



Farmland Lease Request for Applications

October, 2021

Grow Food Northampton (GFN) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to build a just and resilient local food system that nourishes our community and protects and enriches the earth. A core component of our work is to provide ethical stewardship and equitable access to farmland so that people can grow food for themselves and their community. Our 121-acre Community Farm in Florence, MA sits on land with rich agricultural history. Originally farmed by the Indigenous Nipmuc and Pocumtuck peoples until they were forcibly removed from the area, in the 19th century, the land also served as the farm of the abolitionist group, the Northampton Association of Education and Industry. The Grow Food Northampton Community Farm is now home to multiple farms with leases of terms ranging from 1 to 99 years; a 320-plot community garden; food access and education programming; agricultural research projects, and a diverse ecosystem on the banks of the Mill River. We are seeking new farmers to join our community, particularly those who have been historically excluded from access to farming and farmland.

Acreage available: Flexible, between $\frac{1}{4}$ and 1.5 acres. See map below. The outgoing lessee has farmed mixed-vegetables using no-till practices on 0.75 acres for the past two seasons.

On-farm infrastructure provided: Frost-free water and 120v electricity. Metered water and electric usage will be paid by the lessee.

In addition to water and electricity, the following resources are available for shared use with other farmers on the GFN site, for a fee:

- Shared cooler space
- Shared space in a small barn
- Use of a 33 horse-power John Deere tractor with bucket and flail mower
- Use of BCS 853 walk-behind tractor with rear-tine tiller and power harrow attachment
- Composting outhouse (no fee)

The outgoing lessee is offering the following equipment for purchase:

- Various irrigation systems designed for small-scale cultivation
- 12' x 40' Hoop House
- 7' x 10' Shed
- Various other hand tools and supplies

Equipment purchase will be negotiated and made directly with the outgoing lessee. Please inquire about the full list of available items.

Lease fee: the maximum per-acre fee for the land lease is \$400 per year. A sliding scale fee is offered to farmers from historically disadvantaged groups and/or with individual or structural obstacles in accessing affordable land for farming including, but not limited to, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Stewardship Principles, Goals, and Requirements

GFN lessees are independent and autonomous, but we ask that they agree with and support GFN's stewardship principles and goals, and adhere to all requirements.

Principles

Grow Food Northampton is committed to the protection and enhancement of the resources in our care, the biodiversity of our natural and cultural systems, and the capacity of our organization to model and promote climate resilient practices. We acknowledge, honor, and value the many layers of cultural, ecological, and political past and present on this landscape.

Goals

In order to honor the above principles, our stewardship goals are to:

1. Conserve and protect water resources, and mitigate damage from flooding
2. Conserve and enhance soil health
3. Foster healthy and diverse plants and animals
4. Demonstrate and contribute to climate resilience
5. Protect and maintain the site's natural and built features

Requirements and prohibitions

1. Farmers will be asked to create an annual management plan, either written or in conversation with our staff, that describes farming practices and how such practices address and advance the above goals.
2. The use of GMO seeds is prohibited. Any synthetic fertilizer, herbicide, or pesticide not on OMRI-approved lists is also prohibited.
3. Farmers must carry general liability insurance. If this is a barrier, please talk to us about options.

To apply:

Please write a description of the farm operation you propose for this leased land. If writing in English or using email is not your preferred way to communicate, please contact us. We are happy to help with the application in any way. Applications should include:

- the types of crops you will grow;
- the market or use that they will be grown for;
- the size lease you are interested in;
- your general farming approach and the farming practices you plan to use;
- your farming experience, and;
- if you are from a historically disadvantaged group and/or how you may have experienced individual or structural obstacles in accessing affordable land for farming.

Please submit applications via email by December 1st, 2021. You are welcome to visit and observe the land before you apply.

To submit an application or to ask a question, contact Michael Skillicorn at Grow Food Northampton: michael@growfoodnorthampton.org -- (413) 320-4799 ext. 109

