

POSITION PROFILE

Chief of Staff

The Berry Center

New Castle, Kentucky



THE BERRY CENTER

About The Berry Center

Founded in 2011 by Mary Berry, [The Berry Center](#) is a nonprofit organization based in New Castle, Kentucky, dedicated to putting the writings and ideas of renowned author, farmer, and cultural critic Wendell Berry into action. Guided by the belief that healthy farms, healthy land, and healthy communities are fundamentally interconnected, The Berry Center works to advance a vision of prosperous small- and mid-sized farms, vibrant rural communities, and healthy regional economies by developing practical, place-based solutions that strengthen the cultural, economic, and ecological foundations of rural life.

The Berry Center is located in downtown New Castle's historic Oldham House, and serves as both a steward of the Berry family's agricultural and cultural legacy and an active laboratory for addressing some of the most pressing challenges facing rural America. Through education, cooperative enterprise, archival preservation, and community engagement, the organization seeks to answer a central question that has guided its work since inception: "What will it take for farmers to be able to farm well and how do we become a culture that will support good land use in this country?"

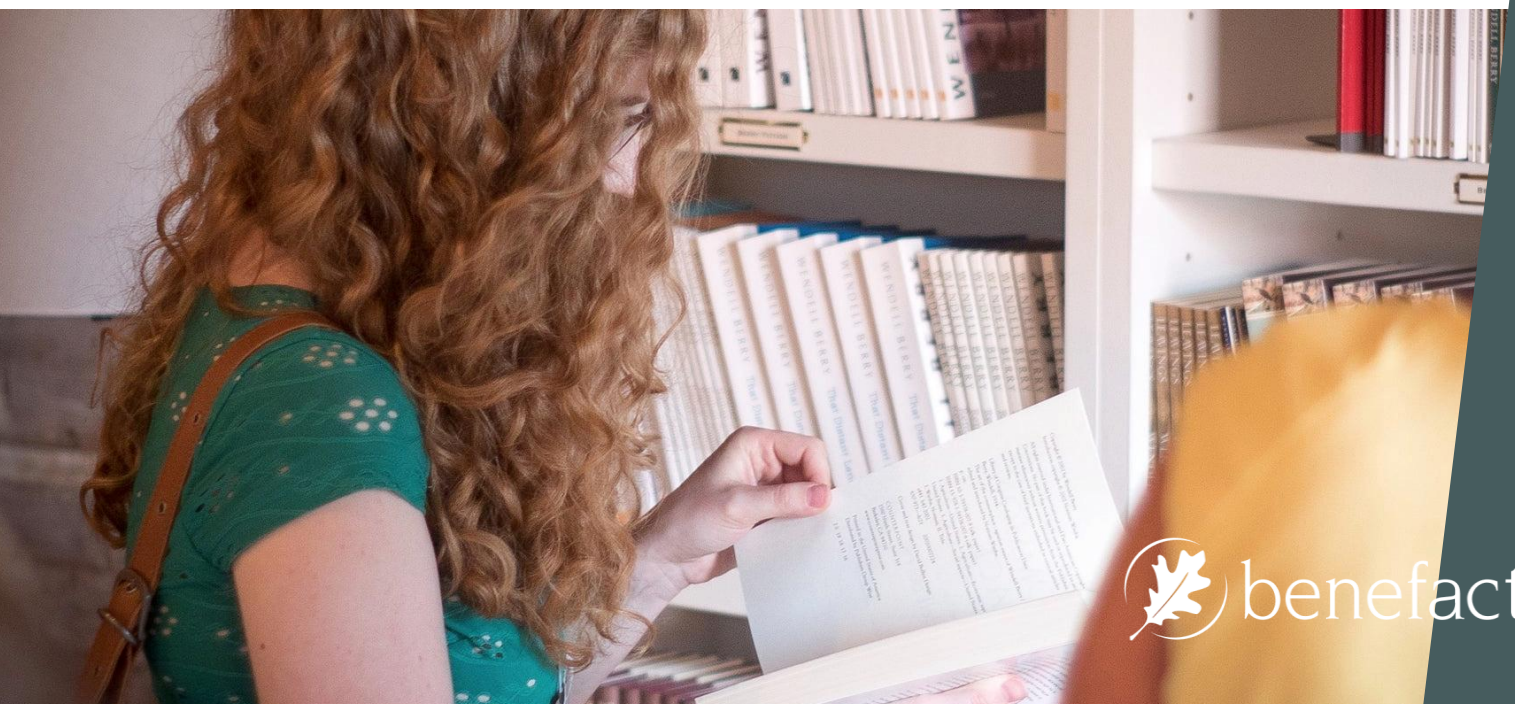
The organization advances its mission through four interconnected initiatives:

Our Home Place Meat

Launched in 2017, [Our Home Place Meat](#) is a farmer-owned cooperative designed to strengthen local food economies and create viable markets for small- and mid-sized livestock producers. The initiative helps farmers capture greater value for their products while promoting environmentally responsible livestock production. By connecting regional producers to local markets and reviving cooperative economic models that once sustained Kentucky agriculture, Our Home Place Meat demonstrates how rural communities can build resilient, place-based food systems.

