



President & CEO

Maine Farmland Trust

February 5, 2019

Summary

Maine Farmland Trust (MFT) has created a Search Committee to find a new president and CEO to lead this innovative, collaborative, and highly successful land trust with a broad mission to protect farmland, support farmers, and advance the future of farming. MFT's former president and CEO accepted a nomination to become commissioner of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.

The Search Committee will undertake an active and aggressive recruitment process during March and April, with the goal of making a final decision by early May and having a new president on board by June 3.

Interested applicants should submit the following information by **midnight on Tuesday, March 19**:

- a cover letter explaining why you are interested in this position, and why you feel you are qualified to fill it
- a detailed resume or CV
- your salary requirement for this position
- your availability for an interview in Belfast between April 1 and 10
- at least one writing sample
- a list of at least four references, including one person to whom you have reported, one with whom you have worked as a peer, and one who you have supervised (all identified as such)

NOTE: MFT will only contact references of applicants who become finalists for the position, and only after conferring with the applicant

Your application should be submitted electronically to Rachel Taker at rachel@mainefarmlandtrust.org

Your candidacy and all information contained in your application will be handled in strict confidence.

MFT is an equal opportunity employer.

About Maine Farmland Trust

Maine Farmland Trust (MFT) is a well-known and highly successful nonprofit organization in Maine focused on protecting farmland, supporting farmers, and advancing the future for farming. In 2019, MFT is celebrating its 20th anniversary. Over the past 20 years, we have worked with farmers, our members, and supporters to lay the foundations for the future of farming in Maine and a strong and sustainable organization. Since 1999 we have protected more than 60,000 acres of Maine's working farmland, linked over 200 new and established farmers to the land they need to get started on or expand their businesses, and supported more than 800 farm families in growing strong businesses. In the last decade, MFT's net assets jumped from \$125,000 to over \$27 million, our membership base has increased from 1,900 to 6,800, and our staff has grown from 6 to 37.

Our goal is not just to protect farmland, but to revitalize the rural landscape by helping farmers and their communities thrive. MFT's multi-pronged approach combines programs that permanently protect farmland utilizing agricultural conservation easements (farmland protection) with efforts designed to help new or existing farmers acquire land (farmland access), along with various programs that help farmers thrive (farm viability).

Protecting farmland is the only way we will ensure that we have enough land to grow our food in the future. We work with farmland owners interested in protecting their land, but also with experienced farmers seeking more land, as well as beginning farmers looking for their first farm.

MFT is one of the few organizations in the country that has successfully integrated farmland protection with farm viability. MFT's Maine FarmLink program is a national leader, connecting farmers searching for land with landowners looking to lease or sell their property.

To revitalize Maine's rural communities, MFT works to help farmers grow their businesses and help more Mainers access local food.

In addition to its farm-focused programming, MFT is well recognized both throughout the state and regionally for its creative and forward-thinking communication efforts. Over the past several years, the organization has produced two films and many short videos, as well as an annual journal that helps thousands appreciate both the great challenges and the great opportunities that lie before Maine farmers. Organizational representatives, most often the President and CEO, frequently speak at public events. MFT also operates an art gallery and arts center that showcases agriculture while attracting new members and raising new funds.

MFT's work is broad and comprehensive, grounded on a belief that we need to address the challenges and opportunities within Maine's food system by taking a systems approach.

MFT's fundraising efforts are strategic and creative in an effort to meet aggressive goals. Its income streams are varied and include individual solicitation, major gifts, membership, special events, and grant funding. In 2015, MFT received a \$16 million challenge grant over 5 years which has enabled the organization to expand its farmland protection efforts, particularly in Southern Maine.

MFT is in year four of a five-year organizational plan focused on supporting the successful match fundraising for this challenge grant and a leveling off of programmatic growth during a period in which MFT has been working to refine and improve the work that it already does. At present, MFT Board and

Staff are actively engaged in a strategic planning process with intended outcomes of a clearly articulated set of values and a long-term guiding vision, as well as a set of short and long-term measurable goals for each of our program areas. Our current strategic planning process is intended to guide the organization's work for the next 3 to 5 years.

