



**KALAMAZOO
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT**

Kalamazoo Conservation District
5950 Portage Rd. Suit B, Portage, Michigan 49002
269-775-3368
www.kalamazooconservation.org

Position Summary

- Title: KCD Incubator Farmer Intern
- Hours: 400+ total (flexible mix of office and fieldwork)
- Pay: \$15/hour (potential for academic credit coordination with your school)
- Location/Base: Kalamazoo Conservation District office, with fieldwork at Farmstead Flats - Lovers Lane, Kalamazoo, MI, and meetings across the county (requires reliable transportation and valid driver's license)
- Supervisors: Chandra Kinney (KCD Manager) and Tricia Keala (KCD Board)
- Duration/Structure: Full Time Summer 2026 Internship, including: office space, available laptop at office, monthly board reports, collaboration with partners. Ideal start date in May.

Main Responsibilities

This role focuses on building community momentum and foundational elements for the program:

1. Perform a feasibility research study on incubator farms and long-term longevity.
2. Work with KCD to refine program outline based on feasibility study findings.
3. Recruit a diverse local incubator farmers committee of community leaders committed to developing and growing the program.
4. Compile local resources (e.g., land, tools, services, potential local apprentices/mentors) that incubator farmers could access.
5. Handle outreach & communications, to facilitate program development.
6. Coordinate 1-2 volunteer field days at our Farmstead Flats partnership facility.
7. Maintain quality record keeping for all program associated tasks.

Qualifications

Required:

- Genuine interest in regenerative agriculture
- Ability to collaborate with diverse groups
- Basic tech skills (apps, spreadsheets)
- Positive, friendly communication style
- Valid driver's license, reliable personal vehicle, willingness to travel in Kalamazoo County

Preferred:

- Strong interpersonal skills
- Familiarity with Kalamazoo County's food systems

Benefits

- Hands-on experience in program development, grant writing, partnerships, and outreach
- Networking with agencies, farmers, and community stakeholders
- Potential college credit
- Portfolio pieces, recommendation letters, and USDA-NRCS Earth Team Volunteer recognition



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- Workers' comp coverage via USDA-NRCS volunteer status; safety protocols and liability waiver required

How to Apply

Submit a resume + brief cover letter highlighting your interest in the KCD Incubator Farmer Internship to:

- Chandra Kinney at chandra.kinney@macd.org

What is an Incubator Farmer Program?

Farm incubator programs support beginning or aspiring farmers by providing low-risk access to resources that are often barriers to entry, such as:

- Land (often shared or leased affordably)
- Equipment and infrastructure
- Training, mentorship, and business planning support
- Marketing channels or community networks

These programs help new farmers test and build their operations (e.g., regenerative, small-scale, or diverse types of agriculture) before committing to full independent ownership. They promote sustainable practices, local food systems, and economic growth in rural or community settings. Examples from other regions (like The Seed Farm or Viva Farms) show they focus on hands-on experience, skill-building, and long-term viability for participants. The KCD version aims to increase localized food sources in Kalamazoo County, support new agricultural businesses through education and hands-on efforts, and emphasize regenerative agriculture through classes accessible to the whole community.