The Farm & Forest Institute

Established in 2012, the [Farm & Forest Institute](#) provides farmers, landowners, and community leaders with education in agrarian thought and practice. Through workshops, field days, short courses, and hands-on learning experiences, participants explore topics such as livestock production on grass, low-impact forestry, cooperative economics, rural leadership, and land stewardship. Grounded in the writings of Wendell Berry and other agrarian thinkers, the Institute equips current and future generations of farmers with the knowledge and skills necessary to sustain productive farms and thriving rural communities.



THE BERRY CENTER

The Archive of The Berry Center

The Archive of The Berry Center preserves and makes accessible the papers, correspondence, writings, and public records of John M. Berry Sr., and his sons Wendell Berry and John M. Berry Jr., alongside a growing collection of materials focused on agriculture, conservation, and rural culture. Complementing the archive, the Tanya Amyx Berry Agrarian Library provides resources for scholars, students, farmers, and community members interested in the agrarian tradition. Together, these collections serve as a nationally recognized resource for research, education, and public understanding of the cultural and historical foundations of sustainable agriculture and rural life.

The Agrarian Culture Center & Bookstore

The Agrarian Culture Center & Bookstore fosters cultural vitality in rural communities through literature, public programs, storytelling, and community gatherings. Located in a historic cabin in downtown New Castle, the Bookstore welcomes visitors from across the country while serving as a gathering place for local residents. The Center's signature Agrarian Literary League has distributed thousands of books and facilitated dozens of community reading groups, helping preserve local history, strengthen connections to place, and celebrate the rich cultural traditions that sustain local communities. Additional programming includes author events, festivals, and Kentucky Arts and Letters Day.

Today, The Berry Center has emerged as a nationally respected voice in conversations about agriculture, conservation, rural economic development, and cultural renewal. While firmly rooted in Kentucky, its influence extends far beyond its home community as farmers, scholars, policymakers, students, and visitors from across the country and around the world engage with its programs and learn from its example of place-based leadership. Through its work, The Berry Center continues to demonstrate that thriving rural communities and sustainable farming systems are not only possible—they are essential to a healthy and prosperous future.

The Opportunity

The Berry Center seeks a seasoned and strategic nonprofit professional to lead and support a long-tenured, high-performing team with an unflagging commitment to building equitable and ecological farming futures. This is an exciting opportunity to join an organization that is recognized as a national thought leader driving the urgent work of building healthier agrarian economies.

The Berry Center operates with discipline and clarity, guided by a visionary Founder and Executive Director, Mary Berry, a committed board, and a well-established team of experts. With longstanding philanthropic support from many prominent individual and institutional supporters of agricultural systems transformation, The Berry Center is ideally positioned for long-term sustainability, resiliency, and increasing impact. The Chief of Staff will play an essential role in building on this moment, supporting the Executive Director and establishing the internal systems and processes necessary to operate efficiently and effectively.

The Chief of Staff will be a strategic people leader and talented communicator. The ideal candidate brings deep experience leading talented, multi-functional teams, with a focus on building a culture of accountability, balancing internal and external stakeholders, and assessing opportunities. As a member of the organization's leadership team with primary responsibility for overseeing



THE BERRY CENTER

implementation of a recently adopted strategic plan, a high level of strategic thinking and professional discernment will be essential for success in the role.

While The Berry Center has earned a national reputation and sphere of influence far beyond its service area, the organization's work is deeply rooted in New Castle and the surrounding community. Residence in New Castle or Henry County is not a requirement for the role; however, an on-site presence and willingness to embed in the community is essential.

The work of The Berry Center is multifaceted and complex, requiring a leader who can communicate strategically, eloquently, and abundantly about the opportunities and challenges facing the organization and the sector more broadly. This role will eventually require an understanding of agrarian economies and food systems transformation; existing knowledge is not a prerequisite but humility and eagerness to learn are essential.

