ACCEPTANCE EMAIL

Hello,

This is your official letter of acceptance and welcome to the 2024 cohort of the Growers Apprenticeship Program with Urban Growers Collective.

The first year of the program will be focused on the hands-on fundamentals of farming and an introduction to the solidarity economy. Through collective work, you will practice the steps needed to build a farm from the ground up, in community with your peers. This will take time, persistence, and dedication.

You will meet as a cohort **every** **Wednesday from 6pm- 7:30pm** and **every Saturday from 9:30am-11,** Marchthrough November. You will also be expected to contribute an additional 4+ hours of applied learning within your communal space. The programming is dynamic - The more you are present, the more you will learn. If you don’t have the capacity to be present, to be responsive, to engage physically and socially; you may want to decline this invitation at this time. There will be many other opportunities to learn and grow with us this season!

To accept this offer, please respond, yes or no, to this email by **Friday, February 9, 2024** **by 5pm**. If you are in need of a scholarship to participate, please also complete [THIS APPLICATION](https://forms.gle/hiHTELGhJqwqfBzn6) by **Friday, February 9, 2024** **by 5pm**. If we have not heard from you by that date we will consider that the invitation has been declined. A materials fee of **$100** and a reservation fee to secure your spot will be due **February 23rd, 2024**. Our first meeting will be **Wednesday, March 6th from 6:00-7:30pm.**

Please know that we had many applicants, and that your seat in this program is a coveted one. We thank you for carefully considering this opportunity, and for entrusting your learning to our care!

In community,

Malcolm & Lauralyn

UGC

DENIAL EMAIL

Thank you so much for applying to the Grower Apprenticeship program for the 2024 season with Urban Growers Collective. We received many strong applications, only some of which we were able to accept this year. We reviewed your application very carefully and noted some strong features, but unfortunately we were not able to move forward with your candidacy for this year's program.

Please see this letter as an invitation as opposed to a rejection. We encourage you to continue your interest in our programs and overall culture by visiting our farm sites, attending public workshops and events, volunteering with us, applying for space on one of our community gardens, and re-applying for this program for the 2025 season when the opportunity arises.

Here is some additional detail about ways to be in community and learn with us this season -

1. **Volunteering:** Volunteering will begin again in April. We will have standing weekend volunteer spots to get your hands dirty and hearts reconnected to the soil, as well as specialized volunteer opportunities to learn and focus more deeply on different aspects of our daily work. This is a great way to continue to contribute and learn at your leisure. More information can be found [HERE](https://www.urbangrowerscollective.org/become-a-volunteer).
2. **Community Garden:** We have open plots at our South Chicago and Jackson Park sites. This is a great way to continue to learn and practice at a smaller scale, particularly if you are in need of access to space to grow. You can find the community garden application [HERE](https://www.urbangrowerscollective.org/community-gardens).
3. **Workshops:** We will host farm foundation workshops for the wider community this year. Coupled with a community garden, this is a wonderful way to curate a personal learning plan that is more aligned to your goals and availability this season. Details will be shared [HERE](https://www.urbangrowerscollective.org/workshops-events).
4. **Special events**: Herb walks, demos, fireside chats, farm stands - the ways to engage are bountiful.

Please [sign up for our newsletter](https://signup-usa.keela.co/join-our-mailing-list-2023) to stay updated on offerings. We appreciate your interest and hope to see you at the farm this season!

In Community,

UGC

RENEWAL EMAIL

Hi <Apprentice>

We hope you are well and have enjoyed some rest this winter. Based on your attendance and demonstrated commitment over <the past season/past 2 seasons for OG’s>, we’d like to extend an offer for you to continue in the Grower Apprenticeship program. To accept this offer, please respond, yes or no, to this email by **Friday, February 23, 2024** **by 5pm**. If we have not heard from you by that date we will consider that the invitation has been declined. Please read the below information carefully.

**SCHEDULE:** Similar to last season, we will meet as a cohort every **Wednesday from 6pm- 7:30pm** and every **Saturday from 9:30am-11a**, mid-March through November. Our first meeting will be **Wednesday, March 13th from 6:00-7:30pm**. You will also be expected to contribute additional time applying what you learn within your communal space. The programming is dynamic - The more you are present, the more you will gain.

**ATTENDANCE:** You can find LINKED HERE your attendance report for the 2023 season. This was a determining factor for your invitation to continue. If your attendance in the 2023 program was less than 60%, or significantly waned at the end of the season, please let us know in your confirmation response what has changed that will allow you to be more present in the upcoming year. If you don’t have the capacity to be present, to be responsive, to engage physically and socially; you may want to decline this invitation at this time.

**TUITION**: The tuition for the program will be set at $1500 + a $100 materials fee. If you are in need of a scholarship to participate, please complete [THIS APPLICATION](https://forms.gle/hiHTELGhJqwqfBzn6) by **Friday, February 23, 2024** **by 5pm**. A materials fee of $100 and a reservation fee to secure your spot will be due **March 1st, 2024**. Any outstanding balances from the 2023 season will also need to be paid or incorporated into a payment plan prior to that date.

**PROGRAM COMMITMENTS:** We are committed to providing you with an early and updated schedule, additional opportunities to work alongside members of our farm, opportunities to visit other sites, an improved online learning platform, clarification around the ways in which we are available to support your growth, and a learning agreement that outlines shared expectations for program participation and progression. We will also better set expectations and ensure there is more transparency in the record keeping process, and hold space to discuss revenue distribution through the coop curriculum. We will review this information together during our orientation.

