



Apprenticeship Description

The Apprenticeship is a hands-on experience focusing on practical training in organic gardening and small-scale farming. The intention of the Apprenticeship is to provide students with a mastery of the basic techniques and methods required to manage organic gardens and small-scale farms. The daily activities of gardening and farming, planning, production, care, and marketing form the basis for this learning.

Apprentices work alongside the founder and director of Little Rock Urban Farming, Chris Hiryak as well as other apprentices and interns in the greenhouses and gardens. Apprentices are exposed to the different aspects of growing plants organically. The apprentices selected to participate in the program each year are interested in practical training that will prepare them to teach others and/or to run their own operations.

Apprentices have gone on to apply the training they have received at LRUF in developing their own commercial farms, market gardens, and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) projects, starting inner-city community gardens, working as environmental educators, participating in international rural development projects, managing organic landscaping businesses, and pursuing degrees in agricultural studies.

The goal of the Apprenticeship is to increase the number and diversity of individuals who have a command of the fundamental skills and concepts associated with organic horticulture and agriculture, such that they will be prepared to actively participate in commercial or social service projects that aim to improve human health and environmental quality through organic practices.

Weekly Schedule

The Apprenticeship is full-time commitment (40-50 hours per week) and runs continuously from mid-February to mid-November. Most program activities take place Monday-Friday, but apprentices need to be available for occasional weekend greenhouse and watering duties (on a rotational basis).

This is a full-time program involving strenuous physical work six days a week. The program's work schedule is generally from 7:00 AM - 12:00 PM and 4:00 PM - 7:30 PM on weekdays and 5:30 AM - 1:00 PM on Saturdays. The schedule is adjusted in the early spring and fall according to daylight and temperatures. Apprentices are expected to participate fully in the program by being available for those hours every day. Examples of daily activities include bed preparation, transplanting, seed sowing, watering, weeding, thinning, composting, harvesting, produce handling, storage, and marketing. Rotational positions of responsibility, such as cooking, cleaning, greenhouse managing, watering, and market coordinating tend to require different and/or longer hours.

Because of the long hours spent working and studying, apprentices are strongly discouraged from holding part-time jobs or enrolling in school part time. Apprentices will get the maximum out of this experience by coming prepared - financially, physically, and emotionally.

How to Apply

Before preparing your application, carefully read all the material presented above. Consider how well this program might fit your stated interests and goals. It's important that applicants have a realistic idea of what the program involves as well as their ability to fully participate from beginning to end.

Download and complete the application form. Type or print legibly. Send two copies of your application, cover letter, resume, letters of recommendation plus the original to:

Apprenticeship Applications
LRUF
5910 G Street
Little Rock, Arkansas 72205

Foreign language international participants must demonstrate adequate English-speaking and comprehension skills. This is determined by passing the TOEFL exam with a score of 450 or better. TOEFL score reports are due with the application.

Criteria for Selection

Applicants must be at least 21 years old.

The goal of our program is to train future organic farmers, gardeners, teachers, and community leaders. Therefore, in our selection process we strive to choose the individuals who seem most prepared to maximize their training and to then use it for their work, to start their own operations, and/or to teach others.

In choosing individuals who will live and work together for 9 months, we are in effect creating a community. Out of the pool of applicants, we attempt to achieve a balance of interests, geographical and cultural origins, ages, and gender. Consequently, there is no one "preferred" type of applicant. We carefully consider each application in relationship to the entire pool of applicants. While the people selected share a strong interest in organic farming and gardening, they come from diverse backgrounds.