

Rural Action Internship Opening Fall 2019

Appalachian Staple Foods Collaborative: Building a National Network around organic staple grains and beans among farmers, millers, tortillerias, and food access programs.

The Appalachian Staple Foods Collaborative helped launch Shagbark Seed & Mill in 2010, one of a handful of regional mills to start up after milling took a blow as industrial agriculture “scaled up” our food system more than 50 years ago. Now, 10 years later, there are numerous mills around the country, but most are priced out of reach for the chronically poor and food insecure. We have the opportunity to build the network in the Appalachian region and across North America to connect the many farms, bakeries, mills, and tortillerias in our region and others. Our aim is to build a model for regional staple food security.

Applicants should be eager to do one or more of the following:

1. Participate in strategic planning for this work
2. Research and gather facts what barriers and opportunities are present to those who want to start a regional staple food system in the Southwest among indigenous farmers and Southern States among Black farmers.
3. Create a logo to for the Staple Foods Network (working title) and the Appalachian Staple Foods Collaborative;
4. Enhance social media presence for both ASFC and SFN
5. Help design and create content for a new web site
6. Develop a photo file for use on web and elsewhere
7. Evaluate, research and propose a social media strategy to promote fundraising opportunities.

While this internship is not paid, this is an exclusive opportunity to build a national network that will help build a standout resume portfolio material.

Background:

Nearly every town in the US has a Mill Street, remnants of the grain processing mills that were once ubiquitous to rural communities worldwide. Grains and beans still account for 70% of the calories most people consume. And according to the 2012 USDA Census, grains, beans, and oilseed accounted for over \$131 billion in revenue, nearly eight times that of vegetables! Sadly, milling and the growing of grains, oilseeds, and dry beans have increasingly become controlled by seed and chemical corporations that have impacted agricultural policies worldwide since the 1960s. The focus on yields, subsidies, and chemical resistance have compromised the healthy diet, genetic diversity, and cultural cuisine these crops have offered for millennia.

But there's more: the decline of midsize farms; boarded up mills and seed cleaners; patented crop varieties developed for yield and chemical resistance (GMOs) over nutrition and soil; subsidies in the US and EU; and, the loss of smaller farms and cultural cuisine in the two-thirds world. All add up to greater dependence on food aid from foreign powers. And the problem is close to home. Right here in Athens County, the last 30 years have seen a sharp spike in diet related illness and food insecurity due to highly processed, low-nutrition, cheap food.

**If interested send cover letter and resume to Michelle Ajamian michellea@ruralaction.org
Be sure to include any questions you may have for us.**