

Hristina Petrovska, RDN

Food Systems Program Coordinator



What is your job title?

Food Systems Program Coordinator

Where do you work (setting and/or company)?

Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Food Innovation Center

How long have you been at this job?

2 years

Please describe your job (including typical role, population served and anything else you feel is important in understanding the job):

As a program coordinator I am responsible for putting together educational content around food systems, sustainability, resilience, and gardening as part of the college's non-credit program offerings. During the fall and spring semesters these programs are largely intended for adults who sign up for these open enrollment classes. In the summer months, we provide this kind of education for youth of all ages (preschoolers to high school students) through interactive gardening experiences. Our site is a 5-acre farm, showcasing a range of sustainable agricultural practices. It also includes a food hub, a licensed food processing facility equipped to produce fresh-cut fruits and vegetables at a range of production scales.

Does your job require any additional schooling or education?

No. RDs in the field of sustainability and food systems is also relatively new, and the RD credential was not even required for this position. It is important, though, for dietetics professionals to venture into this field, as so much of the recommendations that we make as dietitians are so closely connected and interdependent on the food system we are a part of. Addressing issues around access to food, food insecurity, equity, and sustainable farming are crucial in the big picture of healthy living.

What are possible places of employment for your position?

The principles and mindset of sustainability can be applied in any area of dietetics that already exists, and there are many opportunities that still need to be explored and ventured into. Food and farming business and industries, retailers, educational institutions are just a few examples.

What is your favorite thing about your job?

My favorite part about this job is how community based it is. Not only do I get to meet some wonderful and inspiring people through the different programs we offer, but I also get to work with a lot of other community organizations on creating and innovating new ways of engaging with community members.

Why/how did you choose your field and how did you get into it?

Growing up, I was a part of an environmental organization and participated in a lot of action around changing policies, cleaning up lakes, and writing letters to authorities to protect endangered species in my home county Macedonia. Over time, I learned that the impact agriculture has on the environment is much higher than I had initially understood, and I wanted to dive into that field deeper. Through my college years, I remained active in both fields: nutrition and sustainability, through volunteering and actively engaging in community events and activities. When it was time to look for a professional job, I knew that's what I wanted to do.

What is your educational background?

I obtained my Bachelor of Science in Dietetics, as well as my Dietetics internship at Western Michigan University (WMU). Prior to attending WMU, I studied at Kalamazoo Valley Community College for one year, as well as two years at a local university in my home country Macedonia where I studied nutrition science.