



We're Hiring

Value Chain Coordinator for Louisiana Mid-Market Agriculture

Job Title: Value Chain Coordinator (for Louisiana Mid Market Agriculture)

Reports to: Executive Director for Farm & Food (Louisiana Central).

Status & Pay: Salaried \$78,000, depending on experience, full-time, exempt.

Benefits: Health Insurance, vision/dental insurance, HSA contributions, life insurance, generous and flexible vacation and sick-time, professional development opportunities. A relocation stipend may be available.

Work Schedule: Monday-Friday with some weekend and evenings required

Work locations/conditions: 1302 Murray Street Alexandria, LA (office) and some statewide travel for meetings, events, workshops, farm/facility-visits, as needed; work is outdoors in all weather conditions with some operation of tools and equipment up to 50 pounds, plus inside at a desk in an open office environment; year-round, some shifts may exceed 8 hours as needed. Some out of state travel may be required. Remote from within Louisiana will be considered for ideal candidates.

Job Duration: This position is grant funded for a 3.5 year term. Employment is based on performance and is not guaranteed. There is a potential for extension depending on funding availability.

To Apply: Email your resume with any supporting documents you feel will help us understand your interest and qualifications for this role to BNightengale@louisiana-central.com, with 'VCC Application' in the subject line. The position is open until filled, we will be conducting interviews on a rolling basis starting immediately.

Job Summary: The Value Chain Coordinator, employed by Louisiana Central, and working collaboratively with Louisiana Small Scale Agriculture Coalition (LSSAC) Steering Committee and Members, will be responsible for developing and managing the Louisiana portion of the Delta Regional Food Business Center (DRFBC) activities, primarily the Business Builder grant program. The Coordinator will be responsible for the following primary activities: 1) providing/connecting farmers with the support and resources needed for the grant qualification and application process, 2) establishing a network that incubates mid-market agricultural markets in the state of Louisiana that primarily benefits small scale and small socially disadvantaged farms 3) collaborating with aggregators/distributors to connect farmers to intermediated markets; 4) Manage the Louisiana DRFBC requirements as outlined in the MOU with the DRFBC, adhering to all federal regulations as set forth by the USDA, and the DRFBC project leadership 5) participate in the development of a regional collaborative network model that positions the state's mid-market value chain as a sustainable network that co-creates a food system rooted in equity, justice, financial success for small farms, and climate resiliency. Plus other duties as assigned.

Value Chain Coordinator Job Duties and Responsibilities Could Include:

- Farmer and Food Business recruitment and support
- Create and implement an outreach plan to inform the farming community about DRFBC opportunities in Louisiana, and recruit farmers for intermediated markets.
- Build a pipeline to scale farm and food products from post-harvest, Cottage-Food production models, into mid-market agriculture, and food supply chain intermediated market opportunities.
- Assist producers with production planning to ensure a continuous supply that meets market demand.
- When possible, create, administer, and track coordinated production plans for mid-market farms and secure corresponding grower agreements that match farmers' interest and experience level.
- Organize in-person and virtual trainings for farmers with subject matter experts to increase their mid-market readiness and success
- Conduct and/or coordinate site visits with farmers to monitor and identify issues with production, quality, food safety and/or regulatory compliance, etc. to prevent stalling before it impacts aggregation and distribution delays.
- Connect farmers and value chain partners with local/regional experts and resources to help troubleshoot issues.
- Maintain ongoing communications with farmers regarding planting and harvesting schedules, quality requirements and rejections, GHP/GAP and regulatory compliance, post-harvest handling procedures, packaging and labeling standards, and delivery
- Support the development of systemic aggregation and distribution logistics as needed, that emphasize the needs of small scale farm and food businesses.
- Identify strategically located potential and existing aggregation points with necessary infrastructure, equipment, and personnel to coordinate small farm entry into farm and food product supply chains.
- Provide support, training, and ongoing communication to ensure successful aggregation, storage, grading, packaging and labeling, and regulatory compliance for small scale and/or socially disadvantaged farm and food businesses.
- Collaborate with private distributors to develop new or tap into existing delivery routes that distribute produce between sectors of the Louisiana supply chain.
- Identify backhaul and outgoing delivery opportunities that may be accessible, viable options for small scale food and farm businesses and work to form network capacity for these.
- Project Management
- Manage internal and external project communication, related grants, including work plans, budgets, metrics collection, and reporting
- Professionally represent Louisiana Central and LSSAC during all work related activities.
- Work with consultants/partners to explore mid-market agriculture network models for Louisiana.

