



## 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, in partnership with Vermont Works for Women's Step In To Work 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:

- **Stipend and Completion Bonus:** \$125 biweekly stipend and \$250 completion bonus
- **Packing 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, sometimes requiring heavy lifting. 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:
  - Vermont Works for Women's Build Your Skills program, which develops soft skills necessary for success in any workplace
  - 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
  - Continued job placement support to ensure success – even after the program is over
    - *93% of Step In To Work graduates find employment within 90 days - with a starting pay of \$13-\$18/hour!*

**The next cycle starts on January 31<sup>st</sup> – if you are working with someone who may benefit from this program, please have them call Heather or Jake to learn more:**

Heather Newcomb: 802-655-8900 ext. 114; [hnewcomb@vtworksforwomen.org](mailto:hnewcomb@vtworksforwomen.org)

Jake Kornfeld: 802-291-1098; [jake@salvationfarms.org](mailto:jake@salvationfarms.org)

**Attend an orientation to start an application:**

Mondays, 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM at 32A Mallets Bay Ave, Winooski

## Classroom Activities:



**Step In to Work** – Throughout the 4 month program, trainees complete Vermont Works for Women’s holistic work-readiness program, which is designed to support women in overcoming employment barriers. Step In to Work provides an opportunities for deep skill-building and hands-on learning which helps prepare women for meaningful, living-wage work. Examples of highlighted skills include stress reduction, time management, interviewing skills, and financial literacy.



**ServSafe** - Learn how to safely prepare food and work in a kitchen setting. This includes group study sessions, formal review, and a final exam.



**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.



**Food Safety Training** - Learn how to safely manage, store, and handle food, as well as understand and follow Standard Operating Procedures, which are important in many food or 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 get to hear directly from employers what is important to them in hiring and retaining employees.



**Extracurricular** - Learn about food waste and the greater food system through documentaries, readings, and guest speakers.

### Eligibility:

- Female, 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 English
- Commitment to find employment or pursue educational opportunities following participation in the program