



GoFarm Beginning Farmer Training Program 2022 Incubator Farmer Application

[GoFarm](#) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to train and support local farmers, connect people with local agriculture, and increase equitable access to nutrient-rich food grown in Colorado. A large component of fulfilling this mission is supporting farmers through the GoFarm Beginning Farmer Training Program, as well as providing local farmers with access to a reliable wholesale market through our Local Food Share Program.

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GoFarm's Beginning Farmer Training Program

The Beginning Farmer Training Program offers a two-year Incubator Farmer track that is designed for beginning farmers who, upon graduation, are expected to launch or continue an independent urban or small scale farm business producing specialty crops. Incubator Farmers are provided year-round training, mentoring and technical assistance, as well as access to an urban farm plot, water, and equipment. The program is designed to allow Incubator Farmers to maintain a part-time job outside of the Incubator Farmer track.

The Beginning Farmer Training Program also offers a 16-week Whole Farm Planning Course (WFPC) that is focused on education around operating a farm business. The GoFarm WFPC is designed for people who are interested in learning more about local agriculture and/or who may want to start or scale up their own farm in the future. The WFPC is a required component of the Incubator Farmer track (if you have not already taken the class). For those who are not current incubator farmers, the WFPC is a great way to gain the necessary knowledge to become an Incubator Farmer in the future. You can find the information for the WFPC [here](#) if you think this course is a better fit for you.

Seasonal paid internships are also available for those with minimal experience looking to explore a career in agriculture. Interns work in the field with incubator farmers, assist with the GoFarm Local Food Share, and attend workshops with incubator farmers and WFPC participants. Internship applications will be posted in the late winter/early spring for the following summer. Please email info@gofarm.org for more information on the internship.

Please reach out to us if you have any questions about which track may best fit your goals.

Who Should Apply

Beginning and aspiring farmers! We encourage anyone to apply who has any farming experience (volunteering, interning, or work experience) or has completed another farmer training program, such as Veterans to Farmers. We also encourage anyone who has completed the GoFarm internship or WFPC and beginning farmers with their own businesses who have been in operation for 1-5 years to apply. Historically marginalized communities, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), members of the LGBTQIA+ community, refugees, immigrants, people with disabilities, and veterans, are given priority in the application process.

Equity and Inclusion

We acknowledge that there is injustice in the current food system and that land and resources have been stolen and withheld from Black, Indigenous, and People of Color both in the present and historically. In order to provide land and capital to those who have been historically denied, we give priority admittance to those who identify as BIPOC farmers.

We support farmers of all backgrounds within the program and we work to ensure that we are prioritizing the experiences of BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ farmers. Therefore, we are seeking value-aligned farmers to participate in this program who acknowledge the importance of anti-racist work and who do not just accept but celebrate our LGBTQIA+ community.

You can read GoFarm’s full equity statement [here](#).

Selection Criteria

Minimum Requirements:

- 18 years or older
- Understanding of issues around equity and racism in the food system **or** openness to learning more about these issues and willingness to attend and participate in racial equity workshops
- 1 season or more of farming/production experience. We will also consider applicants with extensive gardening experience
- Demonstrated commitment and desire to begin a farm enterprise
- Commitment to using sustainable farming practices
- Ability to work independently
- Ability/commitment to completing coursework and attending workshops
- Ability to commit to the program for 2 years
- Local housing and transportation

Beginning farmers who meet the following will have the most competitive applications:

- Farmers with 2-3 seasons of experience
- Priority admittance for historically marginalized communities, including BIPOC, women, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, refugees, immigrants, and veterans
- Farmers who are already operating a farm enterprise that has been in business for 1-5 years
- Participants of the Mile High Farmers, Black and Brown Growers Collective, RMFU, or NYFC

Application and Selection Schedule

July 5th	Applications released
Saturday, July 30th 10am-11:30am Lakewood (Address will be sent after RSVP)	Meet and Greet Farm Tour - to meet some of the GoFarm Staff and meet current incubator participants and get your questions answered! RSVP here . We have a limited capacity so RSVP early if you want to participate!
August 12th	Applications due
August 15th-August 26th	Interviews
August 27th- September 10th	Applicants informed of their acceptance

September 29th	Welcome and Orientation!
October 19th	Classes start

Program Benefits

- **Land Access**

- Access to 1/8-1/4 acre of land within Jefferson County with seasonal fee of \$150-\$300 and water (with fee based on usage)
 - **Participants can also use property they own or lease already*
- GoFarm covers the initial cost of developing **leased land** (tilling, compost, irrigation, etc)
 - At the end of the two years farmers may choose to repay the site development costs and remain on the site. Average site development costs are \$1,500-\$2,000.
- Help with field prep and irrigation installation at all sites

- **Supply stipends**

- Need based
- Sliding scale of up to \$3,000 for farmers who are leasing land
- Sliding scale up to \$1,500 for farmers who own their land

**Offering stipends on a sliding scale allows us to support more farmers and work toward economic justice*

- **Tools**

- Access to the tools in the GoFarm Equipment Rental Program for a 50% discount. See our library [here](#).

