FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Overview: Full time (1.0 FTE) position providing leadership, coordination, and strategic development of a district-wide Farm to School program in our rural Colorado mountain community, including some direct teaching and oversight and management and continuing education of our Farm to School program staff. The incoming director will build on ten years’ success and take the program to the ‘next level.’

Compensation: Salary starting at $50,000, with some benefits
Reports to: Executive Director, Holly Conn
Location: Gunnison/Crested Butte, CO
Starts: First Quarter of 2023, somewhat flexible

JEDI: To promote more diversity in outdoor education leadership and inclusivity for students from diverse audiences, we strongly encourage BIPOC and LGBTQ+ individuals to apply.

About Mountain Roots
Mountain Roots Food Project cultivates a resilient food system in the Gunnison Valley, Colorado by enhancing healthy connections between food, earth, and community. We foster knowledge, teach skills, and provide opportunities that ensure access to affordable, nutritious food that is regionally based and sustainably produced. As the leading local food systems initiative, we work to increase individual and community resilience and promote personal, community, and environmental health through programs in five focus areas: Food Culture & Education, Food Production, Food Security, Food Economy, and Food Policy. We run a district-wide Farm to School program, manage two community farms and four hydroponic farms, coordinate a network of organic urban/community gardens, manage a 140-member multi-farmer CSA, and lead targeted-access food security programs including Cooking Matters™ and Backyard Harvest.

The Farm to School Program provides fresh produce, environmental education, and nutrition education to pre-K through 12 youth in Gunnison and Crested Butte, Colorado. Through experiential education in-school, after school, and in the summer, kids understand how food choices affect the health of their bodies, the environment, the economy, and our community. In addition, we design and offer independent out-of-school programming and homeschool support. Farm to School includes school gardens, agriculture education, nutrition education, curriculum, summer camps, cooking demonstrations/chef visits, farm field trips, school meals, salad bars, school snacks, food safety, garden to cafeteria, food systems (supply, processing, distribution), procurement, policy, regional and state connections, and professional development.

The Farm to School Program Director is a motivated and inspired leader who is able to meet current goals while creating a strong future for the program to deepen the impact on our rural youth. The F2S Director works closely with stakeholders, including school district personnel, producers, federal, state, and local granting agencies, parents, community groups, past and potential funders, staff, interns, volunteers, and more to build on and further the success of the program. The director leads a team of 4-6 staff who are responsible for working with Gunnison Valley youth ages PreK – college to promote healthy lifestyle choices. This is a position requiring skills in program design/development, teaching, curriculum design, ‘on-your-feet’ thinking, innovative problem solving, and an adaptive management style. This position offers critical support to teachers, students, and school food services to ensure that our schools can maximize the potential of the program in the cafeteria, classroom, and community. The ideal candidate will have skills, qualities, ambition and passion to spend the next 3-5 years taking this program to the next level.

Key Objectives of the Position
a) Program Management & Development: Meeting strategic program goals, developing and maintaining program budget, evaluating program impact / success, then identify and pursue opportunities for improvement, collaboration, and growth.
b) Education: Coordinating all education programming for the organization. Developing and teaching curriculum in the areas of environmental science, nutrition, food systems, sustainable agriculture, small-scale food production, and food preparation in an interactive, outdoor setting

c) School Food: Working to improve school food, supporting procurement, farmer connections, menu improvements, staff training, cafeteria-based nutrition education, and engaging parents/community in advocacy for school food improvements.

d) School gardens: provide oversight of school gardens to maximize their value to schools for food production, education, community engagement, cultivation of environmental stewardship, and as an outdoor classroom for interdisciplinary learning.

