The 2026 application cycle is closed. We anticipate launching the application in February 2027.



Detailed Description

We encourage you to carefully review the detailed description before submitting your application.

"When we get together in our dignity and power to own our means of survival, make decisions about the food system, learn to grow the food that nourishes us, cook for one another, and heal with one another—we can then return to wholeness." Leah Penniman, Co-Director & Farm Director, Soul Fire Farm

About Soul Fire Farm

Soul Fire Farm is a community farm and training center dedicated to uprooting racism and seeding sovereignty in the food system. We use Afro-Indigenous agroforestry, silvopasture, wildcrafting, polyculture, and spiritual farming practices to regenerate 80 acres of mountainside land, producing fruits, plant medicine, pasture-raised livestock, honey, mushrooms, vegetables, and preserves for community provisioning, with the majority of the harvest provided to people living under food apartheid and targeted by state violence in our local community. We are a resource for education in ancestral farming practices, and collaborate with the land to support our communities in healing from racial trauma and imagining bolder futures.

This summer, for the 12th year, a team of committed farmers, builders, and passionate chefs will come together with participants from all over the region and country who are seeking to amplify the land-based skills needed to reclaim leadership as growers and food justice organizers in their communities.

Farming in Relationship to Earth (FIRE) Immersion

The FIRE Immersion is designed for beginner and intermediate growers of Black, Indigenous, and Latine[1] heritage who are rooted in their communities to gain basic skills in regenerative farming in a culturally relevant, supportive, and joyful environment. By the end of the program you will have the knowledge to grow and prepare your own food, and the tools to begin a comprehensive commercial farm training if you choose that path. It is our hope that you will also deepen your

[1] We recognize Latine is a complicated term that some people do not identify with, and that there may be some class, gender, generational, and documentation status divides between who claims and who repudiates this term. We are referring to a person of Mexican, Central American, South America and/or Caribbean origin or descent, and acknowledge the limitations of colonial naming of regions and peoples.

connection to land, heal from inherited trauma rooted in oppression on land, and take steps toward your personal food sovereignty.

Participants will leave having practiced many of the following skills:

- make and use compost
- prepare raised beds
- plant from seed
- transplant
- work with perennial fruits
- select and plant cover crops
- properly use hand tools
- test the soil and use amendments
- wild-craft
- care for sheep and laying hens
- host honeybees
- select and utilize medicinal herbs
- harvest and preserve
- cook using whole foods
- plan a garden/small farm

All of this takes place in an affirming environment that centers Afro-Indigenous farming practices and histories, and uplifts the collective wisdom of the group. Each day will include 4 hours of hands-on work/learning, 2-4 hours of classes on sustainable living skills plus evening cultural/educational activities.

The program brings together training in topics such as soil chemistry and farm planning with a deep analysis of how racism has divorced people of color from the land. From working the earth in hot sun and dreary rain to engaging in vulnerable personal reflection, the immersion is meant to grow us, as much as it is to help us grow food and grow our movements for land sovereignty and community self determination.

Life on Land Farming Immersion

This year, we are introducing the Life on Land Farming Immersion. This program integrates farming and carpentry workshops and is designed for beginner, and intermediate growers of Black, Indigenous, and Latine heritage to gain basic skills in regenerative farming and carpentry. Individuals who are rooted in community, already stewarding land and/or have a land based project in the works or on the horizon in the near future are encouraged to apply. Participants must be 15 years or older to apply.

Participants will practice most of the farming skills described in the FIRE Immersion and can expect farming blocks as well as instruction on carpentry skills, such as measuring and layout,

power tool use, wood and fastener selection, worksite and tool safety, and ergonomic body use. This will be coupled with hand-on projects on site and in the woodworking shop to apply carpentry skills.

Dates:

Each immersion begins with dinner at 6pm EST on Sunday night and runs through lunch at 1:30pm EST on Friday for 5 total days.

- FIRE 1: June 7 - June 12, 2026
- FIRE 2: July 12 - July 17, 2026
- Life on Land: August 2 - 7, 2026

Language:

The program is generally delivered in English, though some facilitators speak and understand Spanish.

Cost:

Sliding scale $150-$1500. Once you are accepted to the program, a $50 non-refundable deposit holds your spot. The real cost to run the program is around $1200 per person.

Children

We firmly believe in the power and importance of intergenerational spaces. The age segregation in US society is harmful to all of us. Children are welcome to attend the FIRE Immersion and childcare will be provided.

Young people ages 15+ MUST submit their own application.