Relevant Skills and Expertise Could Include:

- Specialty Crop small scale production agriculture
- Small scale value added processing
- Industrial food production
- HACCP Planning
- Familiarity and experience in postharvest handling, wholesale produce quality standards, regulatory compliance, and GHP/GAP food safety regulations
- Agricultural Risk Analysis, Assessment, Mitigation, Management

- Knowledge of and comfort with agriculture production, farms and farmers
- Experience selling to, buying from, and/or operating a food hub
- Experience teaching or training farmers, food producers, aggregators, and/or distributors
- Leadership skills with proven project management
- Proficiency with basic software and technology including Google Workspace, smart phones, copier, webinar platforms, etc.
- Outstanding organizational, record keeping and data management skills
- Superior listening, verbal and written communication and interpersonal skills
- Demonstrated ability to network and collaborate with multi-agency/state initiatives
- Ability to present complex information clearly and concisely to groups of farmers, buyers, etc.
- Solid entrepreneurial business acumen

OVERVIEW

Louisiana Central, the Louisiana State Lead for the Delta Regional Food Business Center (DRFBC) project, is a community based organization that has been working in food systems for more than 10 years; we care passionately that the people of Central Louisiana, our home, have livable incomes and build intergenerational wealth. We value knowledge as primary currency – deployed to improve the profitability and competitiveness of business. We build vibrant communities to create, attract, and retain employers in places where people want to live. We measure success by the region’s median household income increasing faster than the nation as a whole. Our Farm & Food team facilitates the Louisiana Food Fellows program to foster leadership in Louisiana food policy, manages the Alexandria Farmers Market, facilitates a year-long farmer training program for new and beginning farmers, is a founding member of the statewide Farmers Market Managers Network, and a founding member of the Louisiana Small Scale Agriculture Coalition.

The Louisiana Small Scale Agriculture Coalition (LSSAC), Primary Partner for the Louisiana DRFBC project, is a statewide coalition that works to ensure equitable opportunities for small-scale agriculture in Louisiana. The coalition provides comprehensive technical assistance to farmers and acts as advisors to organizations and institutions that wish to purchase Louisiana grown, harvested, raised, and produced food directly from Louisiana farmers, ranchers, and fishers. The LSSAC Steering Committee has deep roots in Louisiana agriculture and supports small scale producers across multiple program areas. The Steering Committee consists of leadership from: Acadiana Food Alliance (AFA), Big River Economic Agriculture Development Alliance (BREADA), Louisiana Central (LC), Market Umbrella (MU), New Orleans Food Policy Action Council (FPAC), Shreveport Green (SG), and Sprout Nola (Sprout).

ABOUT WHERE THE POSITION IS BASED

Alexandria, LA is the center of the Louisiana Central service area and region. Bordered by the Mississippi River in the East and the Sabine River in the West, with rolling hills and abundant farmland, Central Louisiana offers the a wide variety of attractions, food, and lifestyles. Our region and communities offer outstanding youth programs, theater, music, art, yoga, the best hunting and fishing in the country, secluded hiking and mountain biking trails, lakes and waterways for canoeing and kayaking, and more. Central Louisiana has a quality of life that can meet and exceed any need. Each of our 10 parishes has something unique to offer and together, they form a region rich in culture and recreational opportunities. Alexandria boasts easy access to the Kisatchie National Forest and a variety of waterways for hiking, biking, paddling, or camping; a growing downtown neighborhood along the Red River; two institutions of higher education (Louisiana State University at Alexandria and Central Louisiana Technical Community College). Central Louisiana is the heart of Louisiana, and a great place to live, work, and play!

EEO Statement

Louisiana Central is committed to a policy that provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status,

pregnancy, medical condition including genetic characteristics, physical or mental disability, veteran status, gender identification and expression, sexual orientation, and to make all employment decisions so as to further this principle of equal employment opportunity. To this end, Louisiana Central will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy, medical condition including genetic characteristics, physical or mental disability, veteran status, gender identification and expression, sexual orientation, and will take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are offered employment and employees are treated during employment without regard to these characteristics.

ADA Statement

Louisiana Central is committed to providing access and reasonable accommodation in its services, programs, activities and employment for individuals with disabilities. To request accommodation in the application process, contact Bahia Nightengale at least 48 hours in advance at BNightengale@louisiana-central.com.