- **Education**

- A 16-week Whole Farm Planning Course during the first winter in the program
- Advanced Farm Business Course during the second winter in the program
- Monthly farm workshops March- October.
- 40-50 hours/year of mentorship from experienced local farmers

- **Labor**

- 6-8 hours per week of assistance from paid GoFarm interns May-October
- *Only available to incubator farmers located in Jefferson County or close by*

- **Post graduation**

- 25 hours of mentorship from a local farmer in the first year after graduation
- 20 hours of mentorship in the 2nd year after graduation

- Opportunity to audit up to 3 classes each winter in the Whole Farm Planning or Advanced courses.

The estimated value for the program is over \$13,000 (not including potential supply stipend).

Program Fee

There is a one-time, nonrefundable fee of \$2,000 for the Incubator Farmer track that is due before classes begin unless a payment schedule is established. Scholarships are available!

Incubator Farmer Requirements

- **Prior to program start**
 - Criminal background check for certain plot locations. Please contact us about any concerns.
 - Signed Incubator Farmer Agreement
 - Submit a photo of yourself and bio for the website
 - Complete an entrance survey
 - Pay the program fee in full (unless a scholarship or payment plan is established)
- **To be completed/obtained/observed during program duration**
 - Participate in the Mile High Farmers [21 Day Racial Equity Challenge](#) discussions in April (Once a week in the evening, exact dates TBD)
 - Actively farm and market your products as a business
 - Maintain farm business and product liability insurance coverage¹ (\$25-\$125/year)
 - Have a signed agreement with landowner and comply with site guidelines
 - Compliance with [Production Standards](#)
 - Payment of all mandatory farm fees (i.e., land and water)
 - Monthly check-ins with GoFarm's Farmer Development & Support Program Manager
 - Complete Whole Farm Planning Course classes
 - Create a business management plan, crop plan, marketing plan, and food safety plan
 - Attend farm workshops March- October (dates and times TBD)
 - Complete the advanced Business Course in the second winter
 - Complete an end of program survey
 - Submit a transition plan in the second year

¹ Incubator Farmers can choose to be covered under Old Fort Market Coop, a farm trainee service cooperative that offers significantly discounted premiums for general and product liability coverage.

Program Schedule Overview

Year 1		Year 2	
Oct 2022	Whole Farm Planning Course: Part 1	Oct 2023	Growing Season and Monthly Farm Workshops
Nov 2022		Nov 2023	Advanced Course & Transition Planning
Dec 2022		Dec 2023	
Jan 2023	Jan 2024		
Feb 2023	Feb 2024		
Mar 2023	Whole Farm Planning Course: Part 2	Mar 2024	Growing Season & Monthly Farm Workshops
Apr 2023	Growing Season & Monthly Farm Workshops	Apr 2024	
May 2023		May 2024	
Jun 2023		Jun 2024	
Jul 2023		Jul 2024	
Aug-Oct' 2023		Aug - Oct '24	

Whole Farm Planning Course Schedule

Classes will be on Wednesday evenings from 5-8pm. Classes will be in person and will include dinner to enjoy and network. The location of the class is still TBD but will most likely be in North Lakewood or Golden.

Date	Topic	Date	Topic
10/19/2022	Realities of Farming with a Farmer Panel	1/11/2023	Farm Supply Budgets and Sourcing
10/26/2022	Mission, Vision, and Values: Defining Your "Why"	1/18/2023	Farm Supply Budgets and Sourcing
11/2/2022	Risk Management on the Farm- Taking Control of Your Creative Power	1/25/2023	Soils, Fertility, and Soil Testing
11/9/2022	Farm Business Models, Markets, and Pricing	2/1/2023	Farm Irrigation and Water Management
11/16/2022	Promoting and Branding Your Farm Business	2/8/2023	Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Weeds and Disease Control
11/23/2022	Break for Thanksgiving	2/15/2023	Elective #3- Seed Saving
11/30/2022	Farm Start-up, Systems, and Design - Planning for Efficiency	2/22/2023	Food Safety - Creating a Food Safety Plan
12/7/2022	Production Planning	3/1/2023	Labor: Managing Interns, Work-Shares, and Helpers
12/14/2022	Elective #1: Growing Starts Under Lights	3/8/2023	Farm Record Keeping
12/21/2022	Winter Break	3/15/2023	Accounting and Bookkeeping
12/28/2022	Winter Break	3/22/2023	Farm Plan Presentations and end of course celebration
1/4/2023	Elective #2- Cut Flowers For the Veggie Grower		

Production Standards

All GoFarm incubator farmers must follow these standards while in the program. These are the same standards any grower who sells into the GoFarm Wholesale Market must follow. For full information on selling to GoFarm, click [here](#).