Responsibilities

- Direct operations and growth strategy for Farm to School Program overall.
- Coordinate all Farm to School programming with participating schools, community partners, farmers, and liaisons.
- Strengthen relationships with schools, key partners, and farmer stakeholders to identify and better coordinate goal alignment and strategic priorities. Primary contact for 5 schools, local preschools, several key community partners and funders.
- Hire, train, manage and conduct performance reviews for the education team, who primarily carry out programming. Determine staffing structure as a whole. May mentor and/or provide training to F2S programs in neighboring counties.
- Develop program evaluation methods and surveys, and gather and analyze data. Track key program metrics and suggest continuous program improvements based on analysis.
- Fundraising for program, including grant writing, donor relations, program income, and business sponsors.
- Manage current grants, including funder relations, monitoring deliverables, and reporting.
- Participate in planning meetings with the school district administration around Farm to School programming as a whole. Keeps up to date on regional, state, and National Farm to School happenings as well as CEEP and CDE developments that might influence our trajectory.
- Provide oversight for school gardens to ensure coordinators are meeting goals and maximizing the value of the gardens to the school, to youth, and to the community
- Develop and teach curriculum in the areas of science, nutrition, food systems, sustainable agriculture, small-scale food production, and food preparation in an interactive, outdoor setting. Review / create lesson plans for programming.
- Create messaging for outreach and publicity
- Facilitate Farm to School team meetings
- Participate in organizational leader meetings
- Strategic planning for program
- Oversee program-based events and participate in organization-wide events
- Recruit, train, engage, and retain community volunteers
- Develop and monitor program’s annual budget
- Provide support to school districts to source and promote local food in their cafeterias and to overcome barriers to implementing Farm to School. Implement and evaluate innovative distribution strategies to bring local foods to institutions including schools

What We’re Looking For:

- Experience and demonstrated success in Farm to School programs
- A Masters’ degree in a related field; or a Bachelors’ degree combined with advanced training in environmental or agriculture education and/or at least two years’ experience in project management working with farmers and/or school food services.
- OR – some combination of education and experience comparable in depth to the above to demonstrate thorough preparation to perform required duties.
- Experience working in or studying food systems, agriculture, public health, education, community organizing, or public service
- Passion for building a healthier future for children
- Motivation to work hard, sometimes with limited resources, in a rural mountain community in order to make a difference
• Commitment to developing the program’s long-term plan and impact
• Demonstrated leadership ability
• Perseverance in the face of challenges and creativity in finding solutions
• Respect for diversity of opinion, experience, and background
• Previous experience in fundraising and organizing/managing grant-funded programs
• Effective communicator and relationship-builder, comfortable with public speaking and public relations, and able to establish and maintain effective, positive, and cooperative relationships with coworkers, students, parents, teachers, and school administrators
• Knowledge of: Local food systems in rural communities; USDA regulations and guidelines as they pertain to school food; Community, regional, and state Farm to School resources; Lesson planning for experiential education (nutrition and EE); Training and coaching beginning teachers
• Excellent time management, prioritizing, scheduling, and organizational skills a must
• Resourceful and adaptive - able to transition with ease from administrative tasks to hands-on tasks
• Optimism and creativity when faced with challenges and problem-solving
• Flexibility to work independently, with minimal supervision, as well as collaborate with others in a team setting
• Professional and responsible in school settings and when working with vulnerable populations

“Plus” Skills
• Proficiency in Spanish language would be an asset
• Grass-roots organizing and advocacy for social change
• Cooking, food preparation and preservation
• Permaculture design
• Neighborhood connections
• Diversity training

How to apply:
Please send the following to Holly Conn, Executive Director director@mountainrootsfoodproject.org
1. Cover letter / letter of interest, in which you describe how your experience will develop and enhance this program, share what unique value you will add, and provide examples of three attributes your co-workers, friends, and family would all agree you possess.
2. Resumé
3. Contact information for two references

Please use “F2S Director Position_YourLastName” in your subject line and in the titles of your attachments.

Application deadline: Jan 31, 2023
If you are serious about this position, do not wait until the last day to apply. We review applications and candidates as they come in.