



Alternative Energy Resources Organization  
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## **Alternative Energy Resources Organization**

### **Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems**

#### **Program Manager**

#### **Job Description and Announcement**

**November 2009**

AERO (Alternative Energy Resources Organization) is a nonprofit membership organization based in Helena, Montana. AERO is a widespread community of people creating social, economic, and environmental health—one farm, one neighborhood, and one community at a time. Organized in 1974, we work toward a vision of a sustainable, community-centered society. Renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and local food systems, resource conservation, and community self-reliance are the areas in which we focus our solutions-oriented work.

The position AERO is seeking to fill is responsible for management and ongoing development of AERO's 25-year-old Food and Agriculture program. This program encompasses several projects designed to improve the sustainability of agriculture and communities by increasing the availability of local foods, changing agricultural practices and systems, improving research and education, increase community economic vitality, and building social capital. The successful candidate for this position will join a dynamic staff in a cooperative, team environment. The program staff work closely with AERO's 900-plus members, particularly the agriculture task force, which sets agriculture program direction. The individual selected will need to possess the ability to prioritize and work on numerous tasks effectively. All these endeavors will take place with the goal of improving the environment and financial stability of communities throughout Montana.

### **Duties and Responsibilities:**

#### **I. Program Management and Administration**

Oversees implementation of the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Program; allocates and manages program resources; provides opportunities for member leadership and participation; connects members with resources they need to be effective in their work; utilizes and maintains relevant office and administrative systems; organizes events; facilitates meetings; builds collaborative relationships. Takes primary responsibility for carrying out AERO's sustainable agriculture and food systems projects.

#### **II. Program Development and Fundraising**

Works with members, staff, and consultants to continually develop a Food and Agriculture program that meets the needs of the members and promotes and develops the organization's vision. Identifies potential funders—both public and private, writes grant proposals and reports, and seeks some non-grant funding. Networks with relevant individuals and organizations throughout AERO's region and the country.

### **III. Member and Leadership Development, Member Services, and Outreach**

Is responsive to members; nurtures development of AERO's Food and Ag Task Force and emerging leaders; recruits new members; serves members' information and technical assistance needs; provides the means for members to connect to each other and AERO's resources; communicates through a variety of means to members and the public about AERO's programs accomplishments, and opportunities for involvement.

#### **Desired Qualifications:**

##### **I. Knowledge and Experience**

- Experience with principles, practices and systems of sustainable agriculture and conventional agriculture (preferably in the West), and local food systems
- Experience with sustainable ag and food system issues, rural development, and policy
- Experience community organizing
- Strong networking experience
- Experience developing community-based leadership
- Knowledge of group dynamics and facilitation
- Knowledge of relevant funders
- Program development and management experience in a grassroots nonprofit or with government
- Experience working in a rural setting; able to communicate with farmers and ranchers

##### **II. Skills and Abilities**

- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Excellent listening skills
- Computer skills: word processing, electronic communication, spreadsheets, etc.
- Private foundation and government grant-writing and reporting, with a track record of fundraising success
- Good media and public education skills
- Supervisory and team management abilities
- Ability to handle multiple tasks in a small, cooperative office environment
- Ability to manage budgets, allocate and manage project resources
- Experience in event organizing and meeting facilitation
- Understanding of adult learning and group process
- Ability to work in the realm of ideas and possibilities while keeping attention to detail

##### **III. Personal Characteristics**

- Passion for and vision of sustainable agriculture, local/regional food systems, and rural communities
- Personal commitment to proactive social change and social justice
- Commitment to creating a culture of connection through grassroots action and community-based leadership
- Commitment to fostering member involvement in all facets of the agriculture program; commitment to inclusion and diversity
- Team-oriented management style
- Commitment to collaborative learning

- Deeply and broadly inquisitive
- Well-organized; thorough

### **Compensation:**

In keeping with our sustainable values, AERO staff typically work .75-.90 FTE. Depending on the percent time, AERO intends to pay \$25-28,000 per year, commensurate with experience. Generous tenure increases, medical and disability insurance, excellent vacation, holiday and sick benefits, and pre-tax medical insurance coverage. AERO members also supply \$150 worth of local food and farm products to AERO staff each year.

### **Deadline and Application Process:**

Please send a resume, written answers to the four questions below (max. 3 pages), a list of three references, and a cover letter highlighting your relevant strengths and experience. Additional writing samples are welcomed. Send to: AERO Program Manager Search, 432 North Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601 or to <aero@aeromt.org.> The deadline for receiving applications is December 23, 2009, however this position will remain open until a qualified candidate is hired. For more information about the position, AERO, or the hiring process, contact Jonda Crosby at (406) 443-7272 between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. MST.

AERO is an affirmative action employer, seeking gender and ethnic/racial diversity. AERO members are encouraged to apply.

## **AERO Sustainable Food and Agriculture Program Manager**

### **Application Questions**

**(Keep answers to a maximum of three pages total):**

1. Describe your passion or vision for this work, how it developed, and where it comes from.
2. Give an example of how you've inspired or responded to the ideas or vision of a grassroots group of people in a way that helped them move to collaborative action and create change.
3. What are some things that need to change in order for our food and agricultural system to become more sustainable?
4. Describe the various aspects of a project or program you helped to develop and manage, and some things it taught you about program management and development.