

THE **UNIVERSITY** OF RHODE ISLAND
COLLEGE OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND LIFE SCIENCES
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

**PAID
INTERNSHIP FOR
URI AND CCRI
STUDENTS IN ALL
MAJORS**

Agriculture and Food Systems Fellows Program

Earn course credit and get paid to work with professionals to strengthen the local food system.



INFORMATION PACKET



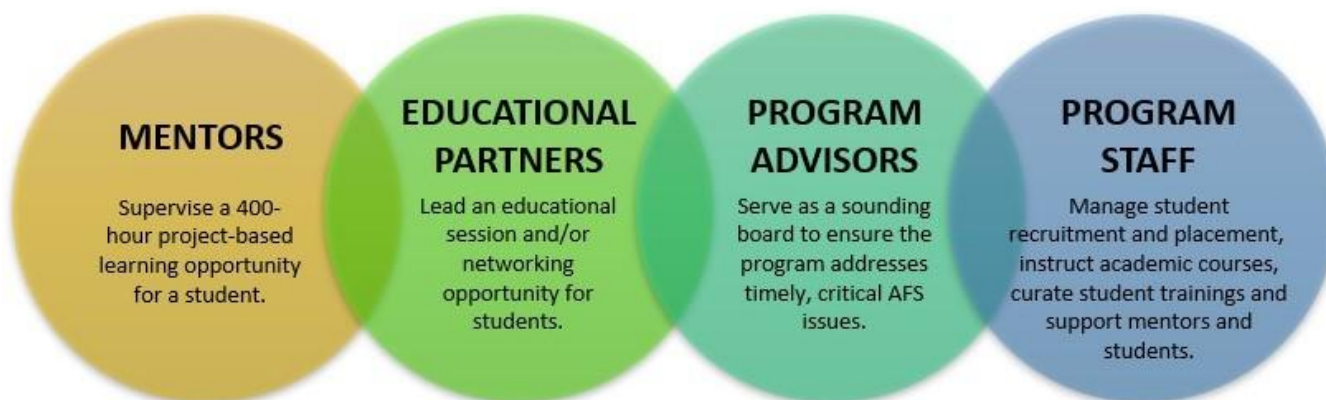
USDA United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture

This project is funded by a grant (no. 2021-10338) from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Research and Extension Experiences for Undergraduates (REEU) program.

Agriculture and Food Systems Fellows Program

How you can support us...

The **RI Agriculture and Food Systems Fellowship Program (AFSFP)** is supported by industry leaders who serve as fellowship mentors to students, educational partners for the AFSFP Summer Industry Training, and/or advisors to program staff. Individuals are welcome to serve in more than one of the roles outlined below.



MENTORS

Mentors are critical to the success of the AFSFP, serving as a direct connection to the agriculture and food system (AFS) community for the students they employ. Mentors provide a) an outline for an AFS-related project activity with a scope of work that clearly identifies a measurable outcome for a student to achieve within the fellowship year; and b) preferred skills, interests and background of a potential student. Mentors support their fellows' professional development by reviewing and approving a student-written learning contract, provide direct support and supervision to students working on food system-related projects for a minimum of 400 hours from May-December, allow scheduling flexibility for the Fellow to participate in the AFSFP summer industry training series and maintain contact with AFSFP staff regarding student performance. See pages 3 and 4 for additional information.

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS

Partners provide in-kind educational services during the summer industry training series organized for fellows by the AFSFP team. Examples of this support may include, but aren't limited to micro-lectures about agricultural science and policy topics, hosted site visits to local area farms, professionals offices, food processing, distribution and/or waste management facilities, academic laboratories or demonstration gardens, and/or participation in panel discussions organized by the AFSFP team around topics including community food system education for youth and food justice and equity. *Email sejal@uri.edu to talk more about this opportunity to share your expertise with our students.*

PROGRAM ADVISORS

Advisors from industry and academia serve as a sounding board for the AFSFP team, providing strategic input on programmatic initiatives to ensure that the program addresses the most timely and critical food-related issues, including selection of mentors and educational partners for the summer industry training and student engagement, retention and tracking. Advisors meet twice/year with AFSFP staff.

