



Farmer Hotline Operator Posting

Job Title: Farmer Hotline Operator

Reports to: Hotline Program Manager

Supervises: No Direct Reports

Job Classification / Employment Category: Exempt / Full-time employee. Grant-funded position through the Western Region Agricultural Stress Assistance Program (WRASAP), part of the USDA's Farm and Ranch Stress Assistant Network (FRSAN).

Position Location: Office is in Cambridge, MA, open to hybrid or remote work arrangements for candidates based in the Western region. Position requires some national travel with a focus on conferences/events/farmer support in the Western region (AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY).

Position Date: Posted May 2023 for immediate employment

Organizational Overview

Farm Aid's mission is to cultivate a vibrant and just, family farm-centered system of agriculture in the United States. With a social change orientation, conviction about the importance of family farmers, and a broad cultural platform, Farm Aid catalyzes and offers creative ways to champion farmers, inspire civic engagement and leverage our position to influence positive change in our agricultural and cultural landscape. Farm Aid artists and board members Willie Nelson, Neil Young, John Mellencamp, Dave Matthews and Margo Price host an annual food and farm festival to raise funds to support Farm Aid's year-round work. Since 1985, through the generosity of the artists who contribute their performances each year, Farm Aid has raised more than \$70 million to support our programs that **help farmers thrive, grow the Good Food Movement, take action** to change the dominant system of industrial agriculture and **promote food from family farms**.

Farm Aid is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with diverse expertise, assets and activities spanning entertainment and music, food business, grant making, direct service to farmers, grassroots movement building, and serving as a convener and coalition partner with aligned organizations for raising public awareness and influencing public policy. Farm Aid achieves its mission by:

- **Amplifying** the voices of family farmers to bring attention to the challenges they face and the benefits they bring to all of us;
- **Connecting** farmers to resources and opportunities;
- **Championing and celebrating** family farmers, good food and the culture of agriculture, in which we all can participate;
- **Inspiring and empowering** farmers and nonfarmers to participate in a democratic, just and sustainable farm and food system; and
- **Investing** talent, time and money in efforts that affect positive change in the farm and food system, especially the cultivation of collective power among agricultural and cultural communities.

Farm Aid's vision—of a transformed America in which family farmers and eaters are partners in a thriving farm and food system that benefits all—is not possible without actively being part of the struggle for racial equity and justice. We are on an active journey of taking stronger action to end racism in our society and in our farm and food system.

Deeply rooted and at a time of exciting growth, Farm Aid seeks a **Farmer Hotline Operator** to contribute to our efforts to cultivate change in our farm and food systems.

Job Summary and Purpose:

As a member of the Farm Aid Hotline Team, the Farmer Hotline Operator supports Farm Aid's Farmer Services program by operating the Farm Aid Hotline on an ongoing basis, providing a listening ear to farmers and connecting them to the resources they need. The Hotline Operator serves as a critical bridge to farmers and rural communities throughout the country and assists in advancing Farm Aid's assessment of the needs of farmers nationwide and the availability of services to meet those needs. The Hotline Operator collaborates with the Hotline Team in the development of reports that translate Hotline activities and inquiries into actionable knowledge for internal and external use in support of Farm Aid's mission.

The Farmer Hotline Operator is expected to:

- Serve as a member of the Hotline Team by helping to operate Farm Aid's 1-800 Farmer Hotline and Online Request for Assistance service.
- Ensure effective recordkeeping and timely tracking of Hotline contacts.
- Update the Farmer Resource Network (FRN) database with the current, appropriate and accessible resources, with a particular focus on building out resources in the Western region of the US.
- Occasionally represent Farm Aid and the Hotline Program at farmer-facing conferences.

Essential Job Functions and Responsibilities:

Hotline Operation (~ 60% of effort)

- Operate Farm Aid Hotline and Online Request for Assistance service two to three days per week, 12pm-6pm Pacific Time, providing farmers with relevant information and referrals, advice and emotional support and ensuring response to inquiries within 48 hours of initial outreach. Provide additional Hotline coverage as backup for the Hotline Team as needed.
- Recommend and coordinate the issuing of Emergency Grants to farmers in crisis with Hotline Program Manager and other Farm Aid staff ensuring adherence to Emergency Grant program guidelines and operations/accounting record keeping.
- Ensure effective recordkeeping and timely tracking of all Hotline contacts, including data on demographics, services needed and referrals.
- Provide quality referrals and resources for English and Spanish speakers.

- Participate in ongoing trainings with the Hotline Team on topics related to farm stress/farmer mental health, crisis response, suicide prevention, financial resources, legal resources, USDA/FSA programs, disaster relief, etc.

Farmer Services Program Support (~ 30% of effort)

- Monitor literature and listservs for emerging resources for farmers, with a focus on Native American farmers and ranchers, beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers, crisis and disaster assistance, financial counseling, legal support and mental health offerings, particularly, but not exclusively for those located in the Western US, including Hawaii, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and Micronesia. Populate farmer resource database with new referrals for English and Spanish speakers.
- Translate emerging resources for farmers into relevant content, including Farmer Resource Guides, and collaborate with Hotline, communications, and marketing staff to ensure timely content is made available through FA communication channels.
- Working with the Farmer Services Network Manager, support Farm Aid's disaster response efforts, particularly for natural disasters occurring in the Western region.
- Assist with outreach through workshops, regional meetings and conferences.

