



**community  
CROPS**

# Community CROPS Growing Farmers Training Program

**Lincoln, NE**

Farm participants include immigrants, refugees and low-income families who want to establish a small farm business.

CROPS offers financial support to beginning farmers by providing low-cost land, startup equipment and access to interest-free loans through partnership with Heifer International.

## YEAR ONE

*Activities:*

- Graduate from the spring workshop training series.
- Develop a business plan.
- Develop planting, financial and yield records.
- Produce transplants in a cold frame or greenhouse.
- Grow on 1/8 to 1/4 acre.
- Attend bi-weekly field walks with CROPS staff.
- Attend 3/4 of all summer workshops.
- Sell at the CROPS OCRFM stall, the CROPS market or the CROPS CSA.
- Utilize other services such as computer classes or ESL, as needed.

*Sales:*

- Gross at least \$1500 over the season (\$80/wk. for 19 weeks at market).
- Save 25% of produce sales for expenses the following year.

*General:*

- Demonstrate commitment, participation and skill development.



## YEAR TWO

*Activities:*

- Attend 1/2 of all first-year spring workshops.
- Attend 2-4 advanced spring workshops or area conferences.
- Exchange labor with an established farmer-mentor.
- Modify and adapt business plan.
- Increase use of planting, financial and yield records.
- Produce transplants in a cold frame or greenhouse.
- Grow on 1/4 acre.
- Attend monthly field walks with CROPS staff.
- Sell at a farmers' market, the CROPS CSA and 1 wholesale account.
- Utilize other services such as computer classes or ESL, as needed.

*Sales:*

- Gross at least \$2500 over season (\$80/wk. for 26 wks. at market, CSA, 1 wholesale account).
- Save 25% of produce sales for expenses the following year.

*General:*

- Continue to demonstrate commitment, participation and skill development.



## YEARS THREE TO FIVE

*Activities:*

- Attend advanced workshops and conferences as recommended.
- Modify and adapt business plan.
- Continue to increase use of planting, financial and yield records. Assist staff with CSA planning.
- Produce transplants in a cold frame or greenhouse.
- Grow on 1/2 acre or more.
- Attend field walks as requested by CROPS staff or participant.
- Sell at farmers' markets, the CROPS CSA and to wholesale accounts.
- Work with staff to identify an independent farm site to rent/buy.
- Identify larger purchasing needs, such as tillers or other equipment.
- Utilize other services such as IDA, computer classes, classes at SCC, etc.

*Sales:*

- Gross \$6000+ over season.
- Save 25% of produce sales for expenses the following year.

*General:*

- Participate independently and seek skill development independently.
- Mentor new farmers.

## INDEPENDENT FARM BUSINESS

- Lease or purchase land located with assistance from staff.
- Rent or purchase farm equipment and supplies as needed.
- Obtain loans through banks, government or other sources.
- Maintain contact with staff for training and other support as needed.