**PROGRAM SPACE:** You will not be able to manage fewer beds. This program is intended for individuals who are interested in becoming social impact or commercial growers, and it’s our goal to teach you how to grow at a scale that supports our community. Through collective work, you practice the steps needed to build a farm from the ground up, in community with your peers. This takes time, observation, humility, trust, hard work and repetition. If you are individually feeling the pull to manage fewer beds, we encourage you to sign up for a community garden plot and take workshops to continue to learn. If you are collectively feeling the pull to manage fewer beds, we will support you this season to increase efficiency in your practice and more creatively engage your families and community in the work.

**CERTIFICATION:** This is currently not a certificate based program. We are working to set standards of what certification may look like and we are committed to better outlining what opportunities may arise upon successful completion of the 3 year cycle. We believe that to be successful in starting your own business, you will need the hands-on skills to hit the ground running when it’s time to invest and begin farming at scale. If you are interested in pursuing a more academic based classroom/certificate farm training program, without a rigorous hands on component, we kindly encourage you to explore IL-extension’s Master Urban Farmer Training Program: [LINKED HERE](https://extension.illinois.edu/cook/urban-agriculture-0#:~:text=Our%2012%2Dweek%20training%20for,Demonstration%20Farm%20in%20Matteson%20IL.); if you are interested in exploring a more academic based classroom/certificate farm training program that includes a hands on component, we kindly encourage you to explore the City College’s Sustainable Urban Horticulture Certificate program: [LINKED HERE](https://catalog.ccc.edu/academic-program-requirements/sustainable-urban-horticulture-advanced-certificate/).

If the program no longer feels aligned, or you do not have the time to commit this year, there are many other ways to continue to be in community with UGC -

1. **Volunteering:** Volunteering will begin again in April. We will have standing weekend volunteer spots to get your hands dirty and hearts reconnected to the soil, as well as specialized volunteer opportunities to learn and focus more deeply on different aspects of our daily work. This is a great way to continue to contribute and learn at your leisure. More information can be found [HERE](https://www.urbangrowerscollective.org/become-a-volunteer).
2. **Community Garden:** We have open plots at our South Chicago and Jackson Park sites. This is a great way to continue to learn and practice at a smaller scale, particularly if you are in need of access to space to grow. You can find the community garden application [HERE](https://www.urbangrowerscollective.org/community-gardens).
3. **Workshops:** We will host farm foundation workshops for the wider community this year. Coupled with a community garden, this is a wonderful way to curate a personal learning plan that is more aligned to your goals and availability this season. Details will be shared [HERE](https://www.urbangrowerscollective.org/workshops-events).
4. **Internship:** If you have the time to commit during the week, and are in need of additional compensation to support your learning, we encourage you to apply for our internship program. More information and the application can be [found here](https://www.urbangrowerscollective.org/internships). You could participate in the internship program concurrent to being in the Grower Apprenticeship Program.

We understand that priorities and commitments shift. Please know you are an important part of our community and will always be welcomed at the farm! We thank you for carefully considering this opportunity, and for entrusting your learning to our care!

In Community,

Lauralyn & Malcolm

OFFBOARD EMAIL

​​Hi <APPRENTICE>,

We hope you are well and have enjoyed some rest this winter. We’re reaching out about programming opportunities in the upcoming season. Based on your in-person participation last season, we’d like to offboard you from the apprenticeship program and offer that you join our community in other ways -

1. **Volunteering:** Volunteering will begin again in April. We will have standing weekend volunteer spots to get your hands dirty and hearts reconnected to the soil, as well as specialized volunteer opportunities to learn and focus more deeply on different aspects of our daily work. This is a great way to continue to contribute and learn at your leisure. More information can be found [HERE](https://www.urbangrowerscollective.org/become-a-volunteer).
2. **Community Garden:** We have open plots at our South Chicago and Jackson Park sites. This is a great way to continue to learn and practice at a smaller scale, particularly if you are in need of access to space to grow. You can find the community garden application [HERE](https://www.urbangrowerscollective.org/community-gardens).
3. **Workshops:** We will host farm foundation workshops for the wider community this year. Coupled with a community garden, this is a wonderful way to curate a personal learning plan that is more aligned to your goals and availability this season. Details will be shared [HERE](https://www.urbangrowerscollective.org/workshops-events).

If you want to be reconsidered for a spot in the 2024 program/new cohort, please fill out this form by **February 23rd**. If you are in need of a scholarship to continue participation, we kindly ask that you also fill out this form by **February 23rd.**  If we have not heard from you by that date we will move forward with offboarding you from the apprenticeship program.

We understand that priorities and commitments shift. Please know you are an important part of our community and will always be welcomed at the farm! We hope to see you again this season.

Take Care,

Lauralyn & Malcolm

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# Apprentices

| **OGs – 2022 Program Class** | Dannah  Derrick  Fylinda  Mary  Malik  Nia - OFFBOARD  Sam - OFFBOARD |
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| **GGs – 2023 Program Class** | Alvin  Alicia  Andreah  Angie  Chevy  Courtney  Kiko  Liz  Malik  Sneha  Zandra  Donnell - OFFBOARD  Karla - OFFBOARD |

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