



The Rogue Valley Food System Network fosters connections to promote equitable food access, ecologically sound agricultural practices and economic vitality. We envision the Rogue Valley with a visible, engaged and vibrant food system.

Value Chain & Market Activation Specialist

Contract Term:

Contracted through July 31, 2027

Total Contract Amount:

\$27,000

Estimated Time Commitment:

Approximately 8–10 hours per week (average across contract term)

Reporting & Partnership:

The Value Chain & Market Activation Specialist will work in close partnership with:

- Executive Director, RVFSN
- Director of Economic Development & Community Impact, RVFSN

Purpose of the Role

The Value Chain & Market Activation Specialist supports implementation of the Rogue Valley Community Food Assessment & Action Plan by strengthening relationships, coordination, and market pathways across the regional food value chain.

The Value Chain Specialist will work with a range of community organizations, retail outlets, aggregators, farmers, ranchers and artisan food producers to identify barriers to effective, efficient and cost effective delivery and distribution mechanisms between producers, aggregators, distributors, and buyers, and supporting coordination efforts that improve flow, alignment, access to fresh, locally produced foods and the long-term resilience of the food system.

This position emphasizes **listening, judgment, and action** rather than new program creation, with a focus on activating existing infrastructure, relationships, and momentum. The position is grant funded, with a number of specific goals:

- Convene **cross-sector partners** to coordinate efforts and secure long-term investments in food system resilience.
- Develop **pilot projects** in food access, local supply chain expansion, and farm-to-market innovation.
- Build capacity for food system support organizations, small farms and food businesses by identifying **technical assistance and training needs**.

The intention of this position is to create outcomes that directly benefit low-income households, small farmers, local food businesses, and environmentally vulnerable communities throughout the Rogue Valley. It is designed to serve as a bridge between strategy, relationships, and implementation—supporting RVFSN’s backbone function by helping translate on-the-ground realities into practical, relationship-based solutions. As per the grant funding this position:

The Rogue Valley Food System Network will convene and facilitate a strategic Working Group of specialty crop producers, distributors, and retailers to identify, develop, and implement coordinated solutions to critical market access barriers.

This collaborative initiative will expand the market share of locally produced foods through:

- (1) conducting an analysis of existing ordering and distribution systems—including the Applegate Valley Food Hub, Rogue Natural Foods, and other regional hubs—to identify strategic alignment opportunities and reduce market barriers
- (2) launching the annual Rogue Grown Showcase to connect producers, buyers, and consumers while highlighting the region's exceptional specialty crop quality and diversity (this position will support the launch of the Rogue Grown Showcase) .

This position is intended to support lasting improvements in market efficiency, strengthen farm viability, and help to develop the infrastructure needed to establish the Rogue Valley as a premier specialty crop region.

Core Areas of Responsibility

1. Value Chain Listening & Barrier Identification (Q1 and ongoing)

- Convene a working group of producers and retail outlets to allow for facilitated discussions addressing challenges, critical market barriers and opportunities in order to increase the access local producers have to retail outlets, and to increase access to locally produced food for customers of Rogue Valley retail outlets.
- Conduct **relationship-based listening** with producers, buyers, food hubs, aggregators, and value-added businesses to surface practical barriers and opportunities grounded in

lived experience.

- Facilitate listening sessions, focus groups, and one-on-one conversations as needed that prioritize trust, relevance, and real-world constraints.
- Identify and distinguish between:
 - System or process barriers
 - Infrastructure constraints
 - Relationship, communication, or information gaps

Deliverables:

- Conduct a **Value Chain Analysis of existing ordering and distribution systems and provide a written report that:**
 - Identifies partners and strategic alignment opportunities and ways to reduce market barriers
 - Identifies available resources and gaps
 - Identifies priority barriers that current limit local food flow
 - Highlights leverage points where coordination or targeted intervention could unlock progress
 - Recommends possible pilot design, partner alignment, and investment needs
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2. Relationship Building & Market Activation (Ongoing)

- Build and strengthen relationships between:
 - Producers and buyers
 - Producers and aggregation or distribution hubs
 - Buyers and existing mini food hubs
- Support **low-lift, relationship-based coordination efforts** that improve communication, alignment, and follow-through.
- Prioritize activation of existing infrastructure and partnerships over creation of new systems.

