



Chief Financial Officer

Leadership Profile

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Executive Summary

Rodale Institute, a globally recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit and a leading voice in regenerative organic agriculture, seeks a strategic, visionary, and experienced financial executive to serve as its next Chief Financial Officer (CFO). This individual will join a mission-driven leadership team at a pivotal moment in the organization's growth, helping strengthen its financial foundation, support long-term sustainability, and advance its national and global impact.

For more than 75 years, Rodale Institute has advanced the science and practice of regenerative organic agriculture through rigorous research, farmer training, education, and consulting. What began as a pioneering effort to explore the connection between soil health and human health has evolved into an internationally respected organization influencing farming practices, food systems, and environmental sustainability worldwide. Today, Rodale Institute operates a growing portfolio of research, education, consulting, technical assistance, and certification-related initiatives while partnering with corporations, foundations, government agencies, and agricultural leaders to accelerate the adoption of regenerative organic practices.

The Institute has experienced substantial growth over the past several years, evolving from an organization with approximately \$10 million in annual revenue in 2020 to an operating enterprise of roughly \$20 million today. During that same period, net assets have grown from approximately \$37 million to more than \$52 million, reflecting increasing organizational scale, philanthropic investment, and programmatic expansion. Rodale Institute is also advancing a comprehensive \$140 million campaign to support research, farmer training, infrastructure, and future growth. As the organization expands its reach, influence, and complexity, there is an opportunity to further strengthen the financial strategy, systems, and organizational infrastructure necessary to support its next chapter.

Reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer and serving as a key member of the Executive Leadership Team, the CFO will provide strategic leadership across financial planning, capital strategy, investment oversight, treasury management, governance support, risk management, and organizational sustainability. The CFO will serve as a trusted advisor to the CEO, the Board of Directors, and the senior leadership team, helping to align financial resources, capital investments, and growth opportunities with organizational priorities. This leader will play a critical role in supporting campaign planning, revenue diversification, enterprise decision-making, and long-term financial stewardship.

The ideal candidate will be a proven and highly credible finance executive with experience leading complex, mission-driven organizations through periods of growth, transformation, and increasing organizational sophistication. They will bring deep expertise in financial strategy, forecasting, capital planning, treasury management, governance, and organizational stewardship, along with the executive presence necessary to establish immediate credibility with the Board, leadership team, donors, financial partners, and external stakeholders. Rodale Institute seeks a leader who has successfully navigated similar challenges before, can quickly build trust and influence, and possesses the strategic mindset and business acumen to help shape the organization's future.

This is an exceptional opportunity for a strategic financial leader to join a respected and growing organization at a defining moment in its history. The successful candidate will help ensure that Rodale Institute has the financial strategy, discipline, and resources necessary to advance a global movement focused on the health of people, soil, and the planet while positioning the organization for continued growth and long-term impact.

This is a hybrid position with a strong preference for candidates who can work on-site one or two days per week in Kutztown, Pennsylvania, to support collaboration and engagement.

To express personal interest in this role or to submit a nomination, please refer to the Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this profile.

Rodale Institute | Organizational Overview

Rodale Institute is a global leader in regenerative organic agriculture with a legacy spanning more than 75 years. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, they are dedicated to advancing the regenerative organic movement through rigorous scientific research, comprehensive farmer training, and broad consumer education. Their long-standing commitment to natural farming systems has helped demonstrate that organic agriculture is a viable and essential approach to ensuring long-term human and environmental health.

History

The origins of Rodale Institute trace back to 1947, when J. I. Rodale established what was then known as the Soil and Health Foundation. Inspired by a belief that healthy soil creates healthy food and healthy people, he purchased a struggling farm in Pennsylvania to test farming methods grounded in natural soil restoration. His pioneering views on organic agriculture helped shape the early organic movement in the United States. After his passing in 1971, his son Robert Rodale expanded the organization's work by developing a research-focused farm in Kutztown, Pennsylvania. Over time, this site became the Institute's home and an active center for regenerative organic research and education. The farmland continues to serve as a living laboratory where soil health practices, organic crop production, and sustainable farming strategies are tested and refined.



