



Aspiring Farmer Fellowship

Cultivating leaders with in-the-field experience

Lead Farm Fellow Role Description

Summary

We're opening two positions for Lead Farm Fellows and looking for candidates!

Big Muddy Urban Farm's mission is to make sustainable agriculture education accessible to all. Central to this mission is our program, the Aspiring Farmer Fellowship, which offers a non-traditional educational experience building skills, growing community, and cultivating local food system leadership.

The Lead Fellows have an important role in the culture and community life of the Aspiring Farmer Fellowship for the season. The aim for Lead Fellows is to develop their language of food, gain a greater understanding of food systems issues, and learn advanced concepts in market farm business planning, operations management, team building, and leadership.

The fellowship season starts with two Lead Fellows co-writing a market farm business plan in the winter months. Three Beginner Farmer Fellows enter in February for a structured spring training and planting period that leads into activation of the business plan for the season. The experience is rounded out with reflection and a celebration in October.

The overall fellowship experience involves community engagement activities consisting of weekly support of gardening/food systems education at a community or nonprofit organization such as a public school or direct service organization. Additional community engagement service includes Big Muddy Urban Farm activities like neighbor meet and greets, farm tours, volunteer days, tool lending, food distribution, and youth garden.

Lead Fellows will be evaluated through varied qualitative and quantitative means. Leads will fill in a pre and post fellowship evaluation to measure skill development. During their fellowship, Leads will present their business plan before a community board for review, advice, and approval, with subsequent evaluations in the form of monthly operations reports, quarterly check-ins, and an end-of-season farm report.

The fellowship learning experience is supported by guest instructors covering curriculum and training components in spring and one-on-one paired mentorship during the season, in addition to occasional farm tours and conferences.

The Lead Farm Fellow position receives a living stipend with possibility of an end-of-season award, in addition to room and board, tuition, resource access. Fellows may be eligible for food stamps and student loan deferment during their term.

This requires a 40hr/wk, live-in commitment where both Lead Farm Fellows will be housemates in the sage green house on the Big Muddy Urban Farm Campus.

Responsibilities and Duties

- Select first year Aspiring Farmer Fellowship candidates with selection committee members.
- Co-write a majority of the market farm production business plan.
- Co-lead monitoring of plots, chicken coop, and house conditions, including shoveling, mowing, and general upkeep.
- Co-lead fellowship meetings, team-building exercises, and regularly scheduled group field walks.
- Co-develop weekly farm task lists and prepare monthly farm operation reports based on business plan objectives.
- Help plan major events including Seed Share, Spring Plant Sale, Summer Alumni Party, 33rd Block Party, and Let's Grow Here Celebration.
- Provide weekly garden/food system education support with a community partner.
- Participate and occasionally help coordinate community engagement activities including farm tours, volunteer days, tool lending, food distribution, and youth garden.

Qualifications

Experience

Vegetable farm production experience, preferably at least one full season, or Completion of First Year Aspiring Farmer Fellowship/Residency term.

Primary Commitment

The quality of the fellowship experience is based on the commitment levels of fellows. Through grant funding and community support, we are able to provide housing, stipends, and tuition coverage for the fellows to dedicate focus to learning while in the fellowship experience. A 40 hr/wk, live-in commitment is required for the duration of the term. There will be some evening and weekend hours during the growing season. We encourage fellows to protect adequate time and energy for engagement in community life, commitment to partnerships, exploration of the city, personal growth, and to live simply and within the means of the program and ask fellows to limit substantial regular commitments during the fellowship term.

Preferred Skills/Interests

- Interest in fulfilling a role of leadership and responsibility.
- Experience working in diverse group/community environments.
- Experience coordinating volunteers.
- Capable of safely leading groups and self during extreme weather conditions.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Professional, mature demeanor and work ethic.
- Ability to lift 50 lbs.

Stipend and Benefits

Stipend

Part of the fellowship package is a stipend of \$675 per month, helping defray living expenses

during the fellow's learning experience. The gross amount of stipend is delivered to the second year fellow by direct deposit at the end of each month. BMUF will not withhold any taxes and the responsibility of taxable income reporting is that of the recipient.

Health Care Reimbursement

BMUF will pay up to \$500.00 in premium costs or medical expenses per term. BMUF can pay this directly to the provider or will reimburse the payee upon receipt of invoice/expenses. Fellows must keep and submit out-of-pocket receipts for reimbursement.

Rent and Utilities

BMUF covers monthly rent and utilities, including electricity, gas, water, and wireless internet.

Tuition, Conference and Travel, Resource Access

BMUF covers the costs of administration, staff time, honorariums to guest instructors and farms as well as travel and registration costs for select conferences and the purchase, storage, and maintenance of tools for use.

Term

The Lead Farmer Fellowship position will begin November 15th, 2021 and run until October 31, 2022.

*The lead fellowship position is open for multiple terms should any candidate want to reapply for additional terms.

To Apply

Send your resume to director@bigmuddyurbanfarm.org by October 15th for consideration of the Lead Farm Fellowship.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to Brent Lubbert at 402.213.9646 or director@bigmuddyurbanfarm.org