- I. Locally Grown; must comply with all of the following:
 - A. Food must be grown within the state of Colorado
 - B. Only sell what you produce when selling to the Local Food Share
- II. Organic Practices, Soil Health and Environmental Stewardship
 - A. Organic Practices; must comply with all of the following:
 1. Soil fertility and crop nutrients will be managed through tillage and cultivation practices, crop rotations, and cover crops, supplemented with animal and crop waste materials and allowed synthetic materials. Manage soil fertility through practices that promote healthy soil and use minimal synthetic inputs that meet organic standards
 2. Crop pests, weeds, and diseases will be controlled primarily through management practices including physical, mechanical, and biological controls. When these practices are not sufficient, a biological, botanical, or synthetic substance approved for use on the USDA Organic National List may be used
 3. The use of genetic engineering, ionizing radiation, and sewage sludge is prohibited
 - B. Soil Health; must comply with all of the following:
 1. No Synthetic Inputs (including glyphosate) that are not on the approved organic list
 2. No GMOs or gene editing
 - C. Environmental Stewardship; must meet 8 out of 10:
 1. Builds Soil Organic Matter
 2. Conservation Tillage (no till to 2x per year)
 3. Protect soil from erosion when not in production (mulch, cover crop, tarps, etc.)
 4. Cover Crops
 5. Crop Rotations
 6. Promotes Biodiversity
 7. Integrated Pest Management plan with emphasis on mechanical prevention
 8. Composting of farm waste
 9. Water conservation practices
 10. Conserve resources by amending soil based on soil testing
- III. Equitable Work Environment; must comply with all of the following:
 - A. All employees should be compensated in a fair manner per state law through the [Agricultural Workers Rights Bill](#)
 - B. All employees have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect at all times
 - C. Goods bought by GoFarm are grown in safe conditions that work towards protecting the environment, building sustainable livelihoods, and empowering and uplifting communities

- IV. Food Safety; must comply with all of the following:
- A. FSMA certification obtained by the end of your first season selling to GoFarm
 - B. Documented food safety plan
 - C. Allow GoFarm to conduct a site visit and food safety plan audit. Audits must be completed before selling to GoFarm
 - D. Limited use of containers that cannot be sanitized (for example, wax boxes)

Application

Please apply by completing this [google form](#). You may use the document below to plan out your answers and copy and paste them into the form. Please be sure to pay attention to character limits. Google forms won't notify you that you are over the limit until you hit submit! If you need to complete this application over the phone or submit a printed version email kevin@gofarm.org.

Name: _____ Pronouns: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

- 1) How do you identify (**select all that apply**)(optional)? The following demographic information is voluntary and confidential, and helps us measure our success in including various segments of our community.
- 2) What does equity in the food system mean to you? *Character limit 1500*
- 3) How did you hear about the GoFarm Incubator? *Character limit 500*
- 4) Explain your interest in the GoFarm Incubator and how it fits into your future plans. *Character limit 1000*
- 5) How many seasons of farming experience do you have (**multiple choice question**)?
- 6) Please describe your farming experience (especially as it relates to specialty crop production and irrigation). *Character limit 1500*
- 7) Please upload your resume. (**File Upload, optional**)
- 8) Are you currently farming (**multiple choice question**)?
- 9) Please describe your current farm business or the type of farm enterprise you are interested in creating. *Character limit 2000*
- 10) What crops or value-added products do you currently or plan to grow/ produce? Please review program information for limitations on types of crops that can be grown. *Character limit 1000*
- 11) Have you read and do you agree to follow the Grower's Standards (**multiple choice question**)?
- 12) What sales markets do you intend to pursue? *Character limit 1000*

- 13) Where do you see your business in 3-5 years? *Character limit 1500*
- 14) Describe what you will need from this program in order to be successful. Include topics for mentorship, tools, resources, etc. *Character limit 1500*
- 15) What do you expect to gain from this experience? *Character limit 1000*
- 16) Do you have a reliable form of transportation (**multiple choice question**)?
- 17) Are you ready to begin coursework on October 13th, 2021 (**multiple choice question**)?
- 18) How do you plan to support yourself financially while participating as an Incubator Farmer? *Character limit 1500*
- 19) Do you have start-up capital to begin your business? Our sliding scale supply stipends may help to cover *some* upfront costs. You should anticipate spending an additional \$1,000-\$3,000 to start your farm business. (**multiple choice question**)
- 20) If accepted into the program, will you farm a GoFarm Incubator Plot or will you farm on your own property or property you lease on your own (**multiple choice question**)?
- 21) If you will be using land you secured on your own (land that you own or lease) please tell us 1) The address of the property 2) the size of the property 3) has the site been in production before 4) what kind of infrastructure is in place 5) would you be open to hosting an additional Incubator Farmer (**optional**) *Character limit 2000*
- 22) Will you need a partial scholarship to participate in the program? Needing a scholarship will not have any negative impact on your application.
- 23) Are you willing to complete a background check? Background checks may be required by some land owners. Please contact us if you have any concerns about this. (**multiple choice question**)
- 24) Please share anything else you would like us to know! Thank you for applying and we will be in touch soon (**optional**). *Character limit 1500*

Please apply by completing this [google form](#).