MFT is also currently in the final two years of a comprehensive \$50 million campaign (which includes the challenge grant) to support its farmland protection, programming, and operational efforts; there is approximately \$15 million left to raise to complete this fundraising goal by the end of 2020.

MFT's 2019 operating budget is approximately \$8 million. Of that amount, we expect the bulk of our fundraising to come from private sources, either individuals or foundations, and a small percentage to come from state and federal sources. Other funds flow from art sales and real estate commissions. (MFT operates a real estate brokerage, Maine Farms Realty, as a wholly-owned for-profit subsidiary.)

Additional information about MFT is available through our website. If you are chosen to be interviewed, you will be provided with MFT's full financial statements and an opportunity to meet with MFT's Board Chair and interim Co-Presidents to receive a more detailed situational analysis.

About the Position

MFT's President is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) with all of the responsibilities generally associated with such a position. The president reports to a 15-member board of directors made up of farmers, agricultural and conservation leaders, and experienced and dedicated fiduciaries. The board meets every other month. A separate executive committee (comprised of the four board officers) generally meets prior to every regular board meeting, as well as other times, as needed.

Unlike many smaller non-profits, MFT is a "staff-driven organization." The board sets policy, approves an annual budget and general work plan, and makes those key decisions which remain in its purview (such as approval of easements, and buying and selling land); staff are encouraged to take initiative, have broad responsibility for developing and implementing projects, and generally work out the details of any proposal going to the board, offering any such proposal together with a clear recommendation for board action.

The president oversees MFT staff, which now numbers 37 employees. (See our [website](#) for a complete listing of staff.) At present, the following persons report directly to the President: Vice President for Administration and Finance (CFO); Vice President of Programs; Senior Legal Counsel; Development Director; Outreach Director; Policy and Research Director; Unity Food Hub General Manager; and the Designated Broker for Maine Farms Realty. (The Unity Food Hub and Maine Farms Realty are wholly-owned subsidiaries of MFT.)

The President is expected to envision a forward-looking strategic direction for MFT. Although the direction that MFT takes will be set with input from MFT's board, the President should have the ability to articulate, for the Board's consideration, a clear strategy that makes sense both programmatically and financially.

The President is the primary face of MFT to the outside world, and will regularly represent MFT at various meetings and functions. In addition, the President will be expected to speak at events designed

to raise public awareness and/or raise money. As such, the president needs to be a capable and compelling public speaker, as well as an engaging storyteller.

The President must be an exceptional fundraiser who is completely comfortable with fundraising and willing to commit a significant portion of their time to this effort. In partnership with the Development Director and development staff, the President will be expected to meet with major donors, attend fundraising events, and pitch the organization to funders in an effort to raise money for MFT.

Key qualifications for the position include the following:

- demonstrated commitment to and passion for fostering farming, farmland protection, and the future of farming in Maine.
- demonstrated success with leading development efforts involving both grant funding, private gifts and fundraising campaigns.
- a proven track record of securing annual and long-term funding for an organization of a similar size and annual budget of at least \$6 million
- exceptional communication skills, including public speaking, along with the ability to build rapport with a wide variety of people
- proven experience managing a complex organization (ideally one of a similar size) through a collaborative style of management and approach to leadership
- ability to lead, inspire and empower staff and board to achieve MFT's annual and strategic goals and objectives
- an interest in fostering a democratic working environment that promotes competitive compensation and benefits, as well as positive work-life balance
- prior experience with a land trust
- the highest standards of personal integrity

Any of the following qualifications would be desirable:

- thorough knowledge of current agricultural and conservation issues
- a strong network within the agricultural and conservation communities
- experience with farmland protection
- direct experience with nonprofit management
- an understanding of agriculture and conservation policy and its development
- successful experience in project management
- experience with real estate transactions

Workplace

MFT has offices in Belfast and Portland. Belfast is currently the administrative hub for MFT, on account of its being the home office for MFT's CFO, Vice President of Programs, Senior Legal Counsel, and the directors of our Farmland Protection, Stewardship, and Outreach Departments. The Directors of MFT's Development and Policy and Research Departments are based out of the Portland office. The new President may be based out of either one of MFT's offices and will necessarily need to engage in frequent travel between offices to fulfill the duties of the position.