Through decades of continued development, Rodale Institute has become recognized as a foundational force in shaping the modern understanding of organic agriculture. Their commitment to long-term research and farmer outreach has established them as a trusted resource for farms, policymakers, and communities seeking to adopt natural and regenerative approaches to growing food.



Mission

Rodale Institute confronts one of the world's greatest challenges: creating a resilient global food system that improves human health and the environment. Their mission is to advance groundbreaking research and best-in-class education that enables farms and farmers to transition to regenerative organic agricultural practices, thereby improving the health of the world's soil and securing the global food supply.

Vision

Rodale Institute envisions a changed world where agricultural products are produced in a regenerative organic manner, and the metrics of success are measured against the health of people and the planet.

Core Programs and Areas of Impact

Rodale Institute's work spans research, farmer training, consumer education, and certification leadership. The following integrated quantitative data strengthens the understanding of their impact.

Scientific Research

Since 1947, Rodale Institute has led scientific exploration into natural and responsible farming approaches grounded in soil biology. Their campus is home to the Farming Systems Trial, the longest-running research project comparing organic and conventional farming practices in the United States. This landmark study demonstrates that organic systems produce competitive yields after the transition period, perform better during drought, support greater farm profitability, improve soil health, and reduce energy use and carbon emissions. Their research also advances solutions for pest and disease management, natural weed control, nutrient-rich food production, and strategies that help farms adapt to extreme weather conditions.

Findings from this research continue to show the advantages of regenerative organic systems. Results from the Farming Systems Trial reveal that organic regenerative systems can yield up to forty percent more than conventional systems during drought years. Additional research shows that organic systems use 45% less energy and emit 40% fewer carbon emissions while increasing soil carbon and enhancing overall soil resilience. These scientific outcomes demonstrate the power of regenerative organic agriculture to address climate change, improve water retention, and support long-term farm viability.

Farmer Training and Workforce Development

Rodale Institute addresses critical national gaps in the agricultural workforce. Only 1% of farmland in the United States is currently certified organic, yet 95 million acres of farmland are expected to change ownership within the next decade. Their farmer training programs are designed to prepare the next generation of regenerative organic growers for this major transition.

The organization offers immersive programs, including the Farmer Training School, Veteran Farmer Training, university partnerships, and internships across multiple departments. These programs cover essential competencies in soil science, crop production, marketing, financial management, and ecological stewardship.

Consumer Education

Rodale Institute provides one of the most comprehensive resource libraries for regenerative organic agriculture. Their platform includes downloadable field guides, white papers, guidance on organic farm funding, and school gardening curriculum resources.

They also offer extensive regional farmer toolkits covering major areas across the United States, including the Midwest, West, Plains, Northeast,

Northwest, Southeast, Southwest, and Mid-Atlantic regions. These resources help farmers strengthen supply chains, improve long-term viability, and transition to organic markets.

In addition, Rodale Institute's virtual learning center provides free online courses in organic certification, livestock transition, regenerative health, and consumer education, expanding access to high-quality organic learning worldwide.

Leadership in Regenerative Organic Certified®

One way you'll see Rodale Institute in the consumer marketplace is through the new **Regenerative Organic Certification**, a new high-bar food and fiber label that includes soil health, animal welfare, and worker fairness. <https://rodaleinstitute.org/education/resources/>

Rodale Institute helped shape and continues to support Regenerative Organic Certified®, a holistic agricultural standard that elevates soil health, animal welfare, and social fairness. The certification builds on the USDA Organic standard and adds additional criteria that set a higher bar for ecological and social responsibility.



This rapid growth reflects an increasing commitment to transparency and integrity in regenerative organic farming systems, with Rodale Institute continuing to guide and support this global movement.

What Is Regenerative Organic Agriculture?

Regenerative organic agriculture is a farming system that goes beyond sustainability. It is a holistic approach that works with natural systems to improve the resources it depends on rather than simply maintaining them. This philosophy recognizes soil as a living foundation for ecological and human health and seeks to enhance its capacity over time.

Why “Regenerative”?

In the nineteen seventies, Bob Rodale, son of founder J. I. Rodale, recognized that the term “sustainable” did not fully capture the potential of organic agriculture. Sustainability implies maintaining current conditions, but that is insufficient given the widespread degradation of soil health caused by industrial farming practices. Bob Rodale understood that farming should foster continual improvement, making soil and land better with each growing cycle. This belief led him to coin the term “regenerative organic,” which he defined as a system focused on renewal, resilience, and long-term vitality.

