Job Description for Program Consultant for SIFTI

Program Consultant – Southeastern Indiana Farmer Training Initiative (SIFTI)
Food & Growers Association, Batesville, Indiana

The Food & Growers Association in southeastern Indiana is looking for a consultant to help direct a pilot farmer training program for producing local foods. This position will begin November, 2016 and conclude in approximately 7 months. This is a part-time position, 15 to 20 hours per week, with the potential for the consultant to be hired full-time as the SIFTI Program Director at the conclusion of the pilot program.

About this program

The successful attempts over the past ten years of the Food & Growers Association (FGA) to build a local food system in Southeastern Indiana centered in the Laughery Valley area of Ripley County, Indiana, reached a level of new expectations for increased quantity, and improved quality, of fresh local foods to be served in the area’s institutions. This interest and desire of the local schools, the hospital and restaurants to order significant amounts of local food for their food service needs is a great opportunity for family farmers in the area, many of whom have been relying on farmers markets to sell their produce and other food items. These area farms are mostly small- and mid-sized farms with farmers holding other jobs to make a decent living. However, the opportunity for increased institutional sales also poses problems which FGA, an all-volunteer organization, cannot address on its own—and a problem that conventional farmers hoping to shift to the specialty crop wholesale market would find difficult to reach without some supportive services.

These institutions have made it clear what their needs are to make a significant shift from their commercial wholesale suppliers. Institutions need consistent amounts of certain specialty crops that they are willing to purchase over many more months than local farmers can usually supply. A centralized ordering and billing system with regular and reliable deliveries is a priority. They do not want to order from individual farmers nor receive deliveries on a haphazard basis. They need to have farmers follow national food safety guidelines to satisfy health department regulations. Most importantly they need to be able to afford local fresh food. They may also expect some processing of the fresh produce to limit their own labor costs in food preparations. While the local institutions have already been ordering local foods in minimal amounts, without an abundant and reliable supply of local specialty crops they cannot increase their purchasing level. Is there sufficient arable land in the area and enough farmers willing to shift from conventional farming to specialty crop farming for the wholesale market? What would it take to bring new farmers into the mix?
Primary Job Functions

The Program Consultant will provide leadership for the Food & Growers Association’s SIFTI program which includes: implementing the SIFTI certification program and all its components with emphasis on collaboration with the Food & Growers Association (FGA), IVY Tech Community College, pilot farms/farmers, mentor farmers and any institutions that partner with SIFTI. Marketing, accounting and business coaching will be contracted to others.

Essential Job Functions/Duties

- Administer SIFTI certificate program for FGA and be responsible to the established SIFTI board for implementing grant funds.
- Collaborate with all personnel involved with SIFTI.
- Manage SIFTI and all its components: program administration, public relations, personnel, finance management and collaboration with all stakeholders and other contracted services.
- Help select candidates for the SIFTI training program who will best accomplish the goals of the SIFTI program.
- Monitor and maintain successful relationships with pilot farms/farmers and farm mentors.
- Facilitate grant-writing opportunities for projects that would advance business success for the trainees.

Minimum Work Experience/Educational Requirements

- experience as a manager and leader
- ability to convey ideas and communicate effectively
- genuine interest and belief in the cooperative system
- a desire to succeed and continually improve performance
- ability to carry forward the details of operating the business
- ability to recognize differences in people and be flexible in dealing with them
- good oral and written communication skills
- ability to work with a board of directors
- recent successful farming experience, especially with specialty crops, if possible
- experience and success in farm management
- understanding of food safety requirements and their applications to specialty crops and wholesale markets
- computer and finance skills sufficient to carry out the above tasks

Requirements of the Applicant

Please submit a resume and a cover letter detailing your experience and education by November 7, 2016. Please mail your resume and cover letter to:
Food & Growers Association
1032 3 Mile Rd.
Batesville, IN 47006
FGA Mission: To be the driving force for building a market for locally produced foods and to be a catalyst for change to improve the health of residents in the Laughery Valley and the environs.

FGA Vision: By promoting the use of locally grown produce, the Food and Growers Association supports family farms, safeguards the community's health, while strengthening the local economy and protecting our environment.