Deliverables:

- Documentation of:
 - Producer, buyer, and hub partners engaged
 - Relationship-building and coordination efforts supported
 - Identification and support of **2–4 pilot projects that either activate market engagement or improve or enhance coordination**
 - Coordination with RVFSN staff to align activities with Open Impact documentation and impact tracking needs
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3. Mini Food Hub & Regional Collaboration (Mid- to Long-Term Work)

- Support coordination, visibility, and alignment of existing mini food hubs and aggregation efforts in the Rogue Valley.
- Where appropriate, facilitate connections with coastal and Klamath partners to support broader regional market alignment.
- Help reduce duplication and fragmentation by strengthening communication across hubs, buyers, and producers.

Deliverables:

- Summary mapping current mini food hubs and aggregation efforts engaged
 - Recommendations for sustaining or strengthening regional coordination and alignment
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4. Rogue Grown Showcase & Market Visibility Support

- Support recruitment and preparation of producers, value-added businesses, buyers, and hubs for the Rogue Grown Showcase.
- Ensure Showcase participation reflects **real market readiness** and value chain needs.
- Share on-the-ground insights to inform regional marketing and visibility efforts.

Deliverables:

- Participation support for Rogue Grown Showcase(s), including producer and buyer engagement
 - Brief input memo summarizing insights from market activation work to inform RVFSN outreach and marketing
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5. Documentation, Learning & Recommendations

- Track activities, participation, and outcomes in coordination with RVFSN staff.
- Translate field-based learning into practical insights that inform RVFSN strategy, and support partner coordination and grant reporting.
- Support reporting needs tied to strategic goals and funder deliverables.

Deliverables:

- Periodic brief progress summaries (timing coordinated with RVFSN)
 - **Final Summary & Recommendations Report**, including:
 - Key relationships built
 - Market barriers addressed
 - Outcomes of pilots or coordination efforts
 - Recommendations for sustaining or scaling successful approaches
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Core Competencies / Ideal Candidate Profile

The ideal candidate brings significant experience in food system development work, blending systems thinking, relationship-based practice with practical implementation experience. They are comfortable working across organizational boundaries, navigating ambiguity, and exercising good judgment in complex, real-world contexts.

Key competencies include:

- **Value chain fluency:** Understanding how food moves from production through aggregation, distribution, and purchasing, and where coordination commonly breaks

down.

- **Strong judgment and prioritization:** Ability to assess complex situations and determine when light-touch coordination is sufficient versus when deeper facilitation or intervention is needed.
- **Relationship-centered approach:** Skilled at building trust with producers, buyers, food hubs, and partners through listening, follow-through, and clear communication.
- **Systems and synthesis thinking:** Ability to translate on-the-ground insights into clear summaries, recommendations, and action steps that support decision-making.
- **Collaborative autonomy:** Comfortable working independently while remaining closely aligned with RVFSN leadership and partner priorities.
- **Practical orientation:** Preference for solutions grounded in existing infrastructure and relationships, with attention to feasibility and long-term sustainability.
- **Clear communicator:** Able to document work concisely and share findings in ways that support coordination, learning, and action.

Experience working in **rural or place-based food systems** and with diverse producers and buyers is highly valued.

General Timeline

Phase 1: Orientation & Listening (0–3 months, with working group ongoing throughout project)

- Partner onboarding with RVFSN leadership
- Convening of Value Chain Working Group
- Initial listening sessions and interviews
- Delivery of Value Chain Barrier Summary

Phase 2: Market Activation & Coordination (Months 4–18)

- Relationship building and coordination support
- Pilot and low-lift activation efforts
- Ongoing documentation and learning

Phase 3: Regional Alignment & Showcase Support (throughout project)

- Deeper engagement with mini food hubs
- Cross-regional coordination as appropriate
- Rogue Grown Showcase support

Phase 4: Synthesis & Transition (Final 3 months)

- Consolidation of learning
- Final Summary & Recommendations Report
- Transition guidance for sustaining efforts beyond the contract term