



Spring Valley Student Farm and the Windham Community Food Network Paid Gleaning Internship March-August 2023



Please review the information below before completing the application questions.

About the Windham Community Food Network

The Windham Community Food Network's (WCFN) mission is to "create opportunities for the community by building a healthy food network." The WCFN works to create a more just and resilient local community and food system, by integrating local food system stakeholders in order to identify local needs and opportunities and meet them using local resources.

WCFN members include community members, farmers, businesses, food assistance providers, social service agencies, municipal partners, and schools. Our goal is to create a self-sustaining local food system that centers those most affected by the current inequity in the mainstream food system and redistributes resources already existing in our community. As a result, food grown and distributed here should reflect true constituent wants instead of just meeting basic needs. Our gleaning program intends to bring us closer to this goal by creating a self-sustaining gleaning program in Eastern Connecticut that benefits both farmers and marginalized/ low-income individuals in Willimantic, CT.

Windham Community Food Network Gleaning Program:

In 2019, the Windham Community Food Network launched one of the first organized gleaning programs in the state. Beginning with two local farms we have been able to expand to four partners where we harvest excess produce and donate it to local food pantries. Farmers receive a stipend for their participation guaranteeing them income and an outlet for their surplus produce. To date the program has prevented over 8,396 lbs of produce from being wasted. We also glean seedlings and seeds from these partners and local nurseries and distribute these to local home gardeners through our Plant-A-Row program. These gardeners also donate back any surplus produce, resulting in an additional 2,983lbs and does not include any produce kept by these individuals to feed their families.

In 2020, the WCFN started Community Table/Mesa Comunitaria (CT/MC), a constituent-led food pantry that increases access to nutritious food and community voice. Originally a response to COVID-19, the program has continued beyond initial funding through crowdfunding, shareholder participation and integration with other local food resources. The program delivers weekly boxes of food to 25 families, with an emphasis on reaching Latinx women, teens and elderly in Willimantic. These boxes are filled with food gleaned from local farmers, gardeners and pantries and supplemented with items purchased through community fundraising efforts. Stipends are provided to recipients to play a role in administering the program.

In 2021, after noticing large influxes of produce over short bursts of time that overwhelmed pantries, we partnered with CLiCK, a non-profit community kitchen in Willimantic, to process this surplus into value-added products that could be saved for when supplies dropped. Cucumbers were processed into pickles, tomatoes were made into tomato sauce and kale was chopped and frozen.

Gleaning Intern Overview:

The WCFN and Spring Valley Student Farm received funds from the the UConn Environmental Sustainability fund to hire two student gleaning interns to help sustain our gleaning, plant-a-row and processing efforts for the 2023 growing season. The Spring Valley Student Gleaning interns will assist in sustaining and expanding the WCFN's gleaning in Eastern Connecticut. This program increases food access and decreases food waste in Eastern Connecticut. This internship is an opportunity for students to play a role in this effort while gaining experience working with a variety of local farms and emergency food programs in our community.

Gleaning Intern Responsibilities:

- Communicating with the WCFN Pantry Coordinator and Spring Valley Student Farm Manager to schedule pick up and drop offs of produce.
- Harvesting, washing and delivering produce to various pantries in the Willimantic area.
- Recording and weighing the amount of produce collected
- Starting and maintaining seedlings to distribute to community gardeners
- Developing a training guide/longevity plan to sustain the program after the internship period

Gleaning Intern Requirements:

- Ability to commit an average of ~8 hours a week between April 1 and August 24, with flexible scheduling
- Available to distribute seedlings to community members at Veggiestock (held at Lauter Park, Willimantic) on Saturday June 3rd, 2023 from 9am-3pm.
- Drivers license and access to transportation to deliver produce and seedlings in North Eastern Connecticut.
- Excellent time management and verbal communication skills
- Ability to lift at least 50 lbs

Gleaning Intern Desired Qualifications:

- Experience growing and harvesting food
- Desire to model and teach fellow students about gleaning methods/protocols
- Strong written and/or visual communication skills
- Plan to live and/or work at Spring Valley Student Farm during summer 2023 (encouraged, not required)

Gleaning Intern Benefits:

The Gleaning Intern position is supported by the UConn Environmental Sustainability Fund through the University of Connecticut's Department of Dining Services. This classification is a seasonal, part time, end dated, non-state position. This position provides the gleaning intern with a bi-weekly wage of \$14.00/hr before June 1, and \$15.00/hr after June 1, 2023.

How to Apply:

Please complete the SVSF General Application, linked on both the Housing and Employment tabs of the Spring Valley website. You may reach out to Jessica.larkin-wells@uconn.edu with any questions.

