

Regenerative Farming Policy Fellowship Program

Grant Project Time Frame: April 2023 - May 2024

Policy Fellowship Program Dates: September 2023 - April 2024

Plan of Work and Key Dates:

April/May 2023: Instructors (Allen, Freeman) develop program participant application; finalize module topics and identify expert speakers; convene a Fellowship application review team; announce Applications for the BIPOC Policy Fellowship at the BIPOC Farming Network (BFN) Farm Bill Virtual Round Table event (May 22, 23, 24. Final date still to be determined).

June 2023: Application process begins June 1 to fill 4 open Fellowship slots. The 6 Regenerative Farming Fellows (RFF) named in the proposal will not need to reapply but, as part of the process, we will require all 10 fellows to include 3-5 topics of concern regarding public policy issues that impact their work and growing operations. This will lay the groundwork for the cohort to identify a Capstone Project topic and help Instructors finalize module content (speakers, specific material, etc.).

July-August 2023: Interviews with new applicants (for the four open slots). Fellows notified of acceptance into program by August 15.

September 2023: Official program launch at the Black Farming Conference. Introduction of BFN Policy Fellows and a policy panel event at the Conference on soil health, urban agriculture, or other topics as determined by the Fellows.

Program Format

Minimum of three touch points per month from October 2023 through March 2024:

- In-person/virtual gathering: Lecture/presentation (1-2 hours) of a monthly module topic led by Instructors and/or invited expert speaker(s).
- Individual Assignments/Homework: (give fellows some flexibility and individualized learning support (minimum 1 hour), (i.e., identify your government official(s) and entities that impact your farm/food production work, attend a local meeting).
- One virtual gathering via Zoom each month between Instructors and Fellows on capstone module theme and progress (up to 1 hour).

First Gathering (Sept 2023): Program Kick-off/Orientation

Introduction to program, distribution of syllabus/workbooks; selection of a Cohort Capstone project theme. Why is understanding public policy important as a BIPOC, urban, small-scale regenerative farmer? Led by Tracy Freeman, Gov Relations Professional Inspiring Outcomes LLC; Patricia Allen, Program Manager BIPOC Farming Network.

Module 1 (Oct 2023): Local (City and County) and Regional (i.e., Miami Valley Policy Makers and Government Bodies

Introduction to Local and Regional Government: Greene, Montgomery, Clark/ Dayton-Springfield/City and County governments; Department of Public Health; County and City Commissions. Topics include Public Health/Food Safety, Zoning laws; Land banks, environmental safety, land access. How are Regenerative Agriculture and Sustainable and Environmentally Friendly Farming Practices developed, incentivized, and implemented at the local and regional level? Who is monitoring soil health at the local level? Possible expert speakers include: Ta Trecia Davis, Asst State Conservationist, National Resource Conservation Service; Brittney Jones PhD, President of the Ohio Food Policy Network.

Module 2 (Nov 2023): Strategies for accessing policymakers and impacting policy -

Understanding how policy is drafted and enacted. Possible presenters: Jenny Connor, Director of Agriculture Policy, TNC North America Policy and Gov Relations, Fred Strahorn, former Ohio Senate minority Leader.

Module 3 (Dec 2023): Ohio Statehouse – Fellows visit Columbus with Instructors. Who are the relevant state decision makers regarding agriculture and food systems and what process is involved in making decisions? General Assembly Agriculture committees, relevant state agencies (i.e., Ohio Dept. Of Agriculture, and Ohio EPA). Possible speakers include Brian Baldrige – Director, Ohio Dept. Of Agriculture, Senator Paula Hicks-Hudson, Ranking member OH Senate Ag Committee, NRCS State Technical Committee on Agriculture.

Module 4 (Jan 2024): Federal Policy Makers – Congressional committee members, Ohio delegation members, organizations involved in developing components of federal legislation/policies. Possible speakers: Celeste Treece, Ambassador Tony Hall, former UN Ambassador for Food and Agriculture, federal agencies such as Dept of Agriculture, NRCS.

Module 5 (Feb 2024): Non-Governmental Organizations and Public Policy Advocacy Organizations - Ohio Food Policy Network/The Nature Conservancy/Non-governmental bodies; local and State Food Policy councils: The Ohio Food Policy Network, OEFFA.

Module 6 (March 2024): Grassroots Organizing/Community Building. How can policy be communicated including traditional and social media, partnering with organizations such as cooperatives, church and civic organizations and engaging at the local level, how to write Op-Eds. Possible speakers include Amaha Sellaisse, Director, Center of Applied Social Issues and Asst. Professor of Sociology at Sinclair Community College, Brittney Jones PhD President of Ohio Food Policy Network.

Final meeting and capstone presentation by Fellows (April 2024)

Final project report (May 2024)