



Maine Forest Collaborative

Building partnerships. Innovating. Engaging in the future.

Program Coordinator Position Description

BRIEF PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Maine Forest Collaborative (MFC) is an initiative spearheaded by the Rural Aspirations Project (RAP), in collaboration with rural high schools, and key community partners representative of a diverse forest economy. We facilitate partnerships and build processes for rural communities and educators to identify skills and knowledge students need to be successful in a diverse, rural, resource-based future. MFC began in 2019, guiding students, teachers, and community partners through an inquiry-focused, place-based experience unique to each region, unified by one overarching question (*“How can we use natural resources to positively impact local communities?”*). All MFC students work through a clearly defined process to create solutions and/or innovations and continuously collaborate across schools to refine ideas, support peer learning and build regional networks. Future questions and their resulting project frameworks will require deep interactions with community partners to answer real-world questions.

LEAD ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Rural Aspiration’s mission is to expand educational opportunities that develop and honor the community while stimulating the innate curiosity of students and teachers. We work with rural educators and administrators as they imagine ways to enrich student experiences and build professional capacity. Our programs facilitate project-based, place-based educational opportunities that create multiple pathways to graduation.

In 8 years, our support to schools has grown considerably resulting in the ongoing development of; natural resource-based programming, structures to support personalized learning, and place-based, project-based curriculum support for teachers and students. We have worked in over 40 schools throughout rural Maine.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE POSITION

This position offers an exciting opportunity to work with diverse stakeholders as we engage schools and communities in thinking about how to develop future leaders and stewards of our rural forest-placed communities. The MFC Coordinator will lead curriculum development, build community partnerships, resource student projects, support a team of rural educators, build a sustainable budget and fundraising strategy, and engage with a broad group of stakeholders. This position reports to the Executive Director of Rural Aspirations and begins in late August. A competitive salary is dependent upon experience.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Work with the Steering Committee, RAP Leadership, and all other collaborative partners to further the development of outcomes, processes, and structures related to the implementation of Maine Forest Collaborative programming in both existing and prospective rural Maine schools.
- Design and organize curricular materials to support student projects
- Manage projects across multiple schools and with community stakeholders
- Lead curriculum and professional development opportunities, by translating expertise provided by collaborative natural resource partners into relevant, clear, developmentally appropriate curricular plans, and accompanying professional development for all participating schools.
- Organize collaborative events that support the curricular framework and student outcomes to build school-to-school and partner relationships and to support classroom learning, assisting schools with coordination of transportation, logistics, and support for students participating in community-based learning experiences.
- Identify and foster relationships in each school region, and Statewide, to enhance student programming
- Represent best educational practices and knowledge of rural Maine schools, teachers, and students.
- Conduct outreach in rural communities to build diverse and deep support for, and partnership in, the Maine Forest Collaborative.
- Build and manage the MFC budget and develop a funding strategy
- Manage the development of MFC curriculum, website, and materials
- Plan and consistently engage with all stakeholders to identify ways to promote programming and expand student opportunity
- Report quarterly to the RAP board and/or MFC governing board

PREFERRED EXPERIENCE / BACKGROUND:

- Preferred Master's Degree in Education or related field
- Preferred experience working with at risk/alternative learners, and teaching in a rural public school
- An understanding of rural communities, schools and the pressures they face
- Knowledge of the natural resource sector, rural Maine's communities and their connected economic viability
- Leadership initiative and strong interpersonal skills
- Ability to draw educational opportunities from a variety of sectors
- Ability to synthesize seeds of ideas into actionable program opportunities for students, teachers and community partners
- Strong experience in interdisciplinary curriculum development/design, teacher training, and program design
- A proven background in challenge/place-based curriculum development with preference for community development
- Experience with program budgeting and grant writing
- Excellent collaborative and facilitative skills, especially with public school teachers
- A sense of humor and ability to be flexible, adapt to and be positive in difficult situations
- Ability to work from home
- A driver's license and reliable vehicle required for extensive, long-distance travel
- Excellent interpersonal, organizational, analytical and conceptual skills
- Strong written and oral communication skills, comfort with public speaking
- The ability to work independently, and follow through on multiple facets of multiple initiatives simultaneously
- A comprehensive understanding of natural resource ecology

OTHER DUTIES AS ASSIGNED:

The Rural Aspirations Project provides responsive professional development to rural schools. This position may require additional duties outside of this description that support and enhance the development of MFC programming. The MFC Coordinator is expected to be ready and willing to assist RAP employees in all organizational areas as needed.

TO APPLY

RAP strives for a diverse workplace and is committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees. RAP is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, race, religion, physical/mental ability, sexual orientation, or national origin.

Applicants shall send a cover letter and resume, along with 3 letters of recommendation, via email or via mail to the address below:

Korah Soll, Founding Director, Rural Aspirations Project
197 Nickerson Rd. Swanville, ME 04915
korah@ruralaspirations.org
(207)801-1595

Finalists may be asked to engage in a curriculum development task for their final interview. A review of candidates will begin immediately, and the position will remain open until filled.