Agriculture and Food Systems Fellows Program

Fellowship Overview for Mentors

The Rhode Island Agriculture and Food Systems Fellows Program (AFSFP) was established in 2022 to engage and train students at URI and CCRI passionate about food-related careers as producers, processors, policymakers, educators, advocates and / or communicators. The AFSFP serves as a talent pipeline for entry- to mid-level professionals with a comprehensive understanding of the science of food, including how humans interact with it, where inequities with food access and security exist, and how they can contribute as professionals to build a healthier, more sustainable and just food system for all. Fellows are paid hourly for their contribution to mentor-supervised projects in sustainable agricultural intensification, food and nutrition translation, and science communication and agricultural science policy leadership.

Student Work Hours

Fellowship period:

January–December

Suggested hours/week:

May–August: 30-35 hrs/wk, September–December: 10-15 hrs/wk*

**Start date and schedule are flexible, as long as Fellows complete ~400 hours of project-based work with their mentor during the fellowship period.*

Student Wages

Thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture, the AFSFP will cover hourly pay for Fellows placed with mentor organizations through 2026. Fellows will be compensated at a rate of \$15.00/hour for their work with their mentor. This equates to ~\$6,500 per student, per year, in savings to the mentor organization.

Mentor Responsibilities

Mentors provide and outline a written description of an agricultural or food system-related project or activity with a scope of work that clearly identifies a measurable outcome for the Fellow to achieve within the fellowship year. The mentor also provides project management oversight and mentoring throughout the duration of the fellowship year, allows scheduling flexibility to the AFS Fellow as they participate in URI-led trainings, workshops, site visits and events, and maintains contact with the AFSFP team regarding student performance.

AFSFP Team Responsibilities

The AFSFP Team manages targeted and competitive student recruitment, conducts initial interviews and supports student onboarding with mentor organizations. The AFSFP team also provides direct student advisement and mentor support throughout the fellowship year, instructs two three-credit courses that focus on professional development topics, leadership training and science communication, and curates the weekly *Summer Industry Training* for students featuring site visits and lectures from industry professionals.

Agriculture and Food Systems Fellows Program

Program Timeline for Mentors

End of August

Deadline to submit the [AFSFP Mentor Expression of Interest Form](#). Note that students are recruited specific to mentor needs; meeting this deadline allows ample time to solicit applications from top students.

End of October

Deadline for students to submit an application for the AFS Fellowship Program.

Mid November

Approved AFSFP mentors are sent top student prospects for 2nd interviews.

Mid December

All AFSFP fellowships are confirmed by mentor organizations and AFSFP staff.

End of January

The Spring semester and AFSFP year begin! Fellows participate in AFSFP orientation and complete a three-credit professional development and leadership course taught by URI faculty.

Mid May

The Summer term begins. Fellows attend weekly trainings and site visits led by AFS industry experts **and** work full time with their mentors on real-world AFS projects.

Early September

The Fall semester begins. AFS Fellows complete a three-credit science communication course taught by URI faculty, and continue working with their mentors for 10 hours/week.

Mid December

The AFSFP year ends. Final student presentations and a Mentor / Alumni Networking Event are hosted at URI. All mentors are strongly encouraged to attend and participate.

Mentor Expression of Interest

Thank you for your interest in mentoring a RI AFS Fellow! Mentorship provides invaluable opportunities for students to learn outside the classroom with industry professionals solving the food system challenges of today.

[CLICK HERE](#) to complete the AFSFP Mentor Expression of Interest form.

The submission deadline is last day in August. The form requires a written description of a proposed project and an articulation of desired skills and academic background of an ideal student. Contact [Kate Venturini Hardesty](#) for support in developing your project concept!