



## Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture Seeks Executive Director

### About CISA

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***Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA) strengthens farms and engages the community to build the local food economy.*** We have been working for over 30 years to build a stronger, more resilient, and more just local food system. CISA contributes to creating a local food system where farms are viable, working conditions are fair and just for owners and workers, the environment is respected, and locally grown food is available for all.

CISA began in 1993 as a conversation between farmers and community representatives about how to support local agriculture. That conversation continues throughout the three counties of the Connecticut River Valley of western Massachusetts. We talk to and take action alongside farmers, food buyers, residents, workers, [partners](#), and supporters 30 years later. Our long-running *Be a Local Hero, Buy Locally Grown*<sup>®</sup> promotion and marketing campaign connects farmers and the community, improving farm business viability and enhancing the quality of life for residents across the region. Additional innovative [programs](#) focus on building a resilient, equitable local food system, with thriving local farms at its center. This work includes an expansive technical assistance program that links 400 farmers and other local food businesses with funding and expert assistance on a range of topics; anti-hunger efforts through CISA's Senior FarmShare program for 800 low-income seniors; and CISA's assistance to farms, farm stands and mobile markets in navigating and accessing the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP).

A more recent CISA focus has been to help farmers adapt to the changing climate through direct assistance, our Emergency Farm Fund, and workshops that offer technical information and opportunities for networking and peer learning. We also help the community recognize local agriculture as essential for community resilience in responding to climate change and for connecting us to farmers, to the seasons, and to each other.

At CISA, we strive for a resilient, inclusive, and just local food system. For many years our board and staff have grappled with systemic racism's impact on our food system and our organization. We're committed to a [transformative journey](#), internally reassessing and evolving our programs and culture. Externally, we're forging stronger ties with leaders in food justice. Examples of our efforts, among others, include backing immigrants' rights to drivers' licenses in Massachusetts, expanding our Senior Farmshare program within underserved communities, and providing support to food-justice focused community-led organizations of color.

With a dedicated staff of 20 professionals, CISA fosters a culture of respect, inclusiveness, and collaboration. We prioritize flexibility and a healthy work culture, ensuring continuous learning for staff, respect for work-life balance, and an equity-focused approach in all our work. CISA is overseen by an engaged board of directors comprising 15 community members – farmers, businesspeople, restaurateurs, and consumers.

Operational funding for CISA, totaling approximately \$2.2 million annually, consists of a diverse combination of state and federal grants and contracts, grants, private donations, and earned income.

After 16 years of service, Executive Director Philip Korman announced his departure from CISA. During his tenure, CISA expanded our financial base, staff size, and mission impact, and the organization is poised to enter new chapters of responsive community connection and innovation.

### **Opportunity Going Forward**

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The Executive Director will have the opportunity to lead a well-established, highly respected, and influential organization. Reporting to CISA's Board of Directors, the Executive Director has overall fiscal, strategic, and operational responsibility for staff, programs, innovation, and impact. Priorities for the next leader include:

**Learning and Immersion:** Engage in a period of deep learning and immersion to understand the complexities and dynamics of CISA's work and community. Focus on active listening to fully understand farmers and community needs and how CISA can effectively and strategically support them.

**Community Engagement and Relationship Building:** Navigate the leadership transition and ensure that existing strong relationships with farmers, funders and donors, legislators, collaborations, and partners are maintained and grown.

**Strategic and Policy Leadership:** Facilitate and guide policy advocacy on important, transformational topics such as climate resilience and equitable land access, while maintaining alignment with CISA's core mission. In partnership with others, seek big-picture solutions to community issues and adapt to changing environments.

**Operational Sustainability:** Ensure that all initiatives are sustainable in the long term while maintaining and enhancing CISA's operational effectiveness. Plan for contingencies in government funding shifts and explore income diversification opportunities. Meet and nurture relationships with donors, partners, and supporters.

**Equity and Social Justice:** Explore and address social justice issues within the food supply chain and farm structure through advocacy, policy and partnerships. Evaluate the reach of CISA's services, particularly in underserved areas like Hampden County, with an eye on opening new markets and increasing visibility in areas where local food access is limited. Cultivate a Board and Staff that are diverse and respects the CISA workplace culture which values equity.

