JOB ANNOUNCEMENT:

Youth Programs Culinary Manager
Permanent Full-Time Position
Watsonville + Santa Cruz, California

Applications Accepted on Rolling Basis
May 2022 Start Date

About FoodWhat: “Food, What?!” is a youth empowerment and food justice organization. At FoodWhat, youth engage in relationships with land, food and each other in ways that are grounded in love and rooted in justice. We provide meaningful space where youth define and cultivate their empowerment, liberation and wellbeing. Youth from Watsonville to Santa Cruz join the FoodWhat Crew through our Spring Internship, Summer Job Training and Fall Project Management programs. FoodWhat youth use organic farming, nourishing food and loving community as vehicles to grow on their own terms and in lasting ways. As a FoodWhat Crew, we grow, cook, eat and distribute fresh, healthy food while also addressing local food justice issues. We envision liberation in all ways, love at all levels and wellbeing in all forms for youth and our community. Check us out at www.foodwhat.org.

FoodWhat has a consistent track record of solid financial standing, and we are on a growth trajectory. This is a new position and we are looking for someone extraordinary to take on this leadership role of visioning, creating, and driving the food-based programming for youth at FoodWhat to the next level. You should be ready to hit the ground running, implementing our existing culinary curriculum in your first year with an eye towards developing innovative culinary programming for the years to come. You are ready to thoughtfully contribute to the growth of the organization and to the success of our mission.

About the Program: We run a daily Spring Internship (March-May), a full time Summer Job Program (June-Aug) and an after-school Fall Management Program (Sept-Oct) with high school-aged youth. We also work with a cohort of second year youth who are in leadership positions throughout the year. Additionally, we run a youth-powered pie micro-business in partnership with a local bakery in the Fall. We serve marginalized/system-impacted yet incredibly resilient youth. They may be in foster care, the juvenile detention system, experiencing homelessness, young parents, identify as LGBTQ+, and come from farm worker families. Many have trauma in their past.
Position Description: We are looking for a highly motivated, detail-oriented and energetic person to join our staff in this new position of Culinary Manager. This role is the primary organizer and leader for all culinary components of our core programming. You will not be behind the scenes, but very much a major partner in the program team, running programs with youth in the kitchen and on the land. You will be a leader in our organization, and a partner, mentor, coach, and cheerleader to the youth. This position will primarily work in concert with our Farm Manager, Programs Manager, Programs Coordinator and Director of Programs in the planning and implementation of these core programs, taking leadership on all aspects related to food.

This position requires a collaborative individual with a high level of organization and flexibility who is gifted in working with youth while sharing culinary skills and passion in the kitchen. You are someone with outstanding cooking skills who can inspire and engage youth in the culinary arts. You have a critical lens on multiple aspects of the food system, and have the capacity to build curriculum at the intersection of racial justice, economic justice, LGBTQ+ justice and food justice. This may include topics such as food access, food trends, food industry, nutrition, mental health as it relates to food, etc. You are approachable, a great listener, and passionate about our mission. You get the big picture while being a strategic thinker who can dive in and get daily work done with a strong attention to detail. Most importantly, you are a deep believer in the power and potential of youth and willing to support youth in removing any barriers to their success and growth. You’re playful, comfortable being you, and willing to share your personal magic with FoodWhat youth while creating safe spaces on the farm and in the kitchen.

Responsibilities:

- Culinary curriculum creation, innovation, and implementation for all youth programming.
- Cultivate a culture of youth ownership and leadership in the kitchen.
- Prep and lead culinary activities each week for Spring Internship youth.
- Develop shopping lists and work with Programs Coordinator on shopping plans.
- Full immersion in the Summer Job Program leading youth in cooking lunch daily for 30+ people and preparing for meals throughout the week.
- Envisioning and prepping meal kits and curriculum for our zoom at-home cooking modules.
- Organize meals for Summer and Fall closing dinner celebrations.
- Lead youth culinary management positions in the Fall.
- Lead youth-powered pie micro-business in the Fall. Involves managing relationships with local business partners and retailers as well as partnering farms.
- Maintain existing, and create new, relationships with local chefs, coordinating their participation as Summer lunch guest chefs.
- Play leadership role in events including alumni gatherings and big on-farm annual events (Spring Strawberry Blast and Fall Harvest Festival).
- Direct the food aspects of our major annual fundraising dinner benefit in September including: menu creation with chefs; sourcing ingredients; coordinating youth cooking with chefs; and coordinating all food day-of logistics.
- Managing potential food components of funder tours.
- Participate in ongoing program evaluation (quantitative and qualitative).
- Ongoing position admin functions such as documentation.
- Supervision of part-time staff and seasonal program staff.
Recommended Qualifications:

