



McDowell County

County/Worksite Location: McDowell County Cooperative Extension

Proposal/Program Area: ANR/CRD

Project Title: Community Garden Internship

Immediate/ Site Supervisor: Molly A. Sandfoss

Other mentors/supervisors:

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 1 | Chad Ray |
| 2 | Vickey Stinson |
| 3 | Paula Avery |

Project summary and intended outcomes:

The purpose of the McDowell County Local Food Advisory Council is to connect, coordinate, and strengthen the local food system to improve the health, income, and livelihoods of all community members. The Advisory Council has goals and activities that help direct their work. One goal is to ensure local food is affordable and accessible to all our community members. We support local food options in several ways. One way is support events that help to purchase local food for our low-income neighbors. Another way is to support community garden efforts. The food produced from community gardens goes directly back to the community through donation as well as sold as the local tailgate market.

The West Marion Community Forum is a grassroots effort that is supported by over 70 community members that identified health food options as a priority issue for their community. The West Marion Community Forum broke ground on Keeping It Fresh, a community garden effort, in 2017. The community distributed 2,500 lbs of produce in 2017, but they would like to increase their knowledge and gain gardening skills.

The student intern would be responsible for carrying out the seasonal growing plan for the community garden located in the West Marion community, a traditionally underserved community. The intern is responsible for ensuring the garden is managed and maintained for the growing season while teaching both youth and adult community members proper production practices.



In addition to managing Keeping It Fresh Community Garden and teaching gardening skills, the student intern would do county-wide outreach and help plan county local food events.

The intended impacts:

Number of individuals who gain knowledge or acquire skills related to vegetable/fruit gardening. Number of individuals who improve knowledge of local food and agricultural systems.

What qualifications and previous coursework does the student need in order to be prepared for this internship, if any?

Vegetable gardening experience, organic methods preferred, but not required

What benefits/skills will the student gain through this internship?

The student intern will be working alongside a highly active grassroots organization that is enacting positive change for their community.

The student intern will gain the following skills:

- Organization & time management
- Relationship building and networking
- Event planning
- Teaching and evaluation

Rural Works!

This internship is part of the Rural Works! Program, an NC State Initiative to place interns in rural Tier 1 counties. For more information:

<https://careers.dasa.ncsu.edu/gain-experience/rural-works/>