

Yale University

President's Public Service Fellowship

Proposal for Fellowship Placement Summer 2024

Organization information

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| <i>Name of organization</i> | Common Ground High School, Urban Farm, and Environmental Education Center |
| <i>Full street address</i> | 358 Springside Ave, New Haven, CT 06515 |
| <i>Website or link to social media page</i> | www.commongroundct.org ; @commongroundct |

PPSF Fellow's direct supervisor

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|--------------------------|---------------|
| <i>Name</i> | Deborah Greig |
| <i>Title</i> | Farm Director |
| <i>Cell phone number</i> | 917 822 7254 |
| <i>E-mail address</i> | farm@nhp.com |

What is the best way for prospective student applicants to contact you with questions about your proposal?

- Send an e-mail to set up a 15-minute phone call to discuss

Placement dates (8-11 weeks between Tuesday, May 28, 2024 through Friday, August 9, 2024)

May 28th-August 9th

Are placement dates flexible? Are there any dates on which your Fellow must work?

Yes, Dates are flexible but we prefer that the fellow start by May 28th so as to participate in orientation with the rest of our Summer staff (even though their responsibilities are slightly different). Placements ideally through August 9th.

Proposed work schedule (*work week should equal (and not exceed) 37.5 hours per week*)

Mon-Fri 8:30-4:30 *if choosing to focus on our Mobile Market, some days might start and end later.

The proposed work schedule is as follows:

May 28th-June 7th: 30hrs/week Orientation on Farm, Compost, youth and/OR Mobile Market.

June 10-28th: 30 hrs/week with our farm, compost system, supporting outreach for our mobile farm stand

Jul 1-Aug 9: 30 hrs/week on the farm/compost/supporting the GJC Youth Crew; 7.5 hrs/wk supporting our mobile farm stand.

If a hybrid schedule is offered at your site, please describe:

N/A

Organization description

Common Ground is a center for environmental learning and leadership, inviting people across ages and identities to connect to their urban environment, build community, grow into their full potential, and contribute to a just and sustainable world. We work toward this mission through active, authentic learning rooted in justice and our environment: a farm, in a forest, in a city. Three connected efforts are at the core of Common Ground's work:

- The nation's longest-running charter high school focused on the environment – growing a new, more inclusive generation of successful students and powerful environmental leaders.
- An environmental education center – each year connects more than 15,000 people of all ages with the natural world while helping them develop habits of sustainable living.
- An urban demonstration farm, modeling practices of sustainable agriculture and contributing to a healthy food system for New Haven residents.

Write a 1-2 sentence summary of the work that the Fellow would be conducting

The Fellow provides hands-on support growing vegetables, maintaining our compost system + caring for animals on the Common Ground urban farm alongside our farm team + Summer young adult interns, and youth employment program (including technical farming workshops, food justice conversations and field trips). The Fellow provides support in getting our produce out through our mobile farm stand, which travels around New Haven neighborhoods and senior centers with fresh, affordable vegetables.

Write a more complete description of the specific project you propose and list the duties/outcomes expected of the Fellow.

The Fellow will take on hands-on work on Common Ground's urban farm. Our ¾ acre sustainable, diversified market garden grows over 10,000 pounds of food and raises livestock in a unique urban setting. We sell our fresh produce and eggs through our Farm Share program, through a mobile farm stand and to our school cafeteria. The Fellow will work under the guidance of our Farm Director and Farm Manager and alongside GJC students and other young adult interns, in the following areas:

