



United States  
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Agriculture

National Institute  
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# Arcadia's Veteran Farmer Program

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Food & Agriculture  
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# VETERAN FARMER PROGRAM

A large, dark green, stylized letter 'V' that serves as the first letter of the word 'VETERAN'. Inside the 'V', there is a white outline of a shovel and a pitchfork, symbolizing agriculture.

PREPARING MILITARY VETERANS  
FOR NEW CAREERS IN AGRICULTURE



# Project Audience

- Military Veterans
- Active Duty Military
- Program participants may come from other areas, but training is focused in the greater Washington, DC metropolitan area
- We hope the trainees stay in the DC area
- Various stages of agriculture experience from exploring, to planning, to start-up



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# Project Overview

Multi-Track Training Program

-Veteran Farm Fellowship-

-Farmer Reserve Program-

Land Access Assistance

Mentoring

Ongoing Market Support

# Veteran Farm Fellowship

- Full-time, paid, one-year apprenticeship at Arcadia Farm (2,000+ Hours).
- On-the-job training of all aspects of farm development and operation.
- Farm Mentor and Advisory Committee
- V.A. approved On The Job Training program – allows Fellows to receive additional assistance from GI Bill.





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# Veteran Farmer Reserve Program



- Part-time training program
- Year-long program (270+ Hours)
- Training workshops 1 weekend a month
- Additional 80 hours of on-farm training a year
- Tuition Based with needs-based scholarships
- Program allows for exploration with opportunity for honorable drop-out



# Veteran Farmer Reserve Program



## Training Program

- Classroom
- Hands-On
- Farm Visits
- Entrepreneurship Focus

Training is not scale-specific

Designed to accommodate various skill-levels and business goals

Farm Fellow participates in training  
Program includes visits and training  
from numerous partners and  
government agencies



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# Overall Target Outcome

We aim to train 50 military veterans,  
producing 25 new farmers operating  
businesses by December 2020.





# Project Accomplishments

## Development Grant -

- Trained 1 Farm Fellow in 2016. He is now employed as a farmer with Arcadia
- Trained 11 Veterans plus the Farm Fellow through the 2016 Farmer Reserve Program
- Received VA On-the-Job Training Certification for the Fellowship

## Since the first grant -

- Currently training 18 veterans in the 2017 Farmer Reserve Program



# Impacts and Evaluation

- In 2016, we worked with 12 veterans.
  - 6 are now farming
  - 5 of those 6 are running their own farm businesses
  - 3 are working in other parts of the food system
  - 2 are still planning for their businesses (1 is active duty and the other is retired but fully employed by the DOD)
- 2017 Farmer Reserve Class has 18 participants
  - 4 own land and are developing business plans through the program
  - 5 others are currently looking for land and developing prospective plans



# Lessons Learned & Best Practices

- Recruiting Veterans can be difficult at first, but it can be successful
- Veterans benefit from training programs designed to meet their needs
  - Accommodating to their lives
  - Benefit greatly from a group environment
  - Recommend more than 1 full-time apprentice/trainee
  - Unit Cohesion is great!
  - Veterans benefit from training each other (Left Seat-Right Seat)
- There are a lot of people getting into this area of training, and it would be really helpful to coordinate efforts
- Veterans are willing to travel for programs that they think will help
- Curricula – We are willing to share ours.
  - We borrowed from many different resources, and people are willing to help and share information



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# Next Year & After

- Currently accepting applications for 2018
- Continue to improve our curriculum
- Plan to pilot Incubator Farm Plots
- Continued dev. of Mentor Network
- Build and improve land access efforts
- Ongoing Market support for program graduates
- Growth of Program (funding contingent)
  - Grow Fellowship
  - Grow Reserve Program (How?)





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# Project Partners and Supporters

BAE Systems

Bainum Foundation Farm

Boeing

ClearedJobs.Net

Grace Communication Foundation

The Mission Continues

Nat'l Trust for Historic Preservation

Neighborhood Restaurant Group

Northrop Grumman

Piedmont Environmental Council

Poppy Davis

Prince Charitable Trusts

Rumsfeld Foundation

Soldier for Life

USDA

Virginia Cooperative Extension



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# Questions?

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