

Job title: *Farm Manager and Director of Agricultural Programs*

Organization: *Common Ground, 358 Springside Ave., New Haven, CT 06515*

Organization Overview

Common Ground is a center for environmental learning and leadership in New Haven, Connecticut where a diverse community of children, young people, and adults cultivate habits of healthy living and sustainable environmental practice. Farm meets forest meets city on Common Ground's 20 acre campus at the base of West Rock Ridge. The site abuts the 1500 acre West Rock State Park, sharing hiking trails, wildlife, and diverse natural habitats with the surrounding forests. Common Ground's Charter High School uses the site as an organizing principle of its curriculum which is guided by an ecological framework that recognizes the connection and interdependence of all living and non-living things. Each year, more than 6,000 community members participate in festivals, field trips, after-school programs, and other educational opportunities on site. Our working organic farm is a key resource for both the high school and community programs, as well as for the greater New Haven community. It includes both production gardens that provide food for our school lunch program and New Haven families, educational gardens used to demonstrate and teach lessons in agriculture, and a variety of farm animals. For more information on Common Ground, see www.commongroundct.org.

Job Description

Common Ground is seeking a reliable, hands-on, experienced farmer-manager to direct our Agricultural Program and run our urban farm. The cultivated area of our farm is approximately one acre, divided between a small children's educational garden and a larger production field. All of our farm practices follow organic recommendations and emphasize overall sustainability, but we are not certified organic. The Director of Agricultural Programs will be responsible for managing both the production and education gardens, oversight of volunteers, interns and apprentices working on the farm, and coordinating the distribution of farm products to Common Ground's various constituencies. However, beyond being a farm, Common Ground is a high school and an educational center for the community, making this job opportunity distinct from many typical farm jobs. The Director of Agricultural Programs will play an important role coordinating educational projects involving the farm that will require strong skills in leading, supervising, and communicating with groups of youth and adults. Some assistance in managing farm tasks and infrastructure is available from the Site Manager; however, the Farm Manager is the only full time position dedicated to our Agricultural Program. Duties will include:

Garden Management

- In coordination with Common Ground staff, create and carry out an annual farm plan that meets the needs of Common Ground's many programs and constituencies. Duties will include crop planning, placing seed orders, daily planting, weeding, harvesting, irrigating, soil amendment, and all other farm tasks.
- Coordinate and oversee the distribution of farm production to end-users, including providing produce to Common Ground High School for its lunch program, providing produce for sale at market, and providing produce to Common Ground's community programs, among others.
- Manage the compost operation, maintain garden infrastructure (irrigation, fences, tool repair...), and help care for the farm animals and farm landscape as needed.

Volunteer, Student, Intern, Job Corp Oversight

- Train and direct students, volunteers, seasonal farm staff, and interns in doing the seasonal work of the farm.

Coordination of Educational Projects

- Assist with the coordination and implementation of educational projects involving the garden.
- Lead individuals and groups of many ages in contributing to the work of the farm.
- Support the involvement of Common Ground High School courses in the life of the farm.

General

- Prepare and present for approval an annual budget and capital improvement plan for the Agricultural Program
- Work closely with Management Team on planning, coordinating, budgeting, and operating the Agricultural Program
- Prepare monthly reports on the status of the Agricultural Program for the Common Ground Board
- Assist with raising funds, including helping with grants, for investment in the Agricultural Program

Common Ground's programs are growing and expanding. This is a great opportunity for a passionate person to jump in at a time when we are ready to explore and develop programs that reach beyond our current scope. Can you teach backyard gardening workshops for adults? Lead youth in developing small business ventures from farm products? Help us green our campus by better integrating composting and waste management into the farm cycle? We are working on many new programs and systems, and are eager to have a Director of Agricultural Programs contribute to the conversation.

Job Schedule

The hours and days required by this job vary with the season and the cycles of work on the farm. This is a full time, year-round position with significant seasonal variation (40+ hours each week from April – November, with a reduced winter schedule). A seasonal outline is below:

April - May: 40+ hrs/week*, Tuesday - Saturday (Sun and Mon off)

- Tuesday – Friday: farm work and educational programs
- Saturday: Open Farm Day and volunteer crews

June - November: 40+ hrs per week*, Wednesday through Sunday (Mon and Tues off)

- Wednesday – Friday: farm work and educational programs
- Saturday: Open Farm Day and volunteer crews
- Sunday: farmer's market

*The successful candidate must be willing to work the necessary hours to manage the farm in the growing season, recognizing that this is often more than a typical 40 hour week. Staff, student, and volunteers will contribute to the work of the farm, but final responsibility rests with the farm manager.

December - March: flexible hours*

- Develop annual program and farm plans and budgets, fundraising, seed and bulk orders, start greenhouse work in March

*To balance the long hours of the growing season, the Director of Agricultural Programs will have a flexible work schedule in the winter. Some work can be done from home, and specific scheduled time is limited. Vacations of more than a day or two must be taken during this time.

Qualifications and Compensation

Minimum qualifications for this position are:

- Experience managing an organic farm, from annual planning and seed ordering to all aspects of caring for the farm through the growing season
- Experience managing the distribution and sale of farm products (CSA, wholesale, farmer's markets, etc)
- Experience with educating and supervising workers on the farm (volunteers, interns, staff, students, etc)
- Excellent administrative, communication and organizational skills
- A strong work ethic and the ability to work independently, with minimal oversight
- Proficiency in Microsoft Word and Excel
- A flexible work schedule
- Non-smoking while on site

Additional skill areas (not required as minimum qualifications, but desired in a strong applicant):

- Mechanical aptitude for maintaining and operating standard farm equipment (mowers, weed whackers, small tractor, etc)
- Carpentry and "fix-it" skills: handy enough with tools and basic carpentry practices to build and fix various items around the farm
- Experience working with small livestock (poultry, goats, sheep, pigs).

Compensation: Commensurate with Experience

Position Type: Full time with benefits.

Position Length: One year renewable basis

To Apply

Application deadline: open until filled (position begins in March 2010)

Position Starts: March 1, 2010

Email a resume and a cover letter describing your relevant experience to Rebecca Holcombe:
rholcombe@nhp.com

PLEASE NOTE: Interviews will be scheduled starting February 1, 2010. Applicants may not receive a response to their application before Feb 1 due to seasonal staff schedules at Common Ground.

It is the policy of the New Haven Ecology Project, Inc. and Common Ground High School that no person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise discriminated against under any program, including employment, because of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, civil union status, sexual orientation, mental retardation, and past/present history of mental disorder, learning disability and physical disability.

It is the policy of the New Haven Ecology Project, Inc. and Common Ground High School to provide equal employment opportunities to all qualified individuals without regard to age, color, marital status, civil union status, national origin, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or gender in all personnel actions, including recruitment, evaluation, selection, daily interactions, promotion, compensation, training and termination.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, it is the policy of the New Haven Ecology Project, Inc. and Common Ground High School not to discriminate against protected qualified applicants and employees with disabilities in all aspect of employment.