- Planting, cultivating, and harvesting over 25 types of vegetables
- Processing for our Compost System
- Supporting a mobile farm stand and farm share program
- Participating in or running weekly educational trips and workshops on farming and food justice related topics
- As part of their responsibilities, fellows will support the CG Mobile Market and can choose to focus on supporting our Green Jobs Core Program for High School Students:
 - The Fellow will support the Mobile Market Manager in outreach, sales and other related activities. The Mobile Market, in operation since its pilot season in 2012, is a farm stand on wheels that brings fresh produce from Connecticut farms directly to New Haven neighborhoods that don't have access to farmers markets or fresh produce through grocery stores. The Mobile Market accepts and encourages SNAP, WIC and Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program Checks to support folks with limited incomes in purchasing fresh produce. It goes to Senior residences, libraries, community centers and other spaces around New Haven.
 - Common Ground's Green Jobs Corps (GJC) connects more than 50 Common Ground High School students with paid environmental work, career and leadership development opportunities, and

individualized support during the Summer and the school year. This Summer, GJC members will take on a variety of work placements – including restoring habitat on and off of Common Ground’s campus, growing produce on Common Ground’s urban farm, monitoring water quality in New Haven rivers, and more.

If interested, the Fellow can help supervise and work alongside members of the GJC Farm Crew, in partnership with Farm staff. The Fellow can also take responsibility for developing and facilitating learning opportunities for the entire GJC Youth Crew. This work will give the Fellow an opportunity to build capacity and understanding related to youth leadership, youth development, youth employment, and education.

List any specific skills/experience required for the project

- Experience in working with youth, preferably high school aged OR experience in customer service settings is helpful
- Commitment to social justice, inclusiveness, and work in racially diverse contexts
- Good communication/interpersonal skills with people of all ages, especially youth
- Good organizational skills and ability to multi-task
- Willingness to get dirty and work in the heat
- Ability to be work hard and be physically active for most of an 8-hour day
- Demonstrated commitment, reliability, punctuality, and responsible behavior
- An interest in learning about sustainable agriculture and local food
- Maturity, and the willingness to be a positive role-model and leader for young people (ages 14 – 18), while maintaining appropriate supervisory boundaries
- Flexibility with the ever-changing needs of farm programs

Additional requirements

A car is not necessary, although helpful, as our site is accessible by the city bus or bicycle. Parking is available if needed.

A background check is required because we are working with youth.

Briefly describe any work that Yale PPSF Fellows and/or Yale students have done with your organization.

Common Ground has been fortunate to host a Yale Fellow on several occasions, and our site and our students have greatly benefited from their contributions.

In summer 2008, we significantly expanded our summer camp program and our Yale Fellow was instrumental in the launch of many new camp sessions. Summer 2008 also benefited from the farm and farmer's market help of an additional Yale Fellow, who farmed, worked Youth Crew, attended farmer's market, and helped us design new publicity materials for our farmer's market stand.

Summer 2009 saw the start of a very popular Saturday Open Farm Day and a successful on-site farmer's market stand, both of which relied on the capable, hardworking help of our Yale Fellow.

In summer 2011, our Fellow was a Green Jobs Corps Youth Crew Assistant Supervisor, managing a team on Common Ground's campus. She developed environmental and food justice curricula.

In the summer of 2012, our Fellow was also a Youth Crew Assistant Supervisor. She proved to be a valuable member of the team; helping to supervise the Farm Crew, running a workshop on goal setting, facilitating various team building activities and leading impromptu discussions on various issues such as the food system and human rights.

Our 2017 Fellow proved to be an integral part of running our farm, and gathered stories/information from alum that has helped us assess the effectiveness of our Green Jobs Corps program.

In 2018, our Fellow was instrumental in helping to run our farm (in the midst of a particularly short-staffed season), supported outreach and general operations support for our mobile farmer's market, and planned a 4-part "Food Stories" curriculum which addressed topics related to food security, food justice and food sovereignty, and culminated in an all-crew cooking event that allowed students to share dishes important to themselves and their families.

In 2021, our Fellow supported Common Ground social media and communications virtually through our Development Department. We additionally had 1 Yale student as part of our Summer Intern Program who stayed on to support the farm and our compost system through November.

In 2023, our Fellow worked on the farm, in our compost area and supported our Mobile Market. They stepped up to teach other summer staff and youth about pickling during one of our weekly educational sessions.

Yale fellows have also worked on several occasions in our summer ecology camps, tutors for Common Ground High School, as research interns, and as mentors for students in classes doing field work, managing social media and research on the farm and in the forest