

**Good Cheer Food Bank and Thrift Stores - Farm Apprentice  
Langley, Washington**

**Supplemental Questions:**

Please submit answers to the following questions with your application. Also include a short personal summary, resume or outline of work experience and education, and contact information for three references.

1. What is your experience farming or gardening and what are your expectations for this apprenticeship?
  - a. If you do not have one full season of farming experience, please also include:  
Why do you want to farm, and what life experiences have led you to apply for this apprenticeship? What is your understanding of farming, in terms of time commitment, seasonal changes, and physical demand? What transferable experiences and skills do you have that will help you learn and excel during the apprenticeship?
2.
  - a. Your education will primarily be through on-the-job training, classes, and discussions. What is something related to agriculture that you are interested in learning more about?
  - b. You will also be asked to put in time on your own preparing for these lessons and discussions, as well as paying attention to changes and advances in farming. Please speak to your ability to learn independently and how you learn best. What is something you have taught yourself?
3. Farming is physically hard, requiring both strength and stamina. What is the hardest work, both physical and mental, you've done?
4. What is your experience living with other people or in a community? What are your needs as it relates to housing--allergies, dietary restrictions, quiet hours, level of social interaction at home, etc.?
  - a. Do you have pets, and if so, are you prepared to find your own housing?
5. Do you have a car? Can you drive a manual transmission (this is not a prerequisite, but would allow you to drive the farm truck on farm errands)?
  - a. If you do not have a car, what is your preferred method of transportation?
6. What is your favorite vegetable?
7. Is there anything else you would like us to know?

Applications are due Wednesday Dec. 18, 2019. Interviews will take place Dec. 27, 2019 to Jan. 10, 2020, in person or by video chat.

Please direct questions to the Garden Manager at [garden@goodcheer.org](mailto:garden@goodcheer.org), or by leaving a message at 360-221-6454 ext. 5.

## **Good Cheer Food Bank and Thrift Stores - Farm Apprentices**

### **Langley, Washington**

Good Cheer Food Bank has been serving the South end of Whidbey Island since 1962 and is funded chiefly through the revenues of two thrift stores. We are a choice-based food bank open 6 days a week, and focus on providing whole foods and fresh produce as much as possible. A commercial kitchen allows us to process and preserve food that is reaching the end of its life, thus limiting food waste and increasing options throughout the year. The food bank is strongly supported by the local community and we receive regular donations from local farms and backyard gardeners. Our volunteer-managed gleaning program harvests donated fruit and collects leftover produce from a farmers market once a week.

Our gardens focus on growing produce in the fall, winter and spring when donations from these other sources are at their lowest. We cultivate 1.25 acres on 2 sites a short distance apart. Our flagship garden was installed in front of the food bank in 2009. In 2016 we added a one-acre farm on unused school district property. Some of what we grow ends up in school cafeterias, school garden programs, or is distributed through other hunger-relief or social support organizations around the Island. We follow organic practices and are in the process of transitioning to a low- to no-till system. We will hopefully have a beehive in spring of 2020 and are beginning to research mushroom cultivation for the 2021 season.

We are hiring two apprentices for the 2020 garden team:

- An Advanced Apprentice with at least one previous season working on a farm, or equivalent experience. Applicants for this position should be interested in learning farm management and taking on more responsibilities as the season progresses, including helping teach the beginning apprentice. Their hours and tasks will strongly mirror the work of the Garden Manager.
- A Beginning Apprentice who is looking to start a career in agriculture. Previous experience on a farm is not necessary, but applicants must demonstrate an interest in pursuing a career in our food system and a strong understanding of the physical nature of farming and the time commitment it requires.

#### **Apprenticeship Term and Time Commitment:**

- Advanced Apprentice: Early March to October 31; Average 40 hours per week
- Beginning Apprentice: April or May to September 30, with the possibility of staying into October as work and interest allows; average 35 to 40 hours per week

#### **Responsibilities:**

Apprentices will be included in all aspects of farm management in order to fully understand the flexibility, forethought, and stamina a full season requires. They will work every third weekend covering basic duties like watering and opening and closing greenhouses. Additionally:

Field Work - mostly hand powered, but we occasionally use a walk-behind tiller

Propagation, Direct Seeding, Transplanting, and Irrigation

Harvesting, Washing, Packing - estimating and communicating with the Produce Manager

Record Keeping - planting, labor, materials, harvest totals

Farm Maintenance - weeding, mowing, and keeping a clean workplace

Plant and Soil Care - pest and disease scouting, soil amending, brewing compost tea, etc.

