Sundance Commons, Community Research Assistant

Overview:

Sundance Commons is an agricultural non-profit that operates at four farm locations in southwestern Ontario. We provide the tools, guidance, and access for new farmers who face barriers to entry in the agricultural sector and land access more broadly. Sundance Commons envisions a regenerative and food-secure world where the equity and agency of farm workers is centred.

This position can be predominately virtual, with one on site visit (Saturday) per month.

The placement:

- We incubate new and aspiring farmers. We provide the educational component necessary to thrive, the tools to boost productivity and the markets to offer fair compensation for crops produced.
- We work with each farmer to determine ideal lease arrangements and farm locations. We offer pathways to equity-building via land improvements, infrastructure ownership with ground leases, and leases that are fair, equitable and long term.
- We provide the delivery and storage tools and infrastructure necessary to scale sooner. We coordinate the logistics of large equipment usages, leveraging our scale of many farmers to mitigate the immense upfront capital needed to build efficiencies.
- Acquire and Manage Farmland to lock in access and equity for BIPOC farmers in perpetuity. All of these aims and program outlines can be strengthened greatly by securing land for affordable access in perpetuity. We work with partner organizations and land-holding farmers to secure donations, offer community bonds, and other mechanisms to own deeds to productive farmland. We do this as a community land trust, a non-profit entity that separates ownership of land from housing and other infrastructure through novel ground leases.

https://www.sundancecommons.com

The position:

We are seeking a dedicated and skilled individual for the position of Community Research Assistant.

- Creation of learning materials and reports specific to small scale agriculture, community land trusts, cooperative farming, sociocracy, food sovereignty, ecological systems, food growing and other relevant themes
- Create case studies and reports based on past interviews of participants
- Support during our Saturday weekly workshops through filming and interviewing participants
- Create a mid and end of year report for each of the Sundance Commons locations, New Farmer Training program and Farmer Member program
- Supporting the Lead Education Program Coordinator in their tasks

- Creation of surveys for workshop participants of our small farm training program as well as other programs
- Delivering a survey before, during and at the end of a participant's time during the 15-week program
- Reporting on workshops, meetings and weekly tasks
- Minute taking during our Annual General Meeting
- Conduct regular tool and machinery inventory and maintenance (brush cutters, lawnmowers, farm/garden tools, etc.)
- Visit each Sundance Commons location with the Program Coordinator and provide field reports in collaboration with Farmer Members

The opportunity:

The potential candidate will gain valuable experience working with our organization, which is a unique blend of community agriculture policy advocacy, rooted in social justice values that seek to foster new generations of racialized farmers and access to land. You will gain experience in community research, engagement and outreach, and develop your analytical, communication and time management skills.

The ideal candidate:

The ideal candidate is passionate about agriculture and social justice, a strong desire to learn, ask questions and demonstrates a capacity to thrive in both independent and collaborative work settings.

*** Personal transportation is not necessary to participate in this placement. Placement sites will be accessible via TTC and through transportation organized by Sundance Commons' coordinator.

How to apply:

For more information about the course and application process go to:
https://www.newcollege.utoronto.ca/cel-courses/cel-how-to-apply/

CEL Coordinator, Kevin Edmonds: nc.engagedlearning@utoronto.ca
Fall/Winter 2024-25