### **Profile of the Ideal Candidate**

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The next Executive Director of CISA will be a seasoned organizational leader who will demonstrate many of the attributes, skills, and experiences listed below, and will be capable of leading an organization of CISA's size and scope. While we understand that candidates may not have all these qualities, if you meet many and are passionate about our mission, we encourage you to apply.

#### **Visionary and Strategic Executive**

- Agriculture and food systems knowledge and/or experience
- Demonstrated ability to lead and implement a strategic organizational vision and plan
- Proven success in bringing new ideas, innovation, and bold thinking to an organization
- Skilled at championing a vision to leverage funding, partnerships, and public awareness
- Able to navigate and adapt to changing circumstances and new challenges

### **Relational, Collaborative and a Community Builder**

- Proven track record of listening to community, assessing trends and aligning organizational values and work with community needs
- Highly collaborative, flexible, and patient with a diverse set of internal and external stakeholders
- Brings strong, diplomatic verbal communication and storytelling skills
- Wisdom to engage and successfully build community with many different constituencies; is a good translator of different points of view
- Knowledge of the Connecticut River Valley region is a plus, although familiarity with other agricultural regions comprised of rural and urban areas is welcomed

### **Fundraising & Financial Acumen**

- Experienced building and maintaining donor relationships including, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship
- Practiced in the strategy of fundraising – foundation relationships, appeals, membership programs, and campaigns
- Business acumen in operations and management, with the financial fluency necessary to manage a budget, financial reporting, and planning

### **Facilitative, Authentic, and Open Leader**

- Warm, compassionate, respectful, and approachable
- Displays emotional maturity and a sense of self; able to hold an independent voice and make effective decisions
- Has balanced leadership skills; listens well and is comfortable leading from behind
- Good communicator, able to clearly articulate priorities and decisions and to bring people along
- Eager to continuously learn and grow, both personally and professionally

### **Commitment to Equity**

- A deep understanding of racial equity issues in the agricultural industry and food system
- A track record of leading initiatives to promote equity within an organization
- Experience applying an intersectional lens to addressing complex problems
- Ability to engage effectively with diverse communities and foster an inclusive environment

### **A Seasoned Executive Manager**

- Experienced with organizational and staff management, including excellent supervisory skills and the kindness and passion to develop, support and lead a team
- A proven record of success in managing growth
- Experienced with managing risk; a solution-finder
- The ability to share decision-making power, work collaboratively, and provide clarity and transparency in decision-making processes
- Familiarity with nonprofit board engagement

### **Desired Credentials**

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- A minimum of 7 years of experience as an organizational leader with increasing levels of responsibility, and at least five as an executive director or senior leader.

### **Compensation and Benefits:**

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This is a full-time, salaried, exempt position with a starting salary range of \$106,000-\$121,000 and a comprehensive benefits package. CISA is currently operating with a hybrid office model that requires staff in

the office at least two days a week; the board prefers the ED candidate to be in-person four days a week to develop critical relationships. Regular in-person appearances within CISA's service area (Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin counties, MA) and occasional travel within the state and country for outreach and events will be required. [CISA's benefits package](#) includes: 75% coverage for health care, vision, and dental premiums, long-term disability and life insurance, 4% matching retirement plan, 10 days for sick time, 4 personal days, 11 holidays, 15 vacation days, and more.

### **Application Process and Additional Information**

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CISA is an equal opportunity employer. CISA will not engage in discrimination against, or harassment of any person employed or seeking employment with CISA on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, status as a protected veteran, or other characteristics protected by law. CISA is committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive environment and we actively recruit employees and promote qualified personnel broadly representative of the community we serve.

Candidates must include a resume and a cover letter, both in PDF format, which describe how qualifications and experience match the needs and mission of CISA. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Upload required documents to: <https://eostransitions.applicantpool.com/jobs/>.

This executive search is being conducted by Eos Transition Partners consultants, Hez Norton and Nancy Jackson. All submissions will be acknowledged and are confidential, and any questions can be submitted to Nancy at: [njackson@eostransitions.com](mailto:njackson@eostransitions.com).