



MAINE FARMLAND TRUST

Job Description – Farmland Access and Transfer Business Specialist

Reports to: Vice President of Programs

Summary: Through MFT’s Farmland Access program, MFT assists farmland owners and farmland seekers to develop business plans that can result in both successful farm transfers and farm acquisitions. The Farmland Access and Transfer Business Specialist provides direct, individualized assistance as well as manages and assists the work of a team of advisers, as appropriate to each farm client’s situation.

This position is based out of MFT’s Belfast office with travel to MFT’s other offices and travel to client sites as necessary.

Duties:

- **Case Managing:** oversee and facilitate progress with business plan development, including identifying and arranging for any necessary external technical assistance to keep plan development moving forward for each farm client.
- **Assisting Farm Seekers:** evaluate the conditions and capacities of all clients that are referred to MFT’s Farmland Access Program for advice and assistance, whether self-referred, referred internally by other MFT staff, or referred by other collaborators and service providers. Determine if the potential needs of clients can be met through direct service delivery; engage in a client-provider relationship or refer to other service providers as appropriate. Work with clients to analyze profitability and potential future viability of their proposed or existing enterprises. Assist clients with preparing and analyzing market research. Help clients to prepare written business plans to the specifications of potential lenders or investors, as requested. Assist clients with preparing and analyzing financial statements. Help clients to identify appropriate sources of capital and assist with loan packaging or seeking other appropriate sources of funding that enable farmland access as needed. Provide other services as may be necessary to help client prepare to access capital as part of a land search situation.
- **Assisting Farmland Owners:** evaluate the conditions and capacities of all clients that are referred to MFT’s Farmland Access Program for advice and assistance, whether self-referred, referred internally by other MFT staff, or referred by other collaborators and service providers. Determine if the potential needs of clients can be met through direct service delivery; engage in a client-provider relationship or refer to other service providers as appropriate. Work with clients to analyze profitability and potential future viability of existing or proposed enterprises. Assist clients with preparing and analyzing market research. Assist clients to develop plans to address impediments to current or future profitability. Help clients to prepare elements of farm succession plans that address financials and viability, potentially including ownership transfer plans and financial plans. Help clients to identify appropriate sources of capital to accomplish a successful farm transfer or succession, including assistance with loan packaging or seeking other appropriate sources of funding as needed.

Employee Initials _____

Supervisor Initials _____

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- **Farm Business Planning Training:** support the development and delivery of any MFT-branded farm business development training and curricula (including the Business of Farming for Wholesale). Represent MFT in any external business planning courses, as requested. Investigate new opportunities for MFT to be involved in providing business planning trainings targeted to farm seekers or farms in succession where a dearth of training may exist.
- **Data and Record Keeping:** keep complete, objective, and current records of client and project information. Track program performance records as may be required by program/project funders and MFT. For projects where MFT has been hired to provide business planning assistance, collect and compile necessary information for activity reports, invoicing, and contracted deliverables.
- **Relationship Building and Networking:** build and maintain good relationships and partnerships with other agricultural service providers, particularly those that provide services related to farm access and transfer, as well as state and federal agencies and lenders. Represent MFT at various events and on various committees, as requested.
- **Program Fundraising:** assist the Development Department by identifying potential sources of funding that could support business assistance programming, including foundation, individual, and corporate donors. At the request of the Development Director, actively participate in fundraising efforts for business assistance programming and work closely with the Development Team to create and/or review materials to be used for funding proposals.
- **Other tasks:** Participate as needed in activities such as outreach events, annual meeting, etc. Be an ambassador for MFT and assist with building the membership base and building MFT's reputation.

Desired Qualifications:

- Sufficient knowledge of farming to facilitate trust and connection with farmers and evaluate business plans, farm goals and objectives, business turn-around options, and so on.
- Proven ability deliver business development and business planning services to farmers and other entrepreneurs, including: one-on-one teaching, training in classroom or workshop settings, business crisis and turnaround management, curriculum design and development, managing learning objectives, managing client expectations, evaluation of financial and production data, evaluation of business conditions and client capacities, market research, loan packaging, and business plan development.
- Ability to effectively and successfully manage multiple and simultaneous projects and clients, keeping all tasks current and managing all project and client components.
- Ability to listen and to communicate effectively in writing and in person; to build rapport and develop effective relationships with others; and to work well with a wide variety of people, including farmers.
- Proficiency with relevant technology and software, including word processing, Microsoft Excel, presentation software, Adobe Acrobat, and survey and data collection tools.

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- Ability to work with minimal supervision and as part of a team.
- A positive attitude, a commitment to customer service, and an appreciation that you are an ambassador for the organization in all that you do.
- Willingness to travel and to work occasionally on evenings and weekends. Ability to provide own transportation.
- Commitment to fostering the future of farming in Maine.
- Bachelor's Degree Required. Higher level degree preferred.