



Vermont Commodity Program Overview

Program Description:

Salvation Farms runs the Vermont Commodity Program, a food hub that takes fruits and vegetables that farmers can't sell and moves them into our community.

The food hub doubles as a workforce development training program. The Vermont Commodity Program does two things: 1) moves fruits and vegetables that otherwise wouldn't be eaten to Vermont's food shelves and meal programs and 2) offers trainees experience, work-readiness skills, and valuable certifications.

The program is 30 hrs/week for 16 weeks, running 9am – 3pm Monday-Friday. Trainees receive:

Compensation: Minimum wage for Department of Labor WIOA eligible participants, or \$250/month for non-eligible participants or those who elect not to receive a wage.

Production Experience (roughly 2/3 of the total program): Trainees work as a team to operate production lines cleaning, quality assessing, and packing vegetables and fruits. The work is hands on and active, and requires attention to detail and persistence. Trainees learn to ship and receive, track product, manage inventories, and ensure workplace safety and food safety. Produce handling takes place throughout the program and can be a dirty and wet job. Each cohort moves over 250,000 servings of food into the community!

Classroom Learning (roughly 1/3 of the total program): Trainees engage in a variety of learning activities throughout the 16-week program. This includes:

- Soft skill development: Learn skills necessary for success in any workplace such as communication skills, conflict resolution, resume/ cover letter writing, interview preparation.
- Certifications in ServSafe, OSHA, and Red Cross First Aid/CPR
- Employment application and placement support
- Field trips to visit local employers in food and manufacturing

If you, or someone you work with may be interested in this program, please call, text, or email or Jake to learn more:

Jake Kornfeld: 802-291-1098; jake@salvationfarms.org

"I was at a point where no one was hiring me, and I said 'Okay, I gotta do something.' It was way better than I expected, I had no idea how good it would be."

- Former VCP Trainee, currently employed full time.

Classroom Activities:



ServSafe - Learn how to safely prepare food and work in a kitchen setting.



American Red Cross

CPR/First Aid - Learn how to respond to someone having a first aid emergency – anything from a small cut to a heart attack.



OSHA 10 General - Learn to recognize and prevent health and safety issues in the workplace.



Soft Skill Development – Work with peers, Salvation Farms staff, and guest instructors to build the foundational skills needed for success in any workplace. Trainees work on professionalism, communication, goal setting, interview skills, and much more.



Food Safety Training - Learn from industry experts how to safely manage, store, and handle food, ensure quality control, and understand and follow SOPs, GMPs, and HACCP plans, which are important in many food and manufacturing jobs.



Field Trips - Field trips provide an opportunity to see what sort of work is out there for people with skills like those trainees are gaining. Trainees hear directly from employers what is important to them in hiring and retaining employees.



Food System Education - Learn about food waste and the greater food system through documentaries, activities, and guest speakers.

Eligibility:

- At least 18 years of age, and legally able to work in the United States
- Commitment to participating in the full program
- Basic literacy skills and ability to speak basic English
- Commitment to find employment or pursue educational opportunities following participation in the program