



Production Manager

The Talking Farm is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit with the mission to provide education, example, and hands-on experience to members of the community to expand the awareness, importance, and availability of food grown sustainably. The Talking Farm operates the Howard Street Farm, a 2.5-acre urban farm in Skokie, as well as offsite educational gardens, and sells produce at local farmers markets and restaurants and through its CSA/weekly produce membership program.

Job Description

The Production Manager is the lead farmer reporting to the Executive Director and/or the Board of Directors and is an intensive field farming position for a full-production urban farm using organic farming methods. The Production Manager is primarily responsible for directing and managing farm staff for the cultivation, maintenance, harvest, and operation of the 2.5-acre Howard Street Farm, farmers markets, and managing a 100-person CSA.

Duties & Responsibilities

- Believe in the mission of The Talking Farm
- Manage production at 2.5-acre organic urban farm with some consultation on off-site gardens
- Responsible for organizing and leading daily organic farming tasks consisting of fieldwork and hoop house cultivation, management, maintenance, harvest, processing, and packaging of crops for the Howard Street Farm (during the growing season), crop planning, purchasing, and seedling cultivation in the preseason, and season extension, winterizing, and digital recordkeeping (in the post-season).
- Be responsible for the starting, maintenance, and inventory of seedlings to be planted on the farm and sold to the public during the annual Spring Seedling Fundraiser
- Develop and execute the crop plan for the farm in line with the strategic, business, sustainability, and non-profit objectives of the organization
- Ability to train, manage, and oversee interns, staff farmers, job trainees, and/or volunteers in urban farming activities
- Oversee and assist with filling produce orders for CSA, preparation for farmers' markets, and/or distribution of produce to restaurant partners
- Assist staff with on-farm volunteer programming and preparation for events
- Must be able to accurately track and report crop and seed inventory, develop a farm materials and staffing budget, and work within the overall vision, objectives, budget and goals set forth by the Board of Directors

Preferred Qualifications

- Minimum of 2 years experience in all aspects of intensive organic field and hoop house farming, including crop planning, planting, weeding, watering, pest management, fertilizing, harvesting, bed prepping, composting, soil health management, pruning, site management, washing, processing, packing, and overwintering crops
- Certification, degree or job training in urban or organic farming practices a plus
- Certified in or knowledgeable about safe food handling including any state, local, federal or trade regulations, Product Safety Alliance guidance or USDA GAP/GHP practices



- Strong leadership skills and experience with managing farm staff and interns, both leading the team as well as working as part of a team
- A positive outlook, sense of humor, and even-keeled disposition that can manage the stress, complications, multitasking, and “moving parts” of farming while maintaining a friendly attitude towards the public, staff, visitors, volunteers, and community partners.
- Ability to deal with the myriad issues involving managing a diverse team, including implementing and enforcing organizational rules, setting standards, expectations, and follow-through
- Physical requirements: Ability to regularly lift up to 50 pounds and be on your feet 8 hours/day; bend and crouch; walk on uneven surfaces, use hands and arms to pick/pull/grasp; be around stinging insects; and work outdoors in all types of weather.
- Valid driver’s license and ability to operate cargo van.
- Ability to use and/or be trained on digital recordkeeping programs like Google Sheets and/or MS Excel, online commerce platforms such as Shopify, and cloud-based storage systems
- Excellent follow-through, communication, and organizational skills.
- Willingness to put in 40-50 hours over the course of 5 days with some occasional weekend work, as well as assist in the preparation for events during the main summer growing season.

Compensation & Benefits

- **Salary:** \$50,000.00 (paid biweekly, exempt).
- **Paid Time Off:** Up to 5 days (40 hours) of paid time off per year accrued pursuant to Cook County leave ordinance. Up to an additional 10 days (80 hours) of accrued paid time off. Accrued paid time off may be used after 30 days of employment.
- Health and retirement package available.
- Paid 2-week end-of-year shutdown in December
- Accessible to public transportation; bike racks provided on the farm; free parking available for employees in adjacent lot.

To apply: Please submit a resume and cover letter along with (3) references to jobs@thetalkingfarm.org. All applicants will need to complete an application.

The Talking Farm provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, sexual orientation, disability, income, marital status, or any other dimension of identity.