Openings: 10

Term: Two-year commitment.
Start Dates: two cycles - March 15th, 2023 and May 22nd, 2023
Reports to:
  Farm Manager: Roni Pasi, roni@mountainrootsfoodproject.org
  Executive Director: Holly Conn, director@mountainrootsfoodproject.org

Fees: There are no enrollment or tuition fees for this program.

Compensation & Support: First and foremost, this is an educational experience. We know the world needs more farmers! And we know you still need to live life while you’re learning. We’re able to offset your living expenses during your apprenticeship with a total of ~$25,000/yr which includes monthly living allowance to cover room and board, and a $7K cash education award. Eligible for health care and childcare. There’s a 10% increase in your second year.

Schedule: Full time hours, but not “Mon-Fri 9 to 5.” It’s farming! Plants and animals require daily care. Early mornings and early evening are often better for working with plants, and sometimes it’s just too hot to work in the fields mid-day. We have a 7-day schedule, where our field teams have a rotation that allows for everyone to have reasonable work weeks and flexible time off.

Snapshot
Learn and Practice the basics of small-scale organic regenerative production farming in the Colorado mountains. Growing spaces include two community farms, two high tunnels, perennial food forest, hoop house, three community gardens, a climate-battery greenhouse, and four hydroponic container farms. Positions are part of a beginning farmer apprenticeship and include mentorship by area farmers and rancher and opportunities to engage in working lands conservation. We emphasize hand-on, experiential learning. Our apprentices typically have more leadership, responsibility, and opportunity for growth, creativity, and innovation than in other programs or positions. In addition to collaborative work, all Apprentices have individual focus areas aligned with specific interest or skill-building goals. The position requires extensive time outdoors, exposure to natural elements, and physical labor affiliated with farming. Some previous agricultural experience preferred.

About Us
Mountain Roots Food Project is a community food systems initiative in the central Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Mountain Roots manages a district-wide Farm to School program, a regional AmeriCorps program, Food Security program, a Regenerative Agriculture program, and more. Gunnison County is a headwaters region of the Colorado River and includes the ski town of Crested Butte and the wide-open ranchlands and riverways of Gunnison.

We are significantly increasing the food resources in our rural mountain community and continue to expand our growing spaces to meet the rapidly growing demand for healthy, local food and to overcome challenges to cold-climate organic food production. Our twelve-person farm team works with staff and volunteers to model, teach, and promote regenerative techniques that improve soil health and water conservation, build sustainable food systems, and promote environmental stewardship, community development, and equitable access to good food for all.
Mountain Roots is revitalizing local agriculture through restoration and conservation of two historic ranch properties, one in Gunnison and one in Crested Butte. These spaces are a window into working lands, acting as replicable models of how active conservation and holistic land management can improve the health of the land, the health of our people, the health of our economy, and the overall resilience of our community. The farms provide a venue for emerging farmer training, for research and development of value-added organic crop products, and for the expansion of educational programming for children, volunteers, young adults, and community members.

Above all, the farms and growing spaces positively impact equitable access to healthy, nutritious food and promote community food security.

The Farmer Apprentice Can Expect to:

- Work side by side on a 12-person farm team to collectively run a start-to-finish growing season across multiple growing spaces. Oversee vegetable and perennial crop management, including soil preparation, seed propagation, watering, transplanting, cultivation, harvesting, washing and sales.
- Learn and participate in growing vegetables hydroponically in container farms.
- Follow and teach best practices of regenerative growing methods.
- Assist in the continued infrastructure development of our farm sites, including bed preparation, irrigation installation, planting, implementation of season extension tools, and fence maintenance.
- Conduct soil tests and amendments, manage irrigation and season extension, procure supplies, maintain tools, equipment, and educational materials, oversee, and execute planting (succession), harvests, and marketing.
- Learn and actively participate in CSA management, including aggregation and distribution of boxes, quality control, customer service, communication with other local farmers, and member relations.
- Lead tours, volunteer days, and meet-and-greets for farm visitors.
- Provide education and instruction on organic, sustainable farming to community members and school children.
- Support marketing and distribution plans including farmer’s markets, farm stand, restaurant sales, and our annual farm-to-table fundraiser.
- Participate in organization-wide events and meetings, appropriately representing Mountain Roots on and off the farms.
- Track budget, seeding, harvest/yield, integrated pest management, soil and waterlogs.
- Coordinate, recruit, promote, and lead community workdays, volunteers, and youth crews, and other community engagement events.
- Improve the overall aesthetic and functionality of the farms including gathering spaces, signage, fencing, landscaping features, art, ecosystem components.
- Small machine operation and maintenance, tool and equipment care. Light building and mechanics.
- Each team member will contribute work within one focused and special area of farm management alongside another team member.

Focus Area Descriptions:
While the apprenticeship position is meant to be highly diverse, and each farmer will have the opportunity to explore the full spectrum of farming tasks, processes, and procedures, each apprentice will also be responsible for taking leadership of a Focus Area. The Focus Area should be something that aligns to your skills and interests, but also provides the opportunity for growth and expansion of your skills.

