



Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO)

Executive Director

**Vetted
Solutions**
A PASSION FOR PURPOSE

Opportunity

PCO's vision is of a world where agriculture systems prioritize health, ecological balance, fairness and care. Our mission is to uphold and advance organic principles and practices through certification, advocacy, and technical support.

Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) is seeking a dynamic, visionary leader to guide PCO into its next era, driving the organization's work with resilience, innovation, and collaboration. This is an exciting opportunity for a seasoned executive with a mix of entrepreneurship, vision, and financial savvy to lead this trusted organic certification institution to the next level of success and client satisfaction in support of the organic movement.

Headquartered in Spring Mills, Pennsylvania, with approximately 40 distributed staff and a budget of \$9 Million, PCO is a USDA-accredited organic certifying agency that educates and certifies growers, processors and handlers of organic crops, wild crops, livestock and livestock products in the contiguous United States. PCO is also proud to be an accredited certifying agent for OPT Certified Grass-Fed Organic Certification, which is a separate program that builds upon the organic standards. Known for its technical expertise and integrity, PCO offers high-touch service to its clients, applying a rigorous methodology to the certification process. PCO stands out in the movement for the services of its Materials Team, ensuring that materials are in compliance with National Organic Program regulations.

The next Executive Director will build on PCO's strong history as a leading organic certifier for small- and mid-sized farms and operations to expand the membership and further develop innovative certification services and resources while cultivating partnerships and the web of farmers, processors, retailers, and advocates working together to support the continued growth of organic agriculture. PCO's next Executive Director will be a mission-driven, people-centered leader, driven by a passion for the organic movement and determined to ensure the organization continues to thrive and the community grows.

The Executive Director serves as the organization's chief administrative officer and is responsible for managing the leadership team and overseeing the administration, programs, and strategic plan of the organization. Other principal duties include marketing, development, and financial planning. The Executive Director reports to and is an ex officio member of the PCO Board, which reflects in its members the deep expertise and commitment to the organic movement PCO actively supports. PCO is looking for a remote-based Executive Director, ideally located within 400 miles of Harrisburg, PA.

Overview

The Executive Director will be guided by PCO's core values: keeping people at the center of every action, interaction, and decision; promoting restorative practices that improve the world for future generations; and embracing transparency and integrity in all our work. Through these Core Values, PCO recognizes the interdependent relationships among all our constituents: certified clients, supporters and members, PCO staff and contractors, partner organizations, and the community and environment. The Executive Director will ensure these Core Values are realized in the course of their work to further PCO's mission, furthering the organic movement, its standards, and the web of relationships ensuring its success.

The ideal candidate is a strong and inclusive leader with a track record of listening first, bridging differences, and serving as a connector to unite staff, Board, key partners, and the community around the organization's mission. The strongest candidate cultivates a culture of mutual trust and shared leadership, empowering their team with autonomy while actively listening and acting on their expertise. They foster transparency, inspire accountability at all levels, and align the organization around a collective vision of impact, all while remaining deeply attuned to the complexities and challenges faced by both staff and the community.

Five positions report to the Executive Director: Certification Director, Human Resources Director, Director of Operations, TOPP (Northeast/Mid-Atlantic Transition to Organic Partnership Program) Director, and Executive Support and Communications Manager.

Primary Duties & Responsibilities

Strategic Planning

- Develop a strategic plan by engaging the Board, team members and constituents in conversation and present for approval by the Board
- Develop and implement strategies that will successfully promote PCO's mission, increase market share, and resolve business challenges, ensuring the organization's core values are upheld
- Implement the strategic plan based on data-driven analytics, projections and financials; and ensure consistent and timely progress, keeping the Board apprised
- Maintain awareness of the competitive landscape, expansion opportunities, and industry developments

Administrative

- Lead the staff and foster a values-based culture of growth and transparent communication throughout the organization
- Manage PCO's budget and ensure that it is a financially viable, sustainable organization with the resources to meet current and projected growth
- Ensure that PCO complies with relevant state and federal laws, regulations, accreditation, and standard accounting procedures

- Communicate effectively and establish credibility throughout the organization and with the Board and the greater organic community
- Develop effective solutions to business challenges

