

Blue Sky Center

Ventures Manager

Job Description

April 2022



Type: Full-time employee

Compensation: Salaried-non-exempt

Hours: 35 hour/week, average

Reports to: Executive Director(s), Board of Directors

Hire Date: ASAP

How to Apply:

Submit a letter of interest and resumé/CV as a PDF to hello@blueskycenter.org and we'll be in touch! There is no deadline; this position is open until filled.

Overview:

Blue Sky Center is seeking a Ventures Manager to operate and grow our nonprofit's entrepreneurial ventures in Cuyama Valley, CA. We are looking for a social entrepreneur who thrives in a rural environment and who has diligent work ethic, integrity, and understands human-centric leadership.

We are looking for a natural leader to help co-create their position. Right now we need someone to steward our social ventures including our [Explore Cuyama](#) hospitality initiative and [Cuyama Beverage Company](#)—a value-added product incubator—as well as supporting general facilities management and direction of our [Blue Sky Shops](#) initiative to support businesses made in Cuyama. We are seeking applicants who want to commit their skills and passion for rural economic development to the Cuyama Valley and call Cuyama home.

[Blue Sky Center](#) (BSC) is a rural nonprofit located in New Cuyama, California. With a vision to build models for resilient, thriving rural economies, we work to strengthen our communities within the surrounding Cuyama Valley by supporting entrepreneurs and building our regional creative and economic resources. We work with grassroots projects ranging from arts, design, hospitality, food systems, and local business development. Our team sees an opportunity to develop hyper-local strategies for economic resilience through creative, value-added, and community-driven business models. We are a small core team, ranging over the years from 5-7 full-time staff with about 10 regularly contributing consultants. Our 267-property in New Cuyama contains 7 mid-century buildings (24,000 SF) and 5 glamping-style huts. Our annual expenses approach \$500,000, with total assets of \$1,200,000. Our work centers on economic development, working with our Cuyama neighbors to improve opportunities and quality of life for all Cuyamans.

Position Background:

Adjacent to the company-constructed townsite of New Cuyama, we steward the former headquarters of the Richfield Oil Co. (later ARCO), which consists of offices, warehouses,

workshops, and agricultural land. We leverage these substantial assets to incubate small businesses as well as offer our own programs that aim to expand regional creative and economic opportunities. Our organization has launched a variety of social enterprises over the years in order to self-sustain our facilities as well as define an innovative entrepreneurship model for rural development. Namely, Explore Cuyama, a hospitality initiative aimed at attracting conscious tourism to our high desert region and establishing a multitude of agritourism opportunities, and Cuyama Beverage Company, a strategy for innovative food systems cultivation through the creation and distribution of value added products that celebrate the Cuyama Valley and directly invest in our farmers and our community.

We launched this new position with the purpose of defining our unique business model, scaling the Blue Sky Center impact, and reinforcing our core value of community ownership in our products and services. With physical assets and human resources being most essential to Blue Sky Center's capacity for impact, every contribution to our organization makes a personal, tangible difference to our day-to-day work. We invite you to learn more about us via the [2021 Annual Report](#) on our website. Grants support most of our programs and we aim to design our earned revenue ventures (hospitality, facility rental, and social enterprises) to cover all operating expenses in the future.

Responsibilities:

We realize we may have interested applicants that are not fully qualified on the myriad of skills and experiences with the full breadth of the work we undertake. We seek first a cultural fit (to the Valley and to Blue Sky) and open up this opportunity for you to co-create the scale and impact of this position.

Primary Responsibilities:

Cuyama Beverage Co.

Providing visionary and strategic leadership to sustain and grow Cuyama Beverage Co. by defining roles, systems, and business plans; communicating with partners for marketing, brewing, production, and distribution; and making sales through retailers, direct sales, and tasting events.

Business Administration

Steering organizational development by tracking results and reporting regularly to fellow staff and periodically to board members. Based on your existing skill-set and interests for professional development, assist BSC leadership with tasks surrounding human resources, financial management, and general operations of the organization.

Additional Responsibilities, commensurate with experience:

Explore Cuyama

Run the operations of our hospitality venture by communicating directly with the ~1,000 annual guests, responding to event inquiries, marketing the property, and cross-promoting opportunities for local business co-hosts.

Facility Management

Lead maintenance and improvement projects on the BSC grounds and facilities by creating budgets, work plans, and timelines; and overseeing the repaving project of our community airstrip on BSC property.

Skills:

We're interested in applicants with varied skill-sets. This is not a position with as clear delineation between other roles that you may see elsewhere. We're a small core team, led by the interests and passions of our staff. Applicants should be someone who does not silo their work, someone who is expansive in the types of work that interest them.

We'll form a role specific to your skills and the needs of the organization and Cuyama community. You need not have today every skill listed below, but you should have expertise in 1 or 2 of them and comfort with 3 to 4, and be desirous of learning more of the others. No one will have all these skills; we'll use our network of partners and future hires to fill the gaps.

Some attributes and specific skills that we'd like to hear more about include:

- Project management
- Personnel management (day-to-day)
- Construction management
- Equipment maintenance
- Risk mitigation
- Graphic design
- Marketing, branding, and social communications
- Human resources (HR) management
- Financial management/bookkeeping/payroll (with specific confidence with QuickBooks, Excel, and Google Sheets)
- Product Development
- Sales management
- Food Systems Network Building
- Strategic Planning
- Data Collection and Impact Reporting
- Grant writing and administration
- Fundraising
- Researching and writing compelling reports
- Board management and relationship building

A top-rated candidate will be:

- Patient but brave
- Personable
- Timely
- Communicative
- Able to take on challenging, ever-changing work
- Creative and entrepreneurial
- Bilingual (in Spanish and English)
- Appreciative of the power of rural communities
- Committed to diversity, ethics, inclusion, and justice in the way we develop and deliver programming
- Tech savvy
- A cultural fit to Cuyama

- Someone who gets things done

Remuneration

- Starting salary of \$47,150, annually adjustable by approval of Executive Director(s), *with opportunities for revenue-based incentive packages*
- Eligible for performance/annual bonus as determined by Executive Director(s)
- Personal employer-provided health insurance coverage
- \$1,500 annual professional development fund for use on direct expenses (conference fees, travel, meals, etc.)
- Flexible professional development period of 20 paid days per year
- 10 paid vacation days per year, 10 paid sick days per year
- Additionally, 10 paid days off for Federal Holidays and ~12 paid days off for Blue Sky closures during Thanksgiving and Winter Break

Fringe Benefits

- Mileage reimbursement for work-related travel
- Discount on Shelton Huts for visiting friends and family
- Occasional weekend activities (BBQs, wine tastings, harvests, farm tours) at various ranches
- Professional network development through Blue Sky Center contacts and events
- Periodic family-style meals with Blue Sky Center team and visitors
- 24/7 access to Blue Sky Center offices/facilities
- Flexibility to accept side work that does not impact duties of position (as pre-approved)

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