

**Oregon Community Food Systems Network (OCFSN)  
Beginning Farmer and Rancher Working Group  
Computer Services Technician Services Opportunity**

Members of the **OCFSN Beginning Farmer Rancher Working Group** collaborate to coordinate existing services for Oregon's beginning farmers and ranchers (BFRs) at all stages of development, between 0 and 10 years of involvement in agricultural production. The primary focus of this working group is to network BFR educators and service providers that support education and training programs and provide resources and services for this segment of Oregon agriculture, <http://ocfsn.net/priority-issue-areas/beginning-farmers-ranchers/>.

Beginning Farmers and Ranchers (BFRs) need training, facilitated access to land and capital, and other resources. We recognize that BFRs need support so they can run viable, sustainable businesses in our communities and contribute to healthy, vibrant local food economies. BFRs are facing significant barriers to success from rising costs of land, housing, health care, childcare, student loan debt and more. BFRs from the Black, Indigenous, People Of Color (BIPOC) communities, Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Trans, Queer (LGBTQ) communities, and other underrepresented communities face systemic oppression to their success due to institutional discrimination, exclusionary policies, and structural racist inequity. Additionally, corporate land ownership and policies favoring non-agricultural investors and large-scale agriculture have challenged the economic viability and sustainability of small and mid-sized family farms.

Working together helps ensure that the needs of BFRs are addressed across the state and that diverse perspectives are represented in program development and delivery and that resources are available to all.

**Computer Services Technician Needed:** We are searching for a contractor to assist us with the online technical tools that the BFR Working Group has developed.

The **Computer Services Tech** position will help us develop a more usable Story Map, decrease technical glitches, and assist and train the "Story Map Coordinator" for the Working Group.

**Time Commitment:**

This is a contract service. The **Computer Services Tech** is expected to provide up to 12 hours over the course of a month to achieve the desired outcomes. Schedule is flexible and meeting times will be identified based on availability. This contract is funded through Beginning Farmer Rancher Development Program funds that are being administered by Rogue Farm Corps (RFC). Although the grant will end in September, the hope is that additional funding will be obtained to purchase additional services.

**Compensation:** Not to exceed \$1200, to be billed monthly at a rate of no more than \$100/hour.

## **Computer Services Tech Duties and Responsibilities:**

- Develop a more usable online [Story Map](#) for the BFR Working Group, using the existing platform or through developing another platform
  - Decrease technical glitches
  - Allow multiple pins for each organization
  - Potentially develop a registration page for new organizations
- Train and assist a “Story Map Coordinator” as a point person within the BFR Working Group for maintaining and updating this resource

\*\*\*Please note that the contractor must have reliable access to the internet and access to a personal computer.

**To apply, please submit a brief cover letter speaking to your qualifications and experience with the position title in the email subject line, and a resume as attachments by email to: Megan Fehrman, [mefehrman@gmail.com](mailto:mefehrman@gmail.com) by February 26th, 2021.**

We value a diverse working group and strongly encourage women, people of color, LGBTQ individuals, people with disabilities, members of ethnic minorities, foreign-born residents, and veterans to apply. Applicants will not be discriminated against because of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, religion, national origin, citizenship status, disability, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, medical condition or any protected category prohibited by local, state or federal laws.

## **More Information on Current BFR Working Group Projects & Advisory Committees**

### **Story Map and Brochure:**

We have a variety of organizations and agencies working to support BFRs, many are members of this working group. See our [Story Map](#) and brochure for a glimpse at the programs and resources currently working to support BFRs across the state. An update of both of these resources will take place before September 2021.

### **Diversity and Inclusion:**

The BFR Working Group aims to help create a new narrative that includes the voices of the systemically marginalized to help guide and shape what the future of BFRs are in Oregon. This includes access to farmland in urban and rural settings, access to the education, skill development, and resources required to successfully and sustainably farm, and an opportunity for BIPOC and underserved groups to be centered in decision-making, and leadership regarding strategies to pursue and to achieve our shared vision.

Through increased outreach, support, and engagement the BFR Working Group is recruiting new people to share information and make connections, we are investigating best practices for creating inclusive learning environments and teaching methods, and actively inviting BIPOC BFR's to access existing educational opportunities and resources, while identifying needs and gaps in service to be able to better serve all BFR's in Oregon.

## **Land Connection Technical Assistance Pilot Project:**

Guided by successful models in other states and the variety of expertise on our collaborative team, this Advisory Committee launched a year-long pilot program in the fall of 2019 aimed at addressing the need for more technical assistance for land transition and in accessing land. This group is developing a plan for a more robust Land Connection TA program in 2021. Please see our page on this [pilot program](#) for more information.

## **BFR Advocacy:**

The BFR Working Group thinks it is important to advocate for improvements and funding that will support the viability of new and beginning farmers and ranchers in Oregon. This includes reaching out to decision makers, foundations, and agencies such as the ODA and USDA to ensure cooperative relationships and to demonstrate the priorities of our collaborative network.

## **Participating Organizations:**

### OCFSN Member Organizations

- Adelante Mujeres
- Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council
- Friends of Family Farmers
- High Desert Food and Farm Alliance
- Huerto de la Familia
- EcoTrust
- Farm Commons
- Nehalem Valley Trust
- Northeast Oregon Economic Development District
- Oregon Agricultural Trust
- Oregon Food Bank
- Oregon Tilth
- OSU Center for Small Farms
- Outgrowing Hunger
- Rogue Farm Corps
- The Next Door, Inc.
- Willamette Food and Farm Coalition
- Zenger Farm

### Non-member Stakeholders

- Barking Mad Farm
- Beaverton School District
- Boots to Roots
- Clackamas Community College
- Columbia Wealth Advisors
- East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District + Headwaters Incubator Program

- Food Roots NW
- Mudbone Grown
- Northwest Farm Credit Services
- Project Delta
- Small Business Development Center
- Southern Oregon University

## **History**

In 2013, BFR education and service providers began convening with the idea to collaborate to evaluate the programs and resources provided and the gaps in services for Oregon's diverse BFRs. Eventually, this informal collaboration recognized that they could better achieve their collective goals of coordinating existing services and exploring new and expanded services for BFRs in Oregon if they were part of a larger network or organizations. They also believe that their work could enrich the existing coordination of efforts, ideas, and resources taking place through OCFSN. Many BFR coalition members are currently members of OCFSN and many are already on a related OCFSN committee – the Access to Land working group.

While access to land is a crucial component of BFR success, it is not sufficient in itself to launch a BFR business. In addition, BFRs are only one demographic that has difficulty accessing farmland in Oregon. Adding the BFR Working Group to OCFSN would help these two teams focus their efforts while also better understanding the synergies.

The BFR Working Group currently meets three to four times per year and has created a timeline and initial gap analysis of BFR programs and services in Oregon. This led to a [BFR Needs Assessment in 2017](#) and the Story Map and Brochure as outreach materials in 2019. Current initiatives and committees are described above.

**If you have questions about providing these services please email:  
Megan Fehrman, [mefehrman@gmail.com](mailto:mefehrman@gmail.com)**