Why It Matters

The current industrial model of agriculture poses significant risks to global food security and environmental stability. According to the United Nations, only sixty years of farmable topsoil remain if prevailing practices continue. Despite this urgent threat, only one percent of U.S. cropland is certified organic. This reality makes Rodale Institute's work especially critical. The food system requires

transformational change to protect people's health, restore soil health, and secure a sustainable future before essential resources are depleted

The Three Pillars of Regenerative Organic Certified®

Soil Health

Regenerative organic agriculture uses practices such as cover crops, crop rotation, and conservation tillage to build soil organic matter, promote biodiversity, and avoid synthetic inputs. ROC® also excludes soil-less systems.

Animal Welfare

The certification protects the Five Freedoms for animals and requires grass-fed and pasture-raised conditions, prohibits CAFOs and long-distance transport, and ensures access to suitable shelter.

Social Fairness

ROC® ensures fair payments and living wages for farmers and farmworkers, safe working conditions, capacity-building, and freedom of association.



Financial Strength and Future Opportunity

Rodale Institute has experienced significant growth over the past several years, evolving from an organization with approximately \$10 million in annual revenue in 2020 to an operating enterprise of roughly \$16 million today. During that period, the Institute has expanded its research, farmer consulting and technical assistance programs, educational offerings, regional partnerships, and national reach.

This growth has been supported by increased philanthropic investment, government and foundation grants, corporate partnerships, and a strong financial foundation. Net assets have grown from approximately \$37 million in 2020 to more than \$52 million in 2024, providing the Institute with substantial resources from which to advance its mission.

Rodale Institute is now entering an important next phase. As its programs and operating infrastructure have expanded, the organization has an opportunity to build an increasingly diversified and sustainable revenue model. This includes strengthening individual and institutional philanthropy while continuing to explore earned revenue opportunities through consulting, sponsored research, professional education, corporate partnerships, and other mission-aligned services.

The next leader will join Rodale Institute at a moment of considerable momentum and will help the organization translate its expanded platform, strong reputation, and growing national relevance into sustainable long-term impact.

Financial Snapshot

- ~\$10M Revenue (2020)
- ~\$16M Revenue (2025/2026)
- \$52M+ Net Assets
- \$140M Comprehensive Campaign
- 75+ Year Legacy
- National Program Footprint
- Multiple Revenue Streams
- Growing Research, Education & Consulting Enterprise



Mission in Action

Rodale Institute's growing national influence is driven by its integrated approach to research, farmer education, consulting, and regenerative organic agriculture. As the organization expands its impact and reach, the EVP CFO will play a key role in ensuring the financial strategy, infrastructure, and resources are in place to support continued growth and mission advancement.

Position Summary

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) serves as a key member of the Executive Leadership Team and a strategic partner to the Chief Executive Officer and Board of Directors. As Rodale Institute's senior financial leader, the CFO is responsible for enterprise-wide financial strategy, capital planning, governance support, and long-term sustainability.

Serving as a trusted advisor to the CEO and executive leadership team, the CFO helps align financial resources with strategic priorities, growth opportunities, and capital investments. This leader provides the financial insight, business acumen, and forward-looking perspective necessary to support sound decision-making, strengthen organizational resilience, and position the Institute for continued growth and impact.

The successful candidate will bring a proven track record of strategic financial leadership, helping mission-driven organizations navigate growth, complexity, and change while maintaining strong fiscal stewardship and operational excellence.

Reporting Relationships

Reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Financial Officer serves on the Executive Leadership Team and oversees the Institute's finance function. Direct reports currently include the Vice President of Finance, who provides leadership for accounting, grants management, financial reporting, and related financial operations. There are an additional four staff members on the finance team, including Staff Accountant, Grant Accountant, Senior Grants Management, and Grant Support Specialist.

Responsibilities

Enterprise Financial Strategy

- Lead long-range financial planning aligned with organizational strategy.
- Advise leadership on the financial implications of major initiatives.
- Develop enterprise financial models supporting growth and sustainability.