- 3-5 years of significant experience cooking (catering experience a plus).
- Experience or strong demonstrated ability to collaborate with youth (teens), preferably from an empowerment perspective.
- Strong facilitation and group management skills.
- Capacity to develop dynamic, innovative programming for high-school aged youth.
- Knowledge of and experience with underserved communities of color.
- Basic understanding of how food systems impact our local community.
- Understanding of and commitment to social justice with an analysis of systems of power, privilege and oppression.
- Passion for building community and deep relationships through food.
- Positive, creative, flexible, and takes initiative.
- Ability to work independently, in team setting, and in fast-paced, changing environment.
- Completes tasks successfully and within specified deadlines; demonstrates strong time management skills implementing programs on time and on budget.
- Dependable with thorough follow through.
- Capacity to handle multiple programs/projects at once; strong organizational skills and attention to detail.
- Ability to communicate clearly and compassionately with youth.
- Willing to communicate regularly via email, text, phone, and video call.
- Capability to engage with organizing platforms like Google Calendar and Asana.
- Physically fit to meet the demands of working in a kitchen for consecutive hours.
- Utilizes strategies for maintaining self-care and personal well-being.
- Willingness to work non-traditional hours, including evenings and weekends as programs demand.
- Valid California Driver’s license and vehicle for personal and youth travel.
- Certification for food safety/handling, preferably food manager certification.

Preferred:

- Cultural identity and lived experience relevant to the youth we serve.
- Experience with traditional and/or ancestral foodways.
- Bilingual Spanish speaker.
- Rooted in Santa Cruz County, particularly in Watsonville.

Position details:
This is a 40-hour per week, full time position with generous benefits including paid time off, sick leave, and full medical, dental, vision, and retirement benefits provided. Starting annual salary range $60,000 - $70,000 based on experience.
To Apply:
Please send a cover letter, resume, completed application, and two references as one PDF file with your first and last name as the filename to Irene@foodwhat.org. Please select at least one reference from previous employment.

Review the application below and answer the questions to demonstrate your skills and approach. The application is not optional; you must include it to be considered for the job.

We will begin reviewing and accepting candidate material immediately. A team of FoodWhat staff, youth and community partners is intended to guide this process and be part of the decision-making.

FoodWhat is an anti-discrimination, pro-equity, equal opportunity organization. Women and Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC) are strongly encouraged to apply. All applicants are considered for employment without discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, veteran or disability status.

Applicants only. Recruiters, please don’t contact this job poster.
Culinary Manager Application Questions

Thank you for your interest in this position. To be considered for an interview, please answer the following questions. You do not need to be exhaustive in your answers and we don’t expect you to know the exact operations of our programs—just help us understand how you would approach this work. Please return them with your cover letter and resume as part of one PDF file as explained above.

1. It’s a typical day in our Summer program and your goal is to prepare a meal for 30 with about 10 youth and 2 junior staff youth helping you in the kitchen. You have 2 hours to make sure there is a main dish, side dish, and drink while also making sure the eating area is set up for a 12:30 lunchtime. You are also responsible for making sure that youth are fully engaged, and doing so safely, in the kitchen. How would you prep this activity and manage/organize the group to complete the tasks successfully?

2. You are in the kitchen cooking with 7 youth, a guest chef, and 1 Junior staff. You have 15 minutes until lunch needs to be served but you still require another 25 minutes of cooking. Meanwhile, you notice a youth has cut themselves while chopping fruit, the veggie saute is starting to burn, and 2 youth are beginning to walk away from the kitchen area. How do you respond?

3. You notice a young person during the first few sessions of the Spring Internship seeming somewhat removed. They do participate in the cooking activities but always distance themselves from the other youth, keeping their hood up the whole day and being very quiet. What would you do in this situation?

4. During the Summer program we run an at-home virtual cooking class that involves cooking a family meal from start to finish in which you would demonstrate cooking techniques live while following a recipe. How would you prepare your space for a virtual cooking session and how would you engage youth virtually to ensure their participation and success?

5. Someone not on the FoodWhat staff thinks they see a few of the youth smoking weed in the hard-to-see area by the barn. How do you handle this situation?

6. What approaches might you take with a youth who has a strained relationship to food or eating? This may look like lack of diversity in their diet, nervousness eating near others, reluctance to try new foods, etc.

7. FoodWhat is always in search of new and inspiring ways to serve youth. Share an idea or two that you might propose of potentially new and innovative culinary program pieces for youth.