



# Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association

P.O. Box 854, Richford VT 05476

Phone: 802-777-2667

[www.VermontMaple.org](http://www.VermontMaple.org)

## VMSMA Job Description

<b>Position Title:</b>	Certification Manager
<b>Position Status:</b>	Salaried, Part-Time (16 hour/week), Grant Funded
<b>Reports To:</b>	VMSMA Executive Director
<b>Updated:</b>	March 22, 2023

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### Pay Rate

\$28/hour, salaried at 16 hours a week with bi-monthly payroll (24 pay periods per year); mileage reimbursement is paid separately. The majority of this position is funded through Congressionally Directed Spending that is scheduled to last through 2026, with the potential for continuation after that point.

### Reporting Structure

The Certification Manager works under the direction of VMSMA's Executive Director and supervises VMSMA's contracted Certifiers. The Certification Manager also works closely with VMSMA's Education Committee and Certification Advisory Board.

### About VMSMA

The Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association (VMSMA) is a non-profit agricultural membership organization organized in 1893. VMSMA's mission is to protect the tradition of maple sugaring while maintaining the highest standards of production and product quality; to identify and study problems and issues that relate to the industry and to set in motion actions to resolve these; to provide educational programming and materials to the general public and the agricultural community with regard to current information, research and advancements relating to maple and maple production; and coordinate industry wide marketing and promotional efforts to support the Vermont Maple Brand, as well as encouraging greater use of Vermont produced and packed maple products within the State as well as in outside markets.

### About the Sugarhouse Certification Program

VMSMA's Sugarhouse Certification Program aligns current sugarhouse food safety practices with those of the Food Safety Modernization Act to create practical, usable operational guidelines that can be documented and followed. The Program is voluntary and the fee structure is based on tap count; recertification is required every two years. All Program materials are free to review on the [VMSMA website](#), including the Checklist, operational templates and other resources.

VMSMA rolled out the Program in 2021 with the intention of including a grant program shortly after, in order to support any operational upgrades needed for sugar makers to successfully complete Certification. The [grant program](#) launched in February 2023 with funding through Congressionally Directed Spending as part of a five-year project (which also funds this position). Funding is available for eligible sugar makers in amounts up to \$15,000. VMSMA anticipates that the new grant program

*Vermont Maple...the Official Flavor of Vermont!*



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will increase interest in Certification during the next three years and the current plan includes certifying at least 50 sugarhouses in 2023.

### **Position Summary:**

The Certification Manager is the main point of contact for VMSMA's Sugarhouse Certification Program and will become a trusted resource for Vermont's sugar makers. They are responsible for coordination of all aspects of the Sugarhouse Certification Program. This includes keeping up to date on any changes in food safety regulations or best practices, ensuring the Checklist and Program resources are regularly reviewed and updated, supervising Certifiers, answering questions from sugar makers, writing educational information for VMSMA member newsletters, attending meetings and answering questions related to the Program and food safe practices. The Certification Manager may also perform onsite Certifications from time to time, as needed, or to train or assess Certifiers.

### **Work Environment:**

This position works remotely and at a variety of sugarhouses for onsite visits. Work is a mixture of phone and desk/computer work and walking outside in wooded areas and inside sugarhouses. A VMSMA laptop will be provided for the duration of employment.

### **Essential Functions of the Job:**

- Collaborate with staff and Certifiers to create goals and metrics to measure program success and identify opportunities for improvement
- Keep up to date on the food safety regulatory environment as it relates to maple
- Field questions from sugar makers, Certifiers, Board members and other partners about the Certification Program and the Grant Program
- Write educational articles for VMSMA's communication channels and partner organizations about Certification and related topics of food safety, quality, and best practices
- Participate in Board Meetings (about 5 times per year)
- Take the IMSI grading school when available and participate in judging entries for VMSMA's pure maple product contest at its annual meeting
- Present educational content during the year (in person and online) as well as at VMSMA's Maple Conference (hybrid online and in-person conference annually in December)
- Build relationships with UVM Extension, Proctor Maple Research Center, VMSMA Certifiers, VMSMA members and other stakeholders
- Coordinate a feedback form to share with sugar makers participating in the Certification Program to measure success and create improvements in the program and materials
- Collaborate with appropriate VMSMA staff and committees to recommend improvements in the Program's Checklist, materials, and process
- Collaborate with appropriate VMSMA staff and committees to reach out to more sugar makers about the program and create opportunities for engagement
- Coordinate tracking of program data, for example: individuals in the process of Certification, Certificate numbers, which sugar makers are due for their two year Certification, etc.



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- Reach out to sugar makers who are coming due for another Certification and remind them when it's time to get started on the process
- Collaborate with VMSMA staff on tracking the Grant Program and any associated metrics
- Innovate on ways to reach a broader audience and continue to share information about the importance of Certification, including sharing more information with bulk packers (who purchase about 85% of Vermont's maple syrup)
- Regularly share information and solicit feedback from Certifiers and hold team meetings at least quarterly

### **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Required:**

- In depth knowledge of food safety regulations as they relate to maple production in Vermont
- Professional and accessible communication skills to build relationships with sugar makers, partner organizations, Certifiers, VMSMA Board members and staff.
- Ability to review complex material and explain it to a variety of stakeholders in written and spoken formats, including at various meetings and printed materials.
- Manage time effectively to ensure work is done in a timely fashion.
- Reliable mode of transportation with valid driver's license
- Neat and clean appearance
- Clear command of the English language, both written and spoken
- Reliable cell phone with appropriate coverage
- Computer skills including Google Drive, Gmail, Dropbox, scanning and saving documents (not an exhaustive list)
- Must be able to walk on uneven terrain in all weather conditions, negotiating sugarhouses and related buildings – often off season and unheated, and having a keen eye for observing small details
- Ability to work outdoors, in a variety of temperatures and all types of weather
- Must have good eyesight

### **Required Experience:**

- Preference will be given to candidates with prior experience with the Vermont maple industry; prefer applicants who have some level of maple sugaring experience
- Knowledge and training in food safety practices and regulations; preference for experience in food safety as it relates to maple production
- Experience supervising employees or volunteers in a professional setting