General and Festival (~ 10% of effort)

- Participate in staff meetings, reviews, planning retreats and other related activities in support of organizational goals.
- Engage in Hotline Team planning for our annual festival, with the opportunity to assist with implementation in-person.
- Other duties as time and interest allows.

Qualifications:

- Minimum of 3 years of experience in the food and agriculture sector, working directly with farmers, ranchers, farmworkers and/or rural communities.
- Familiarity with issues facing farmers, ranchers, farmworkers and rural communities in crisis, including knowledge of issues for BIPOC farming community members and tribal farmers and ranchers.
- Knowledge of programs and services needed for farmers in crisis, including federal farm loan programs, federal disaster programs, legal needs and culturally appropriate mental health practices.
- Familiarity with the above issues and programs in the Western region of the U.S. especially desired.
- Training in agricultural mediation or other training critical to effective farm advocacy is a plus, including any prior mental health and crisis training (such as QPR, mental health first aid, etc.).

- Demonstrated ability to maintain effective relationships with people from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- Excellent interpersonal and communications skills, particularly active listening, with ability to demonstrate compassion for people dealing with challenging situations and to problem solve with them.
- Sound judgment in maintaining professional boundaries and confidential information.
- Interest and desire to serve farmers through direct, one-on-one engagement, and demonstrated excellence in providing supportive services.
- English fluency with speaking, reading and writing required. Proficiency in Spanish or other languages desired.
- Demonstrated team player, with initiative and ability to work both independently and with others.
- Experience and demonstrated proficiency with data documentation and tracking, and technical proficiency with Microsoft Office required (Word and Excel), proficiency with CRM/database management system preferred (Salesforce), and/or demonstrated interest and aptitude to learn.
- Integrity and the ability to be flexible within the Team and changing responses to emerging farm crises.

Work Environment:

The job necessitates regular engagement with people under stress and/or dealing with dire circumstances and can be unpredictable depending on the volume of Hotline calls, natural disasters, and other challenges facing farmers. The Farmer Hotline Operator is expected to be able to shift between intensive listening and referral work, data entry and management, and organizational engagement.

The Farmer Hotline Operator reports to the Hotline Program Manager and interacts regularly with fellow Farmer Hotline Operators and other Farm Aid staff to ensure ongoing and exemplary service delivery and coordination on Farm Aid's Farmer Services program. The Farmer Hotline Operator is encouraged to take structured breaks and will work closely with the Hotline Program Manager and the entire Hotline Team to support each other's well-being, with Farm Aid providing access to Hotline worker mental health services, training and professional development.

In line with Farm Aid's collaborative culture, this position is expected to bring ideas to other members of Farm Aid staff for discussion and approval. The position interacts regularly with other staff members to integrate and coordinate program goals and objectives.

Pay & Benefits

The salary range for this position is \$50,000 – 54,000.

Benefits include 100% health insurance premium coverage (for up to full family coverage, ranging in value of up to \$30K+ annually depending on family size); 20 days (4 weeks) of paid vacation; 10 days paid sick and excused time; 2 civic engagement days; 11 holidays & general office closure from December 24 through January 1; option to participate in company IRA, FSA and Employee Assistance

plans; longevity bonus program rewarding each year of service and a paid; as well as an exciting work environment with smart, passionate people seeking to make change in our food and farm system.

Farm Aid is an Equal Opportunity Employer

Farm Aid recognizes that people gain skills through a variety of professional, personal, educational, and volunteer experiences. If you feel passionate about our mission and believe that you have the skills and valuable perspective to contribute to the growth of our organization, we encourage you to apply, even if you don't believe you meet every one of our described qualifications or have a less traditional background. We believe a diversity of voices leads to better discussions, decisions, and outcomes for everyone and encourage applications from candidates whose identities have been historically under-represented in the farm and food movement.

Farm Aid is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against any team member or candidate because of race, creed, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, pregnancy, or any other basis protected by federal, state or local law.

How To Apply:

If you are passionate about our mission and believe that you have the skills and valuable perspective to contribute to the growth of our organization, we'd love to hear from you!

- Submit your complete application to [hiring@farmaid.org](mailto: hiring@farmaid.org) with “Farmer Hotline Operator” in the subject line. In the email, please include your personal pronouns for how you like to be addressed and attach the enclosures listed below. Note that incomplete applications may not be reviewed. Enclosures include:
 - a **cover letter** indicating where you learned of this opportunity and highlighting your experience, skills and interests relevant to the position and listed qualifications
 - a **current resume**, and
 - a **writing sample** or example of relevant work
- We will accept and consider applications on a rolling basis and seek to make a hire in spring/summer 2023.
- Farm Aid will confirm receipt of your application and will reach out directly only if you are being considered as a candidate for the position.

For more information about Farm Aid, please visit www.farmaid.org