

Position Title: Beginning Farmer Apprentice
Location: Zenger Farm - Portland, OR
Position Type: Volunteer with Stipend; March 17th - October 31st, Monday – Thursday
Stipend: \$576/week
Application Close Date: 5 PM, February 3rd, 2025. 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 well-being and prosperity of children and adults, regardless of race, geography or socioeconomic 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, partnering with other farmers and clinics to provide access to affordable produce to medically vulnerable communities and operating a full-scale organic diversified vegetable CSA and beginning farmer apprenticeship program.

This apprenticeship is exclusively for individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC). The program is part of Zenger Farm's commitment to addressing systemic inequities in agriculture and food systems by creating opportunities for BIPOC individuals to build skills and connections in farming.

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 remain significantly underrepresented in farming. This apprenticeship program seeks to address these disparities, which stem from systems rooted in white supremacy, colonialism, racism, capitalism, and sexism.

Recognizing the historical and systemic barriers that have excluded BIPOC individuals from equitable participation in farming. Additionally, we welcome individuals who also bring lived experiences or identities as women, LGBTQ2SIA people, religious minorities, recent migrants/refugees, people with disabilities, and those from different generational and economic backgrounds who can meet the responsibilities and qualifications outlined. This program is designed for individuals with little or no farming experience and aims to provide meaningful pathways into farming and food systems work.

We seek to model an agroecological alternative to “conventional agriculture” while centering food justice work and developing practices that build soil. Agroecology takes a holistic view of the food system, integrating ecological, economic, and social dimensions. It applies ecological principles to farming by examining the relationships between plants, animals, people, and the environment. This approach enhances biodiversity, improves soil health, reduces reliance on synthetic inputs like chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and supports vibrant, healthy communities.

To create a sustainable, equitable food system, agroecology combines scientific research, farming practices, indigenous knowledge, and movements for social change. It is a transformative approach that is transdisciplinary, participatory, and action-oriented, addressing the interconnected challenges of agriculture, the environment, and society.

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Farm Apprentices care for a small farm site, demonstration gardens, and fruit crops. Zenger Farm follows organic practices. We grow a small diversity of crops (vegetables, flowers, and herbs) at these locations, where we spend the majority of our time. Farm Apprentices will get to learn agroecological farming and gardening practices. In 2025, we will incorporate practices that focus on improving soil health, including no/low-till and on-farm compost. Apprentices will also be helping with fruit crop pruning and maintenance.

The core of the Zenger Farm apprenticeship consists of two beginning farmer training staff and four full-season farm apprentices. Farm apprentices spend much of their time mentored by our two farmer training staff. As farm apprentices gain more skills and familiarity with farming, there will be opportunities for independent and group work.

Education of the body is a component of this apprenticeship. We teach apprentices the underlying ergonomics of farm work. Farming is intense physical work and in nearly all weather conditions. Proper ergonomics are essential for sustainable farm endeavors. Your stamina, self-care, and efficiency will help you operate your own farm successfully.

This program includes both on field and classroom education. 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 endeavors. The farm apprenticeship includes over 40 hours of classroom instruction in topics such as crop planning, irrigation, seed saving, soil fertility, recordkeeping, etc. This classroom instruction includes additional opportunities to attend classes and field trips with other local farms, farm service providers, and community-based food systems organizations. Apprentices will occasionally participate in other programming at Zenger Farm (Youth Education, Food Access, and CSA Partnerships for Health).

We strive to offer a supportive and enriching learning experience for our apprentices. 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 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

- March 17th - October 31st, Monday – Thursday, 8-10 hours/day
- Approximately 20 hours over the entire season to attend other programming at Zenger Farm including community events, field trips, etc.
- Zenger Farm Apprentices will have the opportunity to attend portions of the Beginning Farmer Educational Event Series (BFEES) offered by Rogue Farm Corps. BFEES classes are offered on Wednesdays (online - 6-8 PM; in-person 3-6 PM)

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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.
- 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; recordkeeping and writing newsletters; and a two-week rotation leading the entire crew in all field work.
- Off-field educational opportunities: participate in classroom education, engage independent projects related to farming and food systems, and attend field trips.

Readiness Criteria

- A strong commitment to the mission of Zenger Farm
- Demonstrated interest in farming and/or sustainable food systems
- Intention to maintain continued involvement in the agricultural and food systems community by engaging in farm/food systems 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
- 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

What We Provide:

- \$576/week stipend
- Employee Assistance Program offered by Oregon Educators Benefit Board
- Farm-fresh organic produce, based on availability

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: Sachin Bangalore, Farming Apprenticeship, 11741 SE Foster Rd. Portland, OR 97266.

Contact Sachin Bangalore (sachin@zengerfarm.org) with any questions, but please do not submit your application by email.

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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.

Application

A complete application includes these sections:

1. Applicant information
2. Experience
3. Questions
4. Demographics

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).

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- 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).
 - 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:

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