

Position Title: Beginning Farmer Apprentice

Location: Zenger Farm - Portland, OR

Position Type: Temporary; April 1st – November 14th, Monday – Thursday

Pay Rate: \$16.00/hour, average of 32 hours per week

Position Close Date: 5PM, February 19th, 2024. Open until filled.



About Zenger Farm:

Zenger Farm is a 501(c)3 nonprofit working urban farm in Portland, OR that models, promotes, and educates about sustainable food systems, environmental stewardship, community development, and access to good food for all. We are guided by a vision of a healthy, resilient community, where the wellbeing and prosperity of children and adults, regardless of race, geography or socio-economic status, is enhanced through access to affordable, plentiful and nourishing foods. As a justice centered, food access and education non-profit, we believe nourishment is a basic human right and that the root causes of inequitable food access – racism, poverty and other systems of oppression – must be addressed to create a just food system.

Our multiple programs center on food access and knowledge sharing centering our relationship with food and the environment. This includes youth education opportunities with the local school district and families, cooking workshops led by women of color food leaders, partnering with other farmers and clinics to provide access to affordable produce to medically vulnerable communities and operating a full-scale CSA and beginning farmer apprenticeship program.

Farm apprentices complete the program ready to work on a sustainable mixed-vegetable farm as a Crew Leader, Harvest Manager, Field Manager, or Crew Member. We are proud that so many of our past farm apprentices currently have successful farming careers. Over the past 13 years, Between 2010 and 2023, 44 farm apprentices graduated from our program and 28 of them (63%) farmed during the 2023 growing season (or were in farm-related degree programs), and 17 of them (42%) were farm owners or farm managers.

We seek to train an inclusive next generation of farmers. Nationwide, 95% of farmers are white, 85% of farmers are men, and the average age of a farmer is 60-years-old. Many other groups are underrepresented. This apprenticeship program seeks to decrease these disparities in representation caused by systems rooted in white supremacy, colonialism, racism, capitalism and sexism. Therefore, we encourage Black, Indigenous, and people of color, women, LGBTQ2SIA people, religious minorities, recent migrants/refugees, people with disabilities who can meet the responsibilities and qualifications, and people from different generational and economic backgrounds to apply. This farm apprenticeship program is designed for people with little or no experience farming.

We seek to model an economically-viable alternative to “conventional agriculture” while centering food justice work and developing practices that build soil health. Farmers should be responsible and accountable members of their communities. Farms should improve community resilience and self-reliance. Farms should foster connections with the land. We seek to reform conventional farming practices that depend heavily on machinery, chemicals, exploited labor and exploited soil. Conventional agriculture damages land, air and water; harms the health of communities that consume the produce; and harms the workers who feed our communities.

Farm Apprentices care for four acres of diversified vegetable crops and fruit orchards. Zenger Farm is certified organic. We grow over 150 varieties of vegetables on just over two acres where we spend the vast

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majority of our time. We are also farming a second site called Furey Field that is 0.5 acres for a winter CSA program that is farmed in a no-till way. Farm Apprentices will get experience in both tillage and minimal tillage practices with an emphasis on the main season site.

We seek to operate a farm that models social justice and economic viability. We earned \$113,000 from the distribution of produce in 2023. 95% of our produce went to our CSA, with 35 shares picked up by members at the farm and 75 shares distributed to patients at the nearby Multnomah County Mid County Health Center. The rest of our produce goes to other programming, local restaurants and grocery stores. Our farming operation allows us to model innovative practices. We also cultivate partnerships that prioritize underserved communities in getting access to fresh food in the Foster/Powell neighborhood. We prioritize culturally specific organizations to help conduct outreach for our CSA program, restaurants and buyers who are aligned with our values, and networking with other small-scale farmers who experience barriers in the food system.

The core of the Zenger Farm Crew consists of three farm operations staff and four full-season farm apprentices. Short-season interns will join the crew 2 days/week for 8 weeks in the Summer and again in the Fall. Farm apprentices spend much of their time closely mentored by our two farm staff. Similarly, farm apprentices will work closely with, mentor and teach the farm interns when they join the crew. Additionally, farm apprentices will lead volunteers and other work parties.

Education of the body is the core component of this apprenticeship. We teach apprentices the underlying ergonomics of farm work. Proper ergonomics are essential for an economically-viable farm. Your speed, stamina and efficiency will allow you to operate your own farm and compete when other farms lower their costs with machinery, chemicals, and exploited labor.

We provide an immersive and comprehensive education in farming. Farm apprentices will have direct experience in all aspects of our farming operation and will take turns leading projects that are applicable to future farm jobs. The farm apprenticeship includes over 40 hours of classroom instruction in topics such as crop planning, irrigation, seed saving, soil fertility, enterprise budgeting, etc. Farm apprentices will be provided additional opportunities to attend classes and tours at other local farms. While apprentices may occasionally participate in other programming at Zenger Farm the vast majority of their time is spent farming.

We seek to provide a compassionate education. Zenger Farm recognizes that many people, disproportionately Black, Indigenous and Latinx folks, have historical and current traumas related to land access and agricultural work. We also recognize that training future farmers to operate an economically-viable farm focused on production within a capitalist system hinders our ability to create a healing environment to address that trauma. We strive to create as much of a supportive environment as possible through prioritizing preventative care, open feedback, routine check-ins, and communicating expectations. Apprentices will examine the root causes of injustice in our food system through facilitated discussion with the team prompted by readings, videos, and talks. We make space for apprentices to develop connections and network within the small farming community in Portland to see firsthand how small scale farmers are innovating solutions. Through

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immersive field work, conversation, and creating space, we hope apprentices can start to see themselves as part of a solution for change through agriculture.