Capital and Campaign Leadership

- Serve as financial architect for the comprehensive campaign.
- Model cash flow, commitments, and long-term sustainability.
- Partner with the Chief Development Officer on campaign strategy.

Board and Governance

- Primary financial partner to the Board's Finance and Audit Committees.
- Translate financial data into strategic insight and recommendations.
- Strengthen governance practices as scale increases.

Financial Stewardship

- Provide executive oversight of accounting, audits, and compliance.
- Ensure transparency and integrity of financial reporting.
- Oversee budgeting and multi-year planning.

Investment and Risk Management

- Partner with leadership on investment strategy and financial risk.
- Evaluate opportunities tied to growth and innovation.

Organizational and Team Leadership

- Ensure the performance and development of finance leadership talent, including the Controller.
- Align financial resources with operations, development, and programs.
- Support a culture of accountability and collaboration.

Goals and Objectives

Rodale Institute is entering an important period of growth and organizational evolution. As the Institute continues to expand its research, education, consulting, and global impact initiatives, the CFO will play a critical role in strengthening the financial strategy, infrastructure, and decision-making capabilities needed to support long-term sustainability and mission impact. Working closely with the CEO, Board of Directors, and Executive Leadership Team, this leader will help ensure that financial resources, capital investments, and growth opportunities are aligned with the Institute's strategic priorities. The following goals and objectives represent key priorities for the successful candidate.

Establish Credibility as a Strategic Financial Leader

Quickly build trust and credibility with the CEO, Board of Directors, Executive Leadership Team, and key stakeholders while serving as the Institute's chief financial strategist and advisor. Develop a deep understanding of Rodale Institute's mission, culture, programs, and growth priorities to effectively support enterprise decision-making.

Strengthen Financial Strategy and Decision Support

Enhance financial planning, forecasting, reporting, and performance measurement capabilities that provide leadership and the Board with actionable insights. Develop financial models and analytical tools that support increasingly sophisticated decision-making and long-term planning.

Advance Financial Sustainability and Revenue Diversification

Partner with executive leadership to evaluate and support revenue opportunities across philanthropy, grants, consulting services, education programs, strategic partnerships, and other mission-aligned activities. Help strengthen the Institute's long-term financial resilience while maintaining strong fiscal discipline.

Support Campaign, Capital, and Investment Strategy

Serve as a key financial partner in the Institute's comprehensive campaign and long-term capital planning efforts. Partner closely with the Chief Development Officer, CEO, and Board to align fundraising ambitions, capital investments, treasury management, and financial sustainability.

Enhance Governance, Risk Management, and Financial Stewardship

Strengthen financial governance, enterprise risk management, and scenario-planning capabilities appropriate for a growing, increasingly complex organization. Ensure the Board and Finance Committee receive timely, transparent, and strategic financial information that supports effective governance and decision-making.

Build a Scalable and High-Performing Finance Function

Continue evolving the finance function to support the organization's growing scale and complexity, including the development of systems, processes, and talent necessary to support long-term growth and operational excellence.



Candidate Qualifications

Rodale Institute seeks a proven, highly credible executive who has successfully led financial strategy for a growing and increasingly complex organization. The ideal candidate will bring the judgment, experience, and leadership presence necessary to establish immediate credibility with the CEO, Board of Directors, executive leadership team, and external stakeholders. Candidates should demonstrate experience supporting organizational growth, capital planning, treasury management, revenue sustainability, and strategic decision-making. The successful leader will be capable of hitting the ground running while helping position the Institute for its next phase of impact and growth.

Education & Certifications

A bachelor's degree in finance, accounting, business administration, economics, or a related field is required. An MBA, master's degree in finance, accounting, business administration, or a related discipline is strongly preferred. CPA designation and/or additional professional certifications are valued but not required.

Required Experience and Expertise

The ideal candidate will bring a demonstrated record of strategic financial leadership, organizational stewardship, and enterprise-wide impact within a complex, mission-driven environment.