Children 14 and younger may attend along with their accepted caregiver if they agree to the guidelines described below.

- Caregiver agrees to pay the sliding scale youth attendance fee of **$125-$900.** The fee covers the subsidized cost of food and 15 hours of care throughout the immersion. The real cost of childcare is $25 - $30 per hour. Scheduled childcare blocks allow caregivers to engage in programming while the child is being cared for by a skilled provider. If additional childcare costs arise, they will be communicated with the caregiver.
- Caregiver agrees to bring additional snacks and toys/activities to support the child's happiness and comfort.
- Caregiver understands that bringing a child will almost certainly mean having to miss out on certain experiences, e.g. work periods in adverse weather, sensitive or intimate reflections between adults, any workshop that coincides with the child needing a snack, conflict mediation, or undivided loving attention, etc.

- Caregiver commits to supervising the child **at all times when childcare is not provided**, to keep the child safe from danger and to prevent the child from damaging crops or property inadvertently.
- Caregiver carefully considers whether bringing their child will enhance the experience of the immersion or be a source of frustration. Caregiver also considers whether the child will be able to be happy and self-manage at Soul Fire Farm, e.g. do they have experience with free play in nature, can they fix their own snack, can they manage when the caregiver(s) attention is divided, etc. Please email us at programs@soulfirefarm.org to discuss your particular situation if that would be helpful.

Food & Accommodations:

Most participants will be housed in private tents however we do have a limited number of indoor accommodations. The dimensions of our tents are 94 x 86 inches, technically a four person tent, though we assign one person (or couple/ child and guardian) per tent to allow space for your belongings. Each tent is large enough to fit a full size air mattress if you wish to bring one. Soul Fire Farm will not be providing air mattresses. Indoor accommodations will take place in our new lodge space and will be shared. There are no private indoor accommodations. Each space will feature 2-3 single beds.

There is a covered deck and pond side for leisure. We have 3 toilet stalls, 3 showers, 3 hand washing stations, and a vanity that can be accessed from outside. There are 7 indoor bathrooms. 3 of the indoor bathrooms are equipped with changing tables and 3 are ADA accessible. One of the indoor, ADA accessible bathrooms has an ADA accessible shower.

Participants will have access to the Program Center with a community teaching kitchen and library, as well as the Sanctuary for classes, workshops, reflection time and other activities. Meals will take place communally, in the Program Center and outdoors on tables.

Soul Fire Farm's kitchen is a community teaching kitchen, not an allergy-certified commercial kitchen. We can accommodate the following dietary restrictions:

- vegetarian
- vegan
- gluten-free
- low-sugar

We cannot accommodate severe and/or anaphylactic allergies. For those with special diets and/or allergies that are severe/anaphylactic or may become so after prolonged exposure, please email us before submitting your application to determine whether it is safe for you to attend the program.

We occasionally have dessert, but live a pretty low-sugar life so bring some sweets if you like. Some people find it helpful to accustom their bodies to high fiber meals in advance of arriving for

more “regularity.”

Check out the Accommodations Guide for detailed descriptions and photos to determine whether our facilities will meet your comfort and accessibility needs.

Gender Justice and Safer Space

We are committed to gender justice and making Soul Fire Farm a safer space for queer, gender non-conforming, non-binary, and transgender people. We ask that everyone read the gender justice articles we provide in advance of arriving.

We will host a 90-minute Zoom meeting about decolonizing gender and creating sacred space that is mandatory for all participants in advance of the immersions, with the goal of showing up for one another better at Soul Fire Farm and beyond.

We will also host a mandatory caucus space for cisgender men in advance of the immersions. The goal of this space is to build belonging, dignity, and accountability.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why Black, Latine and Indigenous people? What about other People of Color or of European descent?

This program is designed to be a culturally relevant and safe space that centers folks of Black, Indigenous, and/or Latine heritage - as we are the people whose land and labor has primarily built the food system in this country. As Black people, many of our ancestors were stolen from Africa to be sold into slavery to provide free labor for a multi-trillion dollar agriculture industry. As Latines, many of our families were forced out of our homelands by international trade deals like NAFTA, and currently grow ~85% of the nation’s food with inadequate labor protections. As Turtle Island Indigenous people, our forbearers faced attempted genocide and assimilation, and were driven to leave behind the soils we were in deep relationship with, and so much more. The descendants of European colonizers control almost all (98%) of the land in our country today. The Soul FIRE Immersion is a humble attempt to rewrite part of this story, to reclaim our ancestral right to both belong to the land and have the land belong to us.

