



Practical Farmers of Iowa is Hiring a Business Viability Manager

About PFI

Practical Farmers of Iowa is a nonprofit organization that has worked to equip farmers to build resilient farms and communities since 1985. We create learning opportunities via farmer-led events, on-farm research and educational content through our robust network of farmers. We also provide funding and technical assistance to help farmers adopt regenerative farming practices and grow farm businesses. Our vision is an Iowa with healthy soil, healthy food, clean air, clean water, and resilient farms and vibrant communities.

This work has always been rooted in our value of welcoming everyone and creating a culture of mutual respect. We believe that a diversity of people, ideas and perspectives strengthens our ability to find creative solutions, enriches our understanding and broadens our impact. At Practical Farmers, we celebrate this diversity and are committed to ensuring that our policies and practices create an equitable and inclusive workplace. We take equal opportunity seriously and seek to empower and support all applicants and teammates.

Practical Farmers offers a flexible, supportive and fast-paced work environment. Professional development is a core part of our culture and team members are encouraged to take independent initiative to help fulfill our mission.

About the Position

The farm viability department provides innovative, personalized support to help farmers achieve their goals. We partner with farmers to implement new on-farm practices, develop markets and create robust farm business plans. We make key connections across the food and agriculture supply chain, develop strategic partnerships and shape the policies that encourage resilient farms to thrive.

Our suite of business programs includes the Savings Incentive Program and Labor4Learning, both focused on beginning farmers; the Cover Crop Business Accelerator program, managed in collaboration with the field crops viability team; and our land access programming, including our partnership in the Farmland Access Hub. Business viability is a growing program area at PFI with room to redesign existing programs and innovate new ideas.

We're seeking a business viability manager to shape our farm and food business programming by building, testing and scaling creative solutions that respond to the needs of PFI farmers. As the business viability manager, you will lead a team that provides direct support to beginning farmers as they establish and grow resilient farm businesses. This team will also support small businesses in the food and farm supply chain that advance diverse markets for farmers.

In this role, you will collaborate with PFI's partners to develop programming and cultivate a strong support system of financial and technical assistance providers. Ultimately, you'll work to ensure

diverse farm and food businesses develop viable business plans and gain access to the financing and resources they need to realize their goals.

If you're passionate about advancing regenerative agriculture, building vibrant rural economies, empowering others and using your strategic visioning and business planning skills to support farm- and food-based entrepreneurs, this role is for you! You'll support the farm viability department by:

- **Leading the business viability team.** You will supervise one to three staff members and oversee additional technical assistance providers who manage and support business viability programs.
- **Developing, aligning and overseeing business viability programs.** You'll shape and deliver PFI's business support programs, which include providing technical assistance and administering financial incentives. This oversight also entails supporting staff who are carrying out and managing these programs.
- **Providing direct business technical assistance, and leading the Savings Incentive Program.** This two-year program encourages beginning farmers to save money, offers business plan support, connects them with experienced farmers and offers a savings match if they complete the program. You'll be responsible for providing technical assistance to SIP participants, coaching them on how to create strong business plans, analyzing their financials, making mentor matches and ensuring they complete program milestones.
- **Cultivating partnerships to achieve business viability goals.** This involves collaborating with PFI's existing partners to deliver programs and developing new strategic partnerships that support food and farm businesses. Partners include other nonprofit organizations, government agencies, incubator farms, specialized technical assistance providers and funders.
- **Fundraising for business viability programs.** This entails applying for grants – including developing plans of work, outcomes and budgets in collaboration with partners and other staff – and drafting clear and compelling narratives for high-quality proposals that align with PFI's goals.

Duties

- Design and implement processes to ensure the business viability team's work is consistent and efficient
- Create and manage partnerships that work toward PFI's goals of supporting beginning farmers and developing farm and food businesses
- Develop ways to evaluate the business viability team's work and make decisions based on evaluation results
- Find ways to collaborate with other departments and teams to achieve business viability project deliverables
- Promote teamwork within the business viability team
- Manage business viability projects
- Manage capacity and budget efficiently to complete work



- Oversee contractors, staff members, volunteers and partners who conduct business viability and beginning farmer projects and work
- Train farmers and food businesses on business and financial planning
- Write proposals for grant or fee-for-service funding opportunities

Required Qualifications and Characteristics

- Strong written and verbal communication
- Emotional intelligence
- Skilled at building relationships
- Ability to strategically problem-solve
- Experience supervising and supporting others
- Leadership experience cultivating a collaborative team environment
- Experience managing team budgets and allocating resources
- Experience designing systems and developing efficient processes
- Strong project management skills
- Experience with databases or project management tools
- Strong business planning skills
- Strong financial analysis skills
- Experience coaching, teaching and empowering others
- Ability to manage sensitive client conversations and information with tact, empathy and respect
- Passion for PFI's mission
- Ability to travel to and on farms on occasion in Iowa and surrounding states

Desired Qualifications and Characteristics

- Knowledge of or experience with farm and food businesses
- Knowledge of agricultural systems and sustainable agriculture concepts
- Experience supporting farm or food business plan development
- Demonstrated experience providing consultations
- Experience evaluating programs
- Experience with program and project design
- Experience with grant writing

This is a full-time position based in our Ames, Iowa, office with potential for a remote schedule. The applicant must be in the Ames office at least once per month. The salary range for this position is \$55,500 to \$60,000 with annual opportunity for merit salary increases and position advancement.

PFI values its employees and is a flexible and supportive work environment. Employees are offered a competitive benefits package including employee health insurance with 100% employer-paid premium, generous paid time off, flexible hours, six weeks of 100% paid parental leave, 4% automatic

401k contribution after one year of employment and additional professional development opportunities. Practical Farmers is a family-friendly employer.

Please apply by completing the application form (including contact information, cover letter, resume and references) at the bottom of this page. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.