They will demonstrate:

- A minimum of 10 years of progressive financial leadership experience, including senior-level responsibility for financial strategy, planning, budgeting, forecasting, reporting, and organizational decision support.
- Experience serving as a Chief Financial Officer, Vice President for Finance, Treasurer, or comparable senior financial executive within a nonprofit, research, higher education, healthcare, agricultural, conservation, or other mission-driven organization.
- Demonstrated success partnering with chief executives, governing boards, finance committees, and executive leadership teams to develop and implement strategies that support organizational growth, sustainability, and long-term impact.
- Strong expertise in long-range financial planning, financial modeling, scenario analysis, budgeting, forecasting, performance measurement, and resource allocation.
- Experience supporting capital planning, treasury management, investment oversight, and enterprise risk management within a growing organization.
- Demonstrated ability to support and evaluate diverse revenue streams, including philanthropy, grants, contracts, consulting services, partnerships, earned revenue, and other mission-aligned funding sources.
- Experience serving as a strategic advisor to leadership, translating complex financial and operational information into actionable recommendations that support informed decision-making.
- A track record of strengthening financial systems, processes, reporting capabilities, and internal controls to support organizational growth and increasing complexity.
- Proven success in building, mentoring, and leading high-performing teams while fostering a culture of accountability, collaboration, transparency, and continuous improvement.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to engage, influence, and build credibility with board members, donors, financial institutions, auditors, and other key stakeholders.

Leadership Skills and Competencies

Strategic and Enterprise Leadership

Operates as a trusted advisor to the CEO, Board of Directors, and Executive Leadership Team. Balances mission priorities, growth opportunities, operational realities, and financial sustainability while helping shape long-term organizational strategy.

Financial Acumen and Business Insight

Demonstrates exceptional financial and analytical capabilities, with the ability to translate complex financial, operational, and market data into clear, actionable insights that inform decision-making and drive organizational performance.

Board Partnership and Executive Presence

Possesses the credibility, judgment, and executive presence necessary to build strong relationships with board members, committee leaders, and senior stakeholders. Communicates complex financial information in a clear, concise, and strategic manner.

Collaboration and Relationship Building

Builds trust across functions and works effectively with leaders throughout the organization. Partners

closely with executive leadership to align resources, priorities, and investments in support of the Institute's mission and strategic objectives.

Growth Mindset and Change Leadership

Brings experience leading organizations through growth, increasing complexity, and organizational evolution. Embraces innovation, identifies opportunities for continuous improvement, and helps build the financial infrastructure necessary to support future success.

People Leadership and Talent Development

Demonstrated ability to attract, develop, mentor, and retain high-performing teams. Fosters a culture of accountability, collaboration, transparency, and professional growth while empowering others to achieve organizational goals.

Mission Alignment and Stewardship

Demonstrates a commitment to mission-driven leadership and responsible stewardship of organizational resources. Operates with the highest levels of integrity, transparency, accountability, and respect for the values of the organization.



The Community

Kutztown, Pennsylvania



Kutztown, Pennsylvania, offers a unique combination of rural character, natural beauty, and accessibility to major metropolitan areas. Located in Berks County, the region is known for its rolling farmland, strong agricultural heritage, and close-knit community environment.

Rodale Institute's campus sits on 450 acres and serves as both a working farm and a center for research, education, and innovation. The setting provides a distinctive and mission-aligned environment, offering a direct connection to the land and agricultural systems that define the Institute's work.

Kutztown is conveniently located near the cities of Reading and Allentown and within driving distance of Philadelphia, New York City, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. Residents benefit from a peaceful, rural setting while maintaining access to major economic and cultural centers.

The area appeals to individuals and families seeking a balance of professional impact and quality of life, with access to outdoor recreation, local events, and a strong sense of community.

Lehigh Valley International Airport is approximately 25 minutes from campus, providing convenient access for regional and national travel.

Procedure for Candidacy



All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV/resume and a letter of interest. Review of applications has begun and will continue until the position is filled.

Please direct all nominations and applications to Ashley Buderus, Michelle Johnson, and Jess Cummings through the WittKieffer Candidate Portal by [clicking here](#) or through the office of Jess Cummings at [jcummings@wittkieffer.com](mailto:jcumings@wittkieffer.com).

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Rodale Institute values diversity and is committed to equal opportunity for all persons regardless of age, color, disability, ethnicity, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status or any other status protected by law.

The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. This material has been copied, compiled, or quoted in part from Rodale Institute's documents and personal interviews, and is believed to be reliable. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and factual situations govern.

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