Time Commitment

- April 1st – November 14th, Monday – Thursday, 8-10 hours/day
- Approximately 16 hours over the entire season to attend other programming at Zenger Farm including community events, field trips, etc.

Responsibilities

- Field work: Most field work at Zenger Farm is done with hand tools, and includes seeding, amending, transplanting, weeding, irrigating, trellising, pruning, season extension, pest management, harvesting, hauling and washing produce for sale.
- Machinery: Operate and maintain a weed whacker, flame-weeding, 2-wheel tractor (BCS) with various implements, and rare use of a chainsaw.
- Rotating responsibilities in all aspects of our farming operation, such as management of the propagation greenhouse, irrigation, and field preparation; leading planting, harvest, wash and pack; supervising short-season interns and volunteer work parties; staffing CSA pickup and writing newsletters; driving the farm van during restaurant deliveries; and, toward the end of the apprenticeship, a two-week rotation leading the entire crew in all field work.

Qualifications

- A strong commitment to the mission of Zenger Farm.
- Demonstrated interest in farming.
- Intention to maintain continued involvement in the agricultural community by engaging in farm work or the development of a small farm business.
- Ability to lift and carry 50 pounds, farm outdoors in all weather conditions including heat, cold and rain to perform the above responsibilities.
- Ability to endure prolonged periods of physical activity, including walking, standing, squatting, and repetitive tasks
- Attitude: Positive, driven, flexible and team-oriented.
- Current regular driver's license.
- We will perform a background check and address any issues on a case-by-case basis – no one should feel discouraged from applying.
- We cannot help with visas or work permits for this program.

Compensation

- \$16/hour paid monthly
- 1 full CSA share
- If housing is a barrier for you to participate in the program, please indicate so when you submit the application

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Application Instructions

You can apply online or by US mail. Please do not submit your application by email.

- [Apply online.](#)
- Print and mail the following application to: Zenger Farm, Attn: Jayanika Lawrence, Farming Apprenticeship, 11741 SE Foster Rd. Portland, OR 97266.

Contact Jayanika Lawrence (jayanika@zengerfarm.org) with any questions, but please do not submit your application by email.

Zenger Farm provides equal opportunity without regard to race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, handicap, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity, in accordance with applicable federal laws.

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Application

A complete application includes these sections:

1. Applicant information
2. Experience
3. Questions
4. Demographics (optional and voluntary)

1. Applicant Information:

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Primary Phone: _____

Address: _____

How did you learn about this opportunity (please be as detailed as possible so that we can improve our outreach)? _____

Interview Availability: ☐ At Zenger Farm ☐ Video Chat (only for those out of the area)

Will you be at least 18 years old at the start of this apprenticeship? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you available to participate for the hours and dates outlined in the description? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have a current regular driver's license? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you are not accepted for the full-season apprenticeship, would you like to be considered for the short-season internship (8 weeks in summer or fall, no stipend)?

☐ No ☐ Yes, Summer ☐ Yes, Fall ☐ Yes, Both ☐ Yes, Either

If you have ever applied for this or any other position at Zenger Farm, please list those positions.

2. Experience: You may attach a resume OR complete the following sections on a separate sheet (please limit to two pages total):

- a. Education: Please include the name of the school or organization (high school and above), dates attended (month/year-month/year), location, and what the focus of your education was (major, for example).
- b. Relevant and Recent Work Experience: Please include the name of your employer or situation, when you were employed (month/year-month/year), location, and a brief description of what you did (your job responsibilities, for example).

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- c. Relevant and Recent Community/Volunteer Experience: Please include the name of the organization (if applicable), when your experience was (month/year-month/year), location, and a brief description of what you did.

3. **Questions:** Historically, we have consistently received over 100 applications for just 4 positions. Please, take your time and provide thoughtful responses. Also, please answer the following questions on a separate sheet and limit your responses to one page total.
 1. How do you hope to grow during your apprenticeship at Zenger Farm?
 2. After your apprenticeship at Zenger Farm, how do you plan to use and apply what you've learned?
 3. What experience do you have with gardening or farming?
 4. What is your experience in communities most impacted by injustice in our food system, specifically Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color? This can be lived experience (meaning you identify as a member of these communities), volunteering or paid work.
 5. What experience do you have with physical work and/or physical activity?
 6. What three attributes would co-workers, friends, and family all agree that you possess and why?
 7. What do you most enjoy doing with your free time?
 8. Please provide the name, phone, email address and describe your relationship for two references, at least one reference that is work-related.

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4. **Demographics:** This section is optional and voluntary. We are gathering this information to use after the selection process is complete to evaluate our outreach in attracting a diverse group of candidates. We will never use this information as part of the selection process, nor will we use it to make any decisions about the terms of the apprenticeship. The information will be treated as confidential as appropriate and is intended for use on an aggregate rather than individual basis.

1. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary/third gender
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe: _____

2. How do you identify? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native
- ☐ Hispanic/Latinx
- ☐ Middle Eastern/Arab American/North African
- ☐ Black/African American
- ☐ White/Caucasian
- ☐ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Asian American
- ☐ Indigenous Peoples from North, Central, or South America (Outside the US)
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe: _____

3. What is your age?

- ☐ 17 or younger
- ☐ 18-20
- ☐ 21-29
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-59
- ☐ 60 or older
- ☐ Prefer not to say

4. Are you an immigrant, asylee or refugee?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

5. Do you identify as a person who experiences a disability?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say