Other People of Color are welcome to participate in the program with the understanding that the curriculum centers Black, Indigenous and Latine heritage and food system stories. We acknowledge that there are other ethnic groups with complex histories and current realities related to farming, food and land access in this country. For example, the majority of farm workers were Asian at times throughout US history, and there continues to be significant representation of Asian people in farming, food processing, and restaurant industries. It is our hope that participants of all identities will support in expanding our shared knowledge, as we bring our family histories and personal awareness to this collective learning space.

The founders of Soul Fire Farm are a mixed race family with a multiracial Haitian-Kreyol-Latine Black mom, Sephardic-Jewish dad, and multi-ethnic children. Depending on the session, facilitators may be Black, Latine, Indigenous, Asian, SWANA[2] or MENA[3] heritage, Mixed, and/or other identities. Certain spaces - the classes and reflections - are maintained as POC only. Other spaces - farm work, field talks, meals - are integrated. The super majority of the instruction you receive will be from Black, Indigenous, and Latine growers. When a person of European descent gives instruction they will be paired with POC leadership. People of European descent at SFF are trained in anti-racism and how to be mindful of their privilege and space-taking, which is an ongoing learning process. We are very grateful to the non-POC people who are in the struggle for liberation with us.[4]

Flow of the Week

Generally our days will include several hours of "hands on the land" where we learn about agriculture by doing and 2.5-4 hours of workshops. We will also share responsibility for cooking our meals and cleaning up our living spaces.

What to bring

We ask that you *bring a little knowledge with you* by reviewing a few readings on food and gender justice in advance. All participants are also required to sign a liability waiver and review our community wellness agreements before the program begins.

Additionally, bringing the following items can make your stay more comfortable and safe.

- Warm sleeping bag, pillow, sleeping pad or air mattress. Again WARM. Even in the summer, nights are chilly. Extra bedding is good.
- Rain gear! - waterproof raincoat AND rain pants. Do not skimp on this. Rubber-type/PVC mid grade quality rain gear is better than fancy Gore-Tex gear and way cheaper. Some mid grade quality companies to consider are Helly Hansen, Gempers, Carhartt
- Mud boots - Do not skimp on this either. You need high, rubber, pull-on boots. These cost anywhere from $30-100. Hiking boots, Timberlands, and other boots generally don't work.
- Slip on shoes (sandals, crocs)
- Work gloves
- A **sacred object to add to the collective altar** such as photographs of ancestors, stone, sage, candles, art. You will get this back.
- Headlamp or flashlight with extra batteries

[2] Southwest Asia and North Africa
[3] Middle East and North Africa
[4] We recognize that a space with leadership of mixed or light-skinned Black facilitators and a multiracial founder family might not work for everyone. We are committed to sharing resources and referrals with land-based projects that do not benefit from the same matrix of privileges as us. Let us know if we can help you make a connection with a comrade organization.

- Toiletries
- Towel
- Bathing suit
- Watch (to keep time in the fields where cell phones could get damaged)
- Warm clothes for cool nights
- Hot weather clothes
- Sun hat
- Work clothes for all kinds of conditions (rain, cold, hot, etc)
- Notebook and writing implement
- Bug stuff (there are minimal mosquitos around the fields, but plenty in the woods) *IMPORTANT: There are deer ticks and the danger of lyme disease. This does not mean you should not go into the woods - we do all the time - but learn how to prepare and check yourself accordingly.*
- Sunscreen
- Water bottle
- Thermos or heat safe cup for coffee and tea
- Snacks/specialty foods (we provide 3 meals and 1+ snack per day but if you love to snack or have certain foods you can't live without, bring provisions)
- A poem, prayer, or song to offer as a gratitude before a meal (optional)
- Slippers or other indoor footwear for "no shoes" spaces (optional)
- Fanny pack (optional, but so sweet)
- Battery powered alarm clock (optional, good for people who want to leave phones charging overnight)
- Face masks
- Travel-sized hand sanitizer
- Shower shoes/ waterproof sandals (optional)

Transportation

Please plan to arrive on the farm on Sunday night between 4:30 PM and 5:30 PM. This allows time to register and settle into your space before the program begins with dinner at 6:00 PM. We cannot accommodate early arrivals.

If you are taking the bus or train, you may select from Greyhound to the Albany Hamilton Street station (**NOT** SUNY Albany-Collins Circle), the Megabus to Albany/Rensselaer station, or Amtrak to Albany/Rensselaer station. Plan to arrive in Albany/Rensselaer between 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM. If you are arriving by plane, ideally you should plan your arrival around those hours as well.

