



**KALAMAZOO  
CONSERVATION  
DISTRICT**

**Kalamazoo Conservation District**  
5950 Portage Rd. Suit B, Portage, Michigan 49002  
269-775-3368  
[www.kalamazooconservation.org](http://www.kalamazooconservation.org)

**Position Summary**

- Title: Kalamazoo County Incubator Farmer Start-Up Intern
- Hours: 160-200 total (flexible mix of remote and fieldwork)
- Pay: \$15/hour (potential for academic credit coordination with your school)
- Location/Base: Primarily around Kalamazoo County, 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: Flexible schedule (e.g., 4-6 hours remote + 4-6 hours fieldwork per week), weekly check-ins, monthly board reports, collaboration with partners

**Main Responsibilities**

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

1. Network and communicate with state/local agencies, farmers, and residents to form collaborations.
2. Recruit a diverse local work group of community leaders committed to developing and growing the program.
3. Compile local resources (e.g., land, tools, services) that incubator farmers could access.
4. Research and identify potential funding sources (including preparing a grant outline).
5. Create a directory/list of local food producers and sellers in Kalamazoo County.
6. Handle outreach, communications, and remote admin tasks.
7. Conduct in-person meetings across the county.
8. Maintain records (e.g., spreadsheets), prepare reports.

**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
- 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 Incubator Farmer Start-Up

Internship to:

- Chandra Kinney at [chandra.kinney@macd.org](mailto:chandra.kinney@macd.org)



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**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.