Composting - building and turning hot compost piles, feeding worm bins

Apprentices will occasionally work in the food bank and donation center to better understand how our organization functions and to get to know the community. Apprentices can help the Produce Manager with processing projects and stocking the store, if interested. Other aspects of nonprofit management:

Volunteer Coordination and Recruitment - individuals, service groups, work parties

Outreach - social media, writing blog posts, connecting with food bank shoppers, site interpretation

Community Engagement and Events

### **Education:**

In accordance with the Washington State Farm Internship Project, the program will include lessons, trainings, and supplemental experiences to explore the theoretical aspects of farming that are equally important to a farmer's development. Most classes and trainings will be led by the Garden Manager or members of the Organic Farm School, the School Garden Program, South Whidbey Tilth, WSU Extension, and Whidbey Island Growers Association. Some of these will take place outside of the regular work day. Additionally, apprentices will spend time on their own preparing for group discussions with the Executive Director. This includes reading books and articles, listening to podcasts, watching short videos, and paying attention to the news surrounding agriculture. Apprentices are encouraged to pick a special project and will be given time during the work week to pursue areas of interest.

### **Work Week and Season:**

Apprentices are expected to be present at the start of the work day--between 7:30 and 8:30 depending on the season--and stay until work is finished. While the day will often end on time, some days will be longer to finish big projects on tight deadlines. Some classes, trainings, and field trips will take place outside of the regular work day. All team members share weekend responsibilities. Apprentices will work every third weekend to help the garden manager with Saturday morning volunteer days, and independently water starts, open/close greenhouses, irrigate as needed, and occasionally fill in to glean from the farmers market,. We will establish this rotation at the beginning of the season.

Farm work this far north has a noticeable seasonal shift. Work will pick up quickly in May and drop off just as quickly in September following the increase and decrease in light and warmth. Hours per week will follow this same pattern. We will keep a record of hours worked under and over 40 hours per week so the average across the season does not exceed this total.

### **What to expect:**

An educational, hands-on experience in small-scale farm management and extensive practice in agricultural skills. A production-focused work environment, repetitive manual labor, and, occasionally, tedious tasks.

Longer than typical work days during the height of the season and some weekend work throughout the season.

Educational discussions and field trips and the opportunity to delve more deeply into areas of interest.

As a nonprofit, we rely on volunteers so expect to be around people more than on a typical farm. Also expect to take part in community events that support the garden and apprenticeship program.

### **What we expect:**

A strong, stable person who has a natural curiosity for agriculture and capacity for independent learning.

Someone who observes carefully, takes initiative, and handles responsibility well; is interested in connecting with the community; is familiar with the physical demands of farming and understands that farming is not a

typical, 9-to-5 career; has the physical and mental strength to perform hard, manual labor outdoors in all weather conditions. A good team member who starts each workday prepared, present, and ready to work.

### **Compensation**

- Monthly stipend dependent on qualifications, and a pay increase after successful training period
  - We are working on the 2020 budget and are happy to discuss parameters with applicants before they submit an application. Please reach out if you need more information on potential pay ranges.
- Housing, typically in the form of a homestay
  - A note to applicants with pets: none of our current homestay hosts allow pets. You are welcome to apply, but understand that you will be responsible for finding your own housing. Please clearly state in your application if you have pets and that you understand this limitation.
- Food from the gardens and the food bank
- Paid time off

**Questions** can be directed to the Garden Manager at the email address above or by leaving a message at 360-221-6454 ext. 5. See also: [goodcheer.org](http://goodcheer.org); [goodcheergarden.wordpress.com](http://goodcheergarden.wordpress.com); [cultivatingcommunitywhidbey.wordpress.com](http://cultivatingcommunitywhidbey.wordpress.com) (a bit out of date)

### **Application Process**

Please email the following materials to [garden@goodcheer.org](mailto:garden@goodcheer.org):

1. a current resume, or outline of work experience and education;
2. a brief personal summary and answers to the questions outlined on the next page;
3. three references that can speak to your personal character, work ethic, or agricultural experience

**Applications are due** Wednesday Dec. 18, 2019

**Interviews** will take place Dec. 27, 2019 to Jan, 10, 2020 in person or by video chat. We will notify candidates about the position by the end of January. Visits are encouraged and can be scheduled prior to the interview period. If you require an exception to this timeline, please explain in your application.

### **About Whidbey Island:**

Whidbey is a large, mostly rural, island 45 minutes northwest of Seattle. The south end of the island is connected to the mainland via the Mukilteo-Clinton ferry. You get used to the timing your plans by the ferry schedule. Ferry lines are an unfortunate reality in the summer, especially on weekends. There is a free bus system on the island with regular service Monday through Friday, limited service on Saturday, and no service on Sunday ([islandtransit.org](http://islandtransit.org)). Most bus lines only run once per hour. The north end of the island is connected by a bridge. We are 1.5 hours from Anacortes and the San Juan/Vancouver ferry system, 2 hours from Bellingham, and 2.5 hours from the North Cascades. A second ferry route from Coupeville to Port Townsend offers access to the Olympic Peninsula and Olympic National Forest.

*We are an equal opportunity employer and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.*