Vegetable Farm Apprenticeship

The Food Bank operates its Cultivating for Community regenerative and education farm initiative on the Food Bank Farm in Hadley. We seek to contract a Vegetable Farm Apprentice for the 2024 growing season (March 18 – November 15) to work full-time alongside our field crew, farm manager and volunteers. This 8-month apprenticeship is an intensive educational training program for individuals interested in farming full time and who are ready to increase their farming knowledge to prepare for a career growing vegetables. Apprentices will gain a solid foundation in the skills necessary to manage a small-scale commercial vegetable operation using minimal-till methods.

The Food Bank is an equal-opportunity employer that celebrates diversity and is committed to an inclusive environment for all its contracted workers, employees, and volunteers. Emerging Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) farmers are encouraged to apply.

The starting pay for this position is $17.50/hour with the possibility of a higher starting wage based on experience. See below for the job description and position requirements.

Benefits:
- 3/4-hour paid lunch break
- Paid sick time
- An average of 3-5 hours per week of paid in-field educational training including principles of farm management, decision making, and apprentice mentorship
- Professional development stipend

To apply, please email your resume and cover letter along with two references to Lee Gadway, Farm Manager at: leeg@foodbankwma.org This position will remain open until filled.

Responsibilities include:
- Greenhouse seeding and management
- Transplanting and direct seeding, hand weeding, hoeing, cultivating, harvesting
- Washing and packing, cover cropping, mulching, pruning and trellising, irrigating, compost making, pest and disease control
- Walk-behind and ride-on tractor operating
- Machine and tool maintenance
- Basic record keeping and competency with word processing, spreadsheet, and email/calendar software

WORKING CONDITIONS
- Typical workday schedule: 8:00am - 4:00pm (Monday-Friday with occasional weekend work)
- This is a physically challenging apprenticeship. Apprentice must be able and willing to:
  - Stand, crouch, kneel, and bend for extended periods doing repetitive tasks
  - Lift and move crates, materials, hoses, etc.
- Lift up to 50 pounds on a regular basis
- Perform other physical activities as needed
- Work steadily outdoors in all weather including heat, cold, rain, and wind. (Working outdoors is not required when conditions are hazardous per policy.
  - Use of hand tools and power equipment, including lawn mower, and walk-behind and ride-on tractors

**QUALIFICATIONS/ REQUIREMENTS**
- Minimum one-year/season work experience on a farm
- High school diploma or GED
- Capable of both working alone and on a team

**ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW**
Cultivating for Community (CFC) is a minimal-till organic farming initiative currently on 1.3 acres. We grow 40+ types of vegetables on permanent beds for the Food Bank’s member food pantries and meal sites. We have two heated greenhouses, irrigation systems, four-wheel and two-wheel tractors, storage barn, coolers, and other equipment.

CFC seeks to promote minimal-till organic farming and support the next generation of farmers to succeed by offering apprenticeships, Food Bank Farm incubator pathways, and access to technical assistance.

*Food Bank Farm – Cultivating for Community | The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts (foodbankwma.org)*