Program Information for 2023 Mentors

Returning/ experienced mentors: If you would like to be a mentor in 2023, please fill out This Form.

New/ prospective mentors: Please fill out This Application if you would like to be considered as a mentor in 2023.

The mission of the Women Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN) is to engage women and non-binary people in building an ecologically and socially just food and agricultural system. We envision a vibrant, community-based food and agricultural system that centers the knowledge and abilities of those who have been marginalized on the basis of gender. Our longest running program, Harvesting Our Potential (HOP), provides paid mentorship opportunities for aspiring and beginning food producers to build the skills and relationships they need to move forward with sustainable farming and food systems careers.

Mentor Opportunities for 2023

In 2023, WFAN will offer at least 15 paid mentorships through the HOP program. We seek experienced women, non-binary, and/ or gender queer farmers and ranchers from across the Midwest to act as mentors to aspiring and beginning farmers/ranchers. Mentors should have at least 5 years of experience managing or co-managing a farm/ ranch operation. They should be enthusiastic about teaching others to grow healthy food that sustains our communities and supports our environment. Mentors should be committed to working against oppression of all people, especially those who have been excluded or marginalized on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and/ or ability.

Mentors act as educators and guides to their mentees. Mentorships are expected to last a minimum of 8 weeks, but may last longer depending on the specific needs of the mentor/ mentee pair.

Mentorships for aspiring farmer/ ranchers (those who are not yet farming on their own) should take place on-farm. The meeting schedule and frequency is to be determined between the mentor/ mentee pair. The mentor may choose to offer on-farm housing to the mentee, but is not required to do so. Remote mentorships for beginning farmers will be considered based on mentor/ mentee needs and logistical considerations.

Mentors will work with mentees to:

1) Complete a mentorship agreement that outlines expectations for the mentorship, including duration of the mentorship, expectations for meetings and communication, etc.
2) Craft specific, measurable learning and/ or progress goals for the mentorship.
3) Outline the anticipated steps necessary to achieve learning or progress goals.
4) Complete the learning activities and steps required to achieve learning or progress goals.

Mentors also are expected to:

1) [Prospective/ new mentors only]: Complete a mentor application, then a short interview with WFAN staff
2) [Experienced mentors only]: Complete a program onboarding form and an onboarding call with WFAN staff
3) Work with WFAN staff to approve a “Mentor Profile” that will be placed on the WFAN website
4) Attend mentor training workshops*
5) Complete a mid-mentorship check-in with WFAN staff
6) Complete an end-of-season evaluation

Mentors will receive:

1) $750 stipend/ mentee
   a) (Mentees also receive a $750 stipend)
2) Stipends for attending mentor training workshops (amount/ workshop TBD based on available funding and number of mentors)
3) Up to $250 in available farm-sitting funds, to enable mentors to hire someone (preferably a mentee) to manage the farm while they are away. Mentors may choose to use farm-sitting stipends if they travel to an event or if they simply need a break to attend to their own well-being during the season.
4) Mileage reimbursement and stipend for participating in an optional “skill share mentorship.” Skill share mentorships allow an HOP mentor or mentee to travel to another farm/ ranch for a day or weekend to learn a specific skill. The host receives $100 and the learner receives $50 plus mileage reimbursement.
5) Other networking and/ or educational opportunities as funds allow

Mentor Training Information for 2023:
WFAN staff are in the process of updating our mentor training process. Recognizing that our mentors now live across the Midwest, making it difficult or impossible to convene all mentors for an in-person training, we are opting to offer training virtually. Rather than expecting mentors to attend a single, multi-hour event, in 2023 we will experiment with offering a workshop series. Workshops will last between 60 and 90 minutes. They will begin in April and continue throughout the season. We will ask for feedback on timing and topics in the mentor onboarding form. Mentors will receive stipends for attending training workshops.

Mentor Advisory Committee
WFAN has funding to convene a mentor advisory committee. Mentors who have worked with HOP for at least 1 season are invited to serve in an advisory capacity. Members of the mentor advisory committee will be asked to meet a minimum of 3 times between March 2023 and 2024 to inform the program. They also will help recruit additional mentors and/ or mentees. Members will receive at least $300; this stipend may increase pending funding considerations.