Key Position Functions

The Chief of Staff serves as an internal leader and operational partner to the Executive Director, ensuring that The Berry Center's vision, people, and programs are aligned, supported, and moving forward effectively. The Chief of Staff will create the structure, communication, and accountability necessary for the organization to thrive while preserving its deeply collaborative and mission-driven culture. This is primarily an internal leadership role: the Chief of Staff will run day-to-day operations and directly manage staff, creating space for the Executive Director to serve as the organization's visionary and primary spokesperson.

Organizational Leadership & Staff Management

- Serve as the primary manager and leader of a seven-person Director team, providing supervision, support, accountability, and performance management across the organization.
- Lead staff hiring, onboarding, and evaluation processes.
- Foster a culture of collaboration, transparency, and shared purpose while preserving the organization's deeply relational and mission-driven environment.
- Establish clear goals, priorities, timelines, and expectations for staff and program leaders, ensuring organizational commitments are executed effectively.
- Lead regular staff meetings and create systems that improve communication, coordination, and information sharing across programs.
- Support professional growth and development of staff through ongoing support, mentorship, and feedback to maintain a positive staff culture and exceptional staff retention standard.

Strategic Execution & Organizational Alignment

- Partner closely with the Executive Director to translate organizational vision, strategic priorities, and board objectives into actionable plans and measurable outcomes.
- Monitor progress on strategic initiatives and organizational priorities, identifying challenges and opportunities, and ensuring appropriate follow through.
- Serve as a trusted thought partner to the Executive Director, helping evaluate competing priorities and focus leadership attention on the highest-impact opportunities.

THE BERRY CENTER

- Facilitate cross-functional planning and collaboration among program areas to ensure alignment and maximize organizational effectiveness.

Executive Support & Leadership Partnership

- Act as the Executive Director's key operational partner, managing priorities, tracking commitments, and ensuring critical projects and follow-up actions move forward.
- Prepare briefings, updates, and decision-support materials that enable the Executive Director to focus on vision, thought leadership, fundraising, and external relationships.
- Coordinate organizational leadership activities and serve as a liaison between the Executive Director and staff.
- Help identify responsibilities and decisions that can be delegated from the Executive Director to strengthen organizational capacity and sustainability.

Operations & Organizational Effectiveness

- Oversee day-to-day organizational operations and administrative functions, ensuring systems, processes, and workflows support staff success and organizational growth.
- Develop and implement practical systems that improve efficiency, accountability, and project management across the organization.
- In partnership with the CFO, support staff in monitoring budgets, organizational planning, and resource allocation, allowing the Executive Director to remain focused on strategic leadership.
- Lead continuous improvement efforts toward building a more resilient, durable organization.

Board & Governance Support

- Support the Executive Director and Board of Directors in advancing governance priorities and organizational goals.
- Help ensure strong alignment and communication between staff leadership and the board.
- Support board development efforts, committee work, and governance processes as assigned.

Fundraising & Institutional Support

- Support the Executive Director's fundraising work through project management, preparation, and coordination of donor-related activities.
- Collaborate with staff leaders to align organizational priorities, funding opportunities, and strategic initiatives.
- Contribute to a culture of philanthropy and organizational sustainability across the organization.

Qualifications

Competencies and Attributes for Success in the Position

- Builds relationships and trust
- Collaborates effectively
- Communicates with clarity
- Plans, prioritizes, and executes
- Exercises sound judgment
- Drives accountability and results
- Adapts and learns quickly



THE BERRY CENTER

Required Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree.
- Proven progressive professional experience leading cross-functional teams.
- Experience working with nonprofit governing boards and executive leadership to advance strategic initiatives.
- Demonstrated success leading organizational change, strategic planning, and other enterprise-wide initiatives.
- Personal values that align with The Berry Center's core values.
- Willingness to embed in the New Castle community.

Desired Qualifications

- Master's degree in nonprofit management, public administration, public policy, or related field.
- Existing familiarity with The Berry Center's work and approach.
- Experience working with cultural-change organizations.

Compensation

Minimum target base compensation for this role is \$95,000.

Application Process

Benefactor Group is pleased to be assisting The Berry Center with this executive search. Applications will be reviewed as they are received. All applications are considered highly confidential. To be considered for this position, please submit a resume at the link below. In the application, you will also be asked to provide a brief answer to a question describing your interest in the role.

To apply, please visit: <https://bit.ly/TBC-ChiefofStaffApp>.

To learn more about The Berry Center, please visit: <https://berrycenter.org/>.

Please do not contact staff or board of The Berry Center with questions or interest in the role. All inquiries about the position should be directed to Benefactor Group.

Benefactor Group Recruitment Team

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