in sustainable farming/local food
- Proficiency in Google Docs, website management, email campaign software, and other basic computer competency
- Adept at Instagram and Facebook content development
- Experience managing/organizing volunteers
- Access to reliable transportation to visit rural farms
- Self-driven and self-starting

Preferred Qualifications:

- Experience working in the nonprofit sector
- Experience working for and/or managing farmers market
- Experience facilitating food nutrition programs like EBT/SNAP
- Experience in marketing/sales
- Grant writing
- Public Speaking
- Experience as a community organizer

Compensation, Work Environment and Benefits:

Salary is \$55,000 per year. This is a full time, salaried position working 40 hours per week, with occasional evening and weekend hours. Compensation includes medical, dental, vision, life, long and short-term disability insurance, employer contribution to a simple IRA retirement account, and generous paid time off package. Flexible hours, hybrid work environment and office are provided. It is estimated that the Local Food Coordinator will spend approximately 50% of their work week in Polk and Burnett Counties.

Duration

This is a grant funded position and the duration of the position is two years with possibility of extending based on funding. Estimated start date early January of 2025.

Applications Reviewed as Received

Qualified applicants will be invited to participate in an in-person interview. For priority consideration, please submit a cover letter and resume to Julie Bomar at jbomar@wisconsinfarmersunion.com by November 20, 2024.

The Wisconsin Farmers Union prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, ancestry, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, family/parental status, age, disability, socio-economic or military status, in any of its activities or operations.

These include employment, youth and adult programs, membership, selection of vendors, appointment of board members and selection of grantees, volunteers and representatives