



**Position Title: FARMING ASSISTANT**

**Application Deadline:** February 25, 2017

**Position Start Date:** Flexible, ideally April

**Employment terms:** This is a part-time, seasonal position, 15-19 hours/week April – October 2017. *An opportunity to increase hours and position term may become available depending on funding.*

**Salary & Benefits:** \$15-17/hour depending on qualifications. Health benefits are not available for this position.

**Groundswell Center for Local Food & Farming** is an agriculture education nonprofit based in Ithaca, NY, operating under the Center for Transformative Action and serving the broader Finger Lakes area. Our core work is to foster a diverse next generation of small-scale sustainable farmers and land cultivators by lessening common barriers to land access, resources and business ownership.

This position primarily supports the production aspirations of a diverse group of farmers enrolled in the Groundswell Farm Business Incubator Program by working closely with GS Staff and by maintaining the Incubator Farm site. The Incubator program provides affordable access to land, agricultural infrastructure, and business support for diverse beginning farmers including New Americans, refugees and those with limited resources. This position is funded by USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program Grant # 11674923, the Park Foundation and Groundswell's General Funds.

**Duties and Responsibilities:**

**A. Site and Land Maintenance 45%**

- Help maintain and develop physical infrastructure (fencing, cooler, irrigation, shed, wash station, classroom) and equipment and supplies (BCS, tractor, weed whacker, hand tools, etc.) including purchasing materials, light construction, basic plumbing and electric
- Perform site and prep work to support participants cultivating healthy, certifiably-organic farmland, including safe operation of tractors and implements for field work and activities related to the operation of participant farmer enterprises in field and hoop houses
- Identify and assist to implement site improvements that enhance aesthetics, learning opportunities for visitors and enhance soil health and increase biodiversity of pollinators
- Assist to identify infrastructure needs for Incubator program
- Help train and supervise volunteers

**B. Production Assistant 45%**

- Build relationships with Incubator farmer participants who speak English, Karen, Burmese and ESL; understand their production goals and needs
- Support participants to develop crop plans, establish creative record keeping systems appropriate for English fluency
- Assist with end of season review for each Incubator farmer
- Work with GS Staff to coordinate or lead Incubator farmer trainings, workshops and tours on topics such as seed viability and germination, equipment and machinery use and safety, product pricing, organic pest and disease management, crop selection, fertility and weed management, post-harvest handling and storage and product distribution
- Help coordinate Farmer Mentor network
- Support program outreach and marketing efforts
- Assist to expand marketing channels for Incubator Farmers that meet the participants' goals and address community food needs

#### **D. Community Engagement & Professional Development 10%**

- Participate in Incubator Committee meetings
- Maintain a regular presence at cultural and community events in order to build strong long-term relationships with individuals and grassroots groups in-line with GS program mission
- Develop awareness of important cultural histories and practices relevant to Incubator Program
- Proactively identify areas for growth and professional development
- Build and strengthen community and public relationships with regional farmers, business owners, community members from diverse backgrounds, and with organizations including the Incubator Network, local schools and colleges, refugee support organizations

**Supervision** is provided by Groundswell Farming & Business Specialist.

**Supervision provided:** This position will help to coordinate volunteers.

**Minimum Formal Education:** none

#### **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Desired:**

- Capacity and passion to work with beginning farmers with cultural and racially diverse backgrounds
- Professional and/or lived experience with intercultural and diverse backgrounds
- Verbal communication skills, specifically with ESL individuals
- Hands-on vegetable farming experience is a must including greenhouse and high tunnel production, cover cropping and organic pest management
- Support farm production including crop planning, crop rotation, record keeping is ideal though a willingness to learn is required
- Familiarity with USDA or NOFA-NY organic farming regulations, Farmer's Pledge, biodynamic, CNG
- Ability to juggle multiple tasks, deadlines and attention to detail
- Demonstrated ability to follow directions, work effectively and efficiently without close supervision

- Strong interest and demonstrated commitment to social justice and sustainable farming including a willingness to engage in continuing education on related topics including BOCES ESL classes, undoing racism workshops, NYCAMH
- Proficiency in Word and email communications

**Special Requirements:** This position requires flexible hours, often including evenings and one weekend day to match the farming schedule of Incubator participants. Must possess a valid driver's license and have regular access to personal transportation, an ability to lift 50 pounds, experience safely using hand and power tools, farm equipment and machinery, comfort with basic electrical and plumbing work.

The Center for Transformative Action and Groundswell is an equal opportunity employer. Employees are hired on the basis of their merit, ability, experience, and training without regard to race, creed, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, gender, sexual preference, or disability.

**To apply:** Please email a cover letter and resume as one attachment to Elizabeth@GroundswellCenter.org with "Last Name\_Farming Assistant" in the subject line. We prefer emailed submissions, however you may also drop off or mail your application to 225 S Fulton Street, Ithaca, NY 14850.