Each apprentice will be responsible for some project research, an initial, informal proposal with listed goals, applicable deliverables, and tracking of the project outcomes. Please look these over and come prepared to the interview with any questions or specific interests you may have.
FOCUS AREAS 2023-2025

1. **CSA**
The CSA Lead will be responsible for aiding the Farm Managers and CSA Manager in the long-term and weekly logistics of running a multi-farmer 16-week CSA. These tasks include determining weekly crops and quantities, ordering from farmers and aggregation centers, determining packing and processing methods, leading the processing and packing days, managing distribution, and ensuring quality control. They will also ensure that practices are food safe, that facilities are kept clean, and that standard operating procedures are part of the daily

There will also be an administrative component in the form of recordkeeping, invoicing, and tracking expenses.

2. **Animal Husbandry**
The agriculture program currently raises layer hens and broiler chickens. The Animal Husbandry focus area candidate will oversee all operations regarding the animals (with the supervision of the farm manager). The layer hens and broiler chickens require some different care and projects will vary throughout the season. Operations include brooder and coop set up and maintenance, overseeing scheduling and proper care as the team rotates through chicken chores, implementing a grazing plan in the field, tracking expenses and revenue, assisting in marketing and distribution of products, and overseeing broiler chicken processing and packaging days- this includes managing volunteers.

*Opportunity to plan for expansion in the variety of animals we raise. This is an end of season endeavor and is meant for applicants pursuing the 2-year commitment.*

3. **Perennials/Cut Flowers/Food Forest**
The perennial aspect of our Agriculture Program is one that can be built onto every season. We are currently in the process of raising and protecting young native trees, shrubs, flowers, and herbs that are planted on perimeter spaces of our row crops. These plants serve many purposes to our land, the pollinators and wildlife, and each other. This is an ever-evolving project with plenty of room to grow and learn. We envision these spaces as interactive learning environments for our farmers, volunteers, and community. Tasks (with the guidance of a farm manager) include planning and implementing additions that will benefit the perennial spaces, tracking planting and care, managing a watering and care schedule, monitoring pest and wildlife damage and taking the lead on upkeep for protection, leading tours through the perennial areas.

4. **Season Extension/Greenhouse**
Operations of our indoor spaces include a greenhouse, hoop house, two high tunnels, and a caterpillar tunnel. The member of our team that takes on this focus area will build great skills in seedling and transplant care. This individual (with guidance from a farm manager) will oversee maintenance of these spaces (sanitation and infrastructure), track activity and conditions, and manage a watering care schedule as the team rotates through chores in these spaces.

5. **Farm Business, Sales, & Distribution**
The sometimes overlooked, but equally important, piece of working successfully on a farm, or managing a farm of your own, is the business component. This includes establishing season goals, tracking metrics, executing cost-benefit analyses, managing budgets, and analyzing the data to make smart business decisions. This leader will help the farm managers in all these components, as well as can explore new farm business ideas and market streams, including market analysis and assessment of needs.

6. **Hydroponic and Freight Farms**
New for this year, Mountain Roots will be managing four, year-round hydroponic container farms, to further bolster our growing capacity in a cold-climate. This focus area will help build skills in the field of hydroponic growing, crop management, capacity building, determining the best and most suitable crops, and establishing and leading the best practices. This focus area will be managed by the Hydroponic Farm Manager and will work closely with this person as these container farms grow into their full capacity.

7. **Assistant Farm Managers/Field Leads (2 available positions)**
These focus areas will be for the development of skills around field operations and farm management. These members will work closely with the two farm managers to understand the day-to-day operations, task management, prioritization, and leading on-field tasks and decisions. These members will have the opportunity to grow into a full-time farm manager for the second year of their apprenticeship, if determined to be the right candidate.
Skills
- Sustainable Agriculture, Soil Science, Conservation
- Communications
- Food Systems
- Community Organization
- Education
- Leadership
- Conflict Resolution
- Teaching/Tutoring
- Trade/Construction
- General Skills
- Environment

How to Apply

Applications are accepted by email only.
Please send two documents (word or PDF please) to: roni@mountainrootsfoodproject.org

1) Resumé with contact information for two references
2) Prepare a letter of interest that explains:
   a) the value you will add to our team: your experience with farming/gardening or local food systems,
   b) your goals / what you’d like to learn; and
   c) three attributes your co-workers, friends, and family would all agree you possess, with examples.

Use "NextGen 2023 – NAME" in the subject of your email
Use “NAME_Resume” and “NAME_LetterofInterest” as the titles of your attachments.

Application Deadline:
Jan 1st, 2023 for the March 15 start date.
March 1st, 2023 for the May 22 start date.
This is a competitive selection process. We review applications as they come in and select top-notch candidates as we go. If you are serious about this opportunity, do not wait until the deadline to apply.