Development/Relationships

- Lead expansion and business development initiatives
- Represent PCO, its vision, its programs and services to strengthen its presence and place in the farm and agricultural products sector
- Forge and maintain fruitful relationships of trust with constituents, partners, and external authorities
- Coordinate effective marketing and public relations initiatives

Programs

- Oversee and ensure that PCO's Certification Program is in compliance with USDA organic regulations and accreditation requirements
- Maintain productive and collaborative partnerships with key constituents, including USDA, The Accredited Certifiers Association, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA), and policy and advocacy organizations
- Provide leadership in program development and organizational plans in accordance with the strategic plan
- Oversee all business activities to ensure they produce desired results, increase organizational efficiencies, comply with regulatory requirements, and are consistent with the overall strategy and mission

Skills, Experience, and Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent work experience
- Minimum 5 years' successful senior leadership experience with a non-profit, professional services, or related industry organization
- Experience or working knowledge of the organic farm and products sector, certification, and organic regulations
- Experience successfully supervising, evaluating, and supporting staff, and managing effective dispersed and remote teams
- Aptitude for implementing technology-driven approaches to ongoing work processes, leveraging technology for business development, and experience embracing technology and data to inform decision-making
- Exceptional organizational abilities, and the ability to present PCO persuasively to a wide range of constituents representing diverse interests and perspectives

General

- Participation in a compliance-driven, highly regulated industry
- Networking and relationship-building among industry colleagues
- Good organizational, communication, and writing skills
- Self-motivation, creativity, and open-mindedness
- Flexibility, multi-tasking, and effective performance under pressure
- Strong understanding and support of the organization's mission, vision, values, and goals
- Leadership and team-building skills, including change management
- Ability to act as a role model and mentor, providing guidance and teaching
- Analytical skills, strategic thinking, and problem-solving
- High quality and integrity of work

Measures of Success

The specifics regarding measures of success, including metrics, will ultimately be agreed upon by the new Executive Director and the Board, but at the end of the executive's first year, the Board would expect that the new executive will have achieved the following:

- Develop and implement a strategic plan that establishes and broadens PCO's relationships with clients, supporting communities, and regional and national partners
- Expands PCO's certification capacity; and create a business development strategy to drive PCO's growth and impact
- Lead a thoughtful rearticulation of the PCO brand, its positioning, and its brand promise to its community
- Grow PCO's positive culture, providing effective coaching and leadership and earning the trust of staff

About PCO

Pennsylvania Certified Organic (PCO) was founded as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization in 1997 to support Pennsylvania's organic community, certifying 54 crops and livestock farms in its first year. It launched from a firm foundation, with members performing these services as part of the Pennsylvania chapter of the Organic Crop Improvement Association, founded in 1985, before establishing this new organization to focus on Pennsylvania. PCO has been a core member of the organic community since its inception and is seen as one of the movement's founding institutions.

Over the years, PCO added certification services for processing, handling, distribution, brokering, mushrooms, maple products, poultry, and more. In 2004, PCO certified about 315 operations based in Pennsylvania. That same year, it began to offer certification services to operations in adjoining states, including Ohio, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware and West Virginia. Currently, PCO certifies over 1,600 operations, and can certify operations throughout the contiguous United States.

Since its founding, PCO has grown from one employee to its current size of 39 staff and over 40 inspectors, all of whom are connected to organic production. Some are organic farmers or have worked on a farm, some are trained organic inspectors, and some have an academic background in agriculture.

Compensation

Compensation for this role will reflect a range of factors, including relevant experience, demonstrated expertise, and other considerations. Pennsylvania Certified Organic's good faith starting salary estimate for this position is \$160,000 - \$175,000. Additionally, PCO also offers a comprehensive benefits package for their employees.

Digital Presence

Web: <https://paorganic.org/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/pennsylvania-certified-organic/>

X: <https://x.com/PAOrganic>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/paorganic>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PAorganic/>

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For confidential consideration, please email your resume and cover letter to Jim Zaniello, President, via PCOEDSearch@vettedsolutions.com or call +1 202 544 4749.

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