

**ORGANIZATION:** Grace Farms Foundation  
**POSITION:** Chief Operating Officer  
**REPORTS TO:** Sharon Prince, President & Founder  
**LOCATION:** New Canaan, CT  
**INFORMATION:** [Website](#); [Annual Report](#)  
**TO APPLY:** Please send resume and cover letter to [GraceFarmsCOO@pbrsearch.com](mailto:GraceFarmsCOO@pbrsearch.com).

## **BACKGROUND**

Grace Farms Foundation was founded in 2009 with a bold vision of advancing good in the world through local, national, and international programming focused on five initiatives—justice, faith, community, art, and nature. Situated on approximately 80 acres, including preserved open meadows, woods, wetlands, and ponds, the centerpiece of Grace Farms is the [award-winning](#) River building designed by the Japanese architecture firm [SANAA](#). The River building, comprised of five interconnected glass volumes, houses an indoor amphitheater, library, common gathering area, pavilion, and a subterranean recreation and performance space. In addition, the property features two renovated barns used for program, meeting, and office space.

What sets the Foundation apart is the intentional and invitational use of space – coupled with our interdisciplinary approach. The Foundation leverages the River building, barns, and open landscape to serve as the nexus of the work, and the platform for scalable impact. In other words, the [space both anchors and amplifies the mission](#) of the Foundation. The five initiatives are distinct in purpose, yet complementary. With an entrepreneurial lens and leadership from best-in-class experts, the approach allows for people from different fields and perspectives to influence each other’s conversations and work in a reflective, yet dynamic manner, often driving new outcomes and breakthroughs that move the needle on some of today’s most pressing humanitarian issues.

Grace Farms operates on a \$13M budget, supporting the daily operations of Grace Farms and the Foundation’s local and global initiatives. The building and grounds are free and open to the public six days a week.

The Foundation’s vision is led by [Sharon Prince](#) and operated with a staff of more than 85 people.

## **POSITION**

Grace Farms Foundation has experienced extraordinary success and growth since its founding. Programming, events, staff, and infrastructure have all evolved and expanded over the past four years. Looking ahead, the organization expects that growth will continue through both planned and unexpected opportunities at local, national, and international levels. As a result, the organization seeks a strategic, forward-thinking, creative chief operating officer with very strong financial skills to lead and oversee all internal day-to-day functions for the Foundation, including finance, human resources, operational teams (food and beverage, events, hospitality, facilities, housekeeping, and basketball court), safety, IT/AV, and events. The ideal candidate will inspire team members from diverse industry backgrounds to achieve clearly established goals through strong leadership and coaching. In addition, the COO will be a thought partner to the President and the initiative directors on all critical leadership, operational, financial, and strategic decisions affecting the organization.

The ideal candidate will relish leading team members from diverse industry backgrounds to a common goal through strong leadership and coaching. S/he will have particular strengths in building best practice systems, optimizing operational and fiscal efficiencies, creating and stewarding a positive organizational culture, and developing solutions to meet short-term needs and long-term strategic objectives. This role dynamically combines a roll-up-your-sleeves sensibility with strategic thinking. Candidates proficient at toggling back and forth between the forest and the trees and adept at navigating through growth and change will thrive in this role.

### **Leadership**

- Motivate, mentor, and support direct reports, ensuring they have the tools, training, and direction they need to meet or surpass Foundation goals while also meeting their personal goals for professional growth and advancement.
- Lead from a perspective of “Yes, let’s see what’s possible,” while clearly articulating the operational and financial impacts of organizational and programmatic decisions and plans.
- Partner with Human Resources on organizational development, creating and implementing processes and systems that support the development of a high-performance, continuous improvement, accountable culture that reflects the vision, mission, and values of the Foundation.
- Clearly define desired Foundation outcomes and develop new processes, procedures, and systems to effectively achieve them.

### **Operations**

- Act as an internal champion for the Foundation’s strategic plan and ensure that activities, budget, and resources align with the plan.
- Oversee and monitor infrastructure, systems, processes, and standards to achieve desired outcomes, and create conditions for great programmatic work to occur.
- Partner with the President and heads of programming to align operational resources to ongoing programs and partnerships.
- Coordinate and oversee strategy and execution of IT systems and software, including document and data management systems, CMS, HR, and/or accounting software.
- Utilize data and recurring feedback to refine operational models over time.
- Create the structure and processes necessary to manage the organization’s current activities and its projected growth; provide the operational, financial, human resources, and infrastructure lenses to help inform decision-making on pace and type of growth.
- Be as hands-on as necessary to support operational teams onsite.
- Collaborate internally with legal, HR, safety, and operational teams to create a culture of safety that mitigates risk.

### **Finances**

- Ensure that the vision and mission of the Foundation are carried out with fiscal integrity.
- Partner with the President and controller to develop and implement the overall long-term strategic operating plan and annual budgeting process.
- Take a strategic, prospective view of financial planning and management, developing plans and models that provide a clear picture of the organization’s finances; ensure that models are flexible enough to accommodate new initiatives and opportunities as they arise.
- Working closely with the controller, assure that the annual budgeting process is conducted in the most effective and efficient way, given the Foundation’s projected growth trajectory.
- Support the controller in the implementation and setup of new accounting software to best support the financial systems and program needs of the Foundation.
- Based on accumulated historical data, construct a standard fee structure for program and operational expenses with an eye towards balancing long-term vendor and partner relationships with budget targets.
- Partner with the heads of all departments responsible for earned and philanthropic revenue to allow for insight regarding revenue streams and accurately forecast future income.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

- At least fifteen years of senior-level operating experience, ideally in a rapidly evolving institution that operates in a public space
- Experience with strategic and annual planning, project management, and process improvement initiatives
- Demonstrated success with scaling programs and infrastructure
- A thorough understanding of finance, systems, and HR; broad experience with the full range of business functions and systems, including strategic development and planning, budgeting, business analysis, finance, information systems, and human resources
- Experience negotiating and reviewing contracts
- Excellent analytical skills and the ability to develop appropriate metrics to measure outcomes across all departments; a high level of comfort with complexity and nuance
- Ability to operate as an effective tactical partner as well as a strategic thinker
- Sophisticated personal presence, superior interpersonal skills, and a high level of emotional intelligence, with a proven ability to successfully engage with a variety of stakeholders
- Strong written and verbal communication skills and an inclusive, transparent communication style that fosters cooperation and teamwork
- A proven track record of leading with diplomacy, integrity, and sound judgment, as well as a sense of humor and humility
- Experience effectively developing and leading a goal-oriented staff
- A positive attitude and self-directed and entrepreneurial work style
- Bachelor's degree required; advanced degree (such as an MBA) or equivalent record of continuing professional development preferred

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