The program ends at 1:30 PM on the final afternoon (Friday) so please plan your bus or train departures for 3 PM or later. Note that if you are flying out from ALB airport on the last day of the program, allow extra time (a later flight departure time), keeping in mind that you will likely arrive at the airport at 3 PM at the very earliest on the last day of the program.

We will provide transportation to and from the Albany transportation hubs for all participants arriving and departing within the scheduled times outlined above. Arrivals and departures outside of these time frames cannot be accommodated. Please adhere to the schedule.

Can I arrive late/leave early? Bring unregistered guests?

NO (said with love!). Please plan to attend for the entire duration of the immersion. If you cannot make the commitment at this point, please consider applying for next year. The program has an arc and the beginning, middle, and end are all part of building a sacred community. We ask that you do not bring guests - arrange to be dropped off before the program begins and picked up after it ends. Thanks for understanding.

Alcohol and Drugs

You are encouraged to leave intoxicating substances behind for this week. You will have a strong community of support, firm land beneath your feet, fresh air, real work for your body, nourishing food, and your ancestors. It is our hope that you can go without these substances and elevate to a new level of healing. That said, no one is going to "police" personal behavior that is discreet and private, and has no impact on the program. Common program spaces are substance-free. There is a location for smoking tobacco cigarettes on the driveway. Coffee is provided. Dessert with sugar is provided one time during the week. Please keep other substances to yourself. No smoking anything in or near tents or buildings. Check out the complete list of Safe and Functional Space Guidelines. Thank you.

Cooking and Cleaning

It is both ethical and practical for all of us to participate in the physical work (cooking, cleaning, farming) that sustains us, rather than perpetuate class and gender oppression by having certain people do the work while others keep their hands clean. The schedule is arranged so that no participant "misses" Soul Fire Farm-led skills workshops during their turn cooking and cleaning. Each person will miss one participant-led movement space and one silent hands on the land block. Throughout the week, you will be assigned times to cook and clean.

Free Time and Farm Time

Everyone is highly encouraged to be present for all meals, hands on the land blocks, team cooking/cleaning, and the skills workshops. If you need to take a break, it's best to do that during the movement or reflection workshop. If additional breaks are needed, just tell a facilitator so we are not looking for you. If you want to farm during your "free" time, check in with a farm team member to see what tasks can be done.

Spirituality and Healing

There are a number of times in the program where traditional African spirituality is uplifted. Some

of the prayers and songs used during the week are also rooted in African tradition. Participants have the opportunity to bring their own spiritual ways of knowing to the gratitude space before meals and the reflection blocks. People of all faiths–Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, secular, et al–are welcome and celebrated here.

Also please note that while this program does feel therapeutic to many participants, it is not a therapy program per se and facilitators are not expected to provide counseling. There is always someone designated to "health and wellness" with whom you can converse if you have a physical or emotional need.

What is the COVID-19 Policy?

All participants, facilitators, and Soul Fire Staff are required to adhere to our COVID Guidelines which include but are not limited to:

- Pre-arrival testing 72 hours and 24 hours before arrival
- Wear well-fitting masks (N95/KN95/KF94) in all indoor spaces outside of your homes and when sharing air with people outside of your household for **5 days prior to arrival**.
- On the third day of the program, Soul Fire Farm will set up a testing station and provide testing materials

The Town - Is it Safe? Are there things to do?

The land in Grafton, NY belongs to the Mohican people, most of whom were forcibly removed to Wisconsin in the 1830's. The rural landscape in upstate New York was maintained as predominantly white through the "sundown town" local regulations that condoned the murder of black and brown people in these towns after sunset. Our people have always resisted and maintained our presence in rural upstate NY - including Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, the Rapp Road Black Farmers, and the Black homesteaders in the Adirondacks in the 1800's. Still 98% of rural farmland is in the hands of people of European descent today (2017 National Ag Census.) We believe that it is important for people of color to reclaim our right to belong to the rural land. We chose Grafton, NY in part because Grafton Lakes State Park and the Grafton Peace Pagoda are well established spaces that many people of color frequent. Also, we spent years building relationships of mutual respect with our neighbors (mostly conservative, working class folks of European descent) before starting up our programs. We do recommend using a buddy system when leaving the property and also recommend against "trespassing" as it could lead to confrontation or harm.

Timeline

- Applications open 2/23/26 at noon EST
- Application deadline extended to Monday, 3/9/26 at noon (12:00 PM) EST. Applications must be submitted by deadline. Those in progress but submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.
- Decisions emailed 5/1/26 by 11 PM EST