

# Application Guidelines

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*This application is for the Madrona Fellowship 2025-2026 cohort, which will begin September 2025 and end August 2026.*

The [Madrona Fellowship for Food System Leaders](#) is a 12-month leadership development program that supports Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) working at the intersections of food, land, culture, and climate. The program begins in September 2025. Through seasonal gatherings, mentorship, and peer connection, the fellowship nurtures transformative leadership that is rooted in land, community, and collective care. Guided by the rhythms of the bioregion, it offers space for reflection, relationship, and regeneration.

For this year's cohort, we are expanding the Fellowship's geographic reach—from the Upper Willamette Valley to the Lower Salish Sea—growing a bioregional network of leaders grounded in place and relationship. The program now brings together Fellows across three regional hubs: Portland, Chehalis, and Seattle. All Fellows gather seasonally for land-based immersions at our central farm site near Chehalis.

Review the fellowship's:

- Full program schedule: [Link](#)
- Curricular framework: [Link](#)
- Frequently Asked Questions: [Link](#)

*Madrona Fellowship is co-led by Ecotrust and the Black Food Sovereignty Coalition*

## **Fellowship Info Session**

Friday, May 2

12:00–1:00 PM PST

Watch the recorded info session [here](#).

## **How To Apply**

To apply for the Madrona Fellowship:

- First, review the application guidelines to confirm your eligibility, availability, and interest in the program.
- Second, complete the [application form](#).

The application asks about your background, your interest in the fellowship, and your ability to meet the program's commitments. You will also be asked to upload your resume and a headshot.

We've provided a [blank template](#) you can use to draft your responses before entering them into the application form.

If you encounter any accessibility issues, contact [madronafellowship@gmail.com](mailto:madronafellowship@gmail.com)

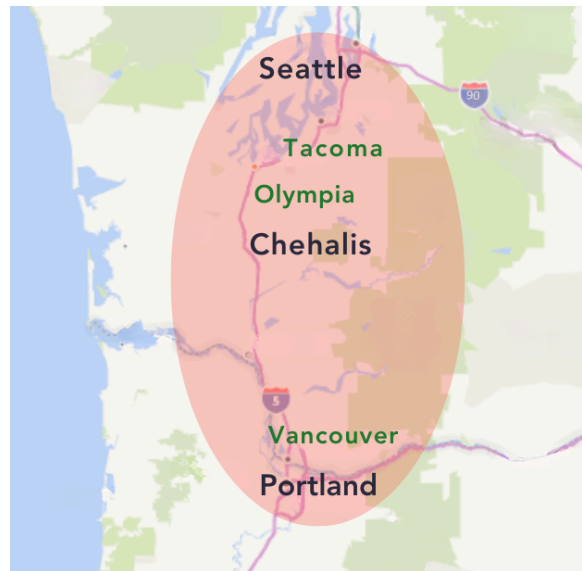
## **Eligibility**

To be eligible for the Madrona Fellowship, applicants must:

- Identify as Black, Indigenous, or a person of color (BIPOC)
- Have at least 2 years of ongoing professional, long-term volunteer, or other experience in food, land, culture, climate, and/or adjacent areas
- Be able to fully participate in all fellowship programming between September 2025 and August 2026. Please see the [programming overview](#) to confirm your availability during the scheduled dates and times.

- Be based in Oregon or Washington, particularly within the bioregion stretching from Portland to Seattle

**Note:** While not required, we strongly recommend that applicants live within 30 miles of one of the three fellowship hubs—Portland, Chehalis, or Seattle. Historically, fellows who live farther away have found it difficult to fully and consistently engage in the program's in-person components.



## Fellowship Expectations

This fellowship is a space for learning, honest reflection, and deepening our relationships with one another and the land. We believe that transformation happens in community — when people show up, stay present, and move through change together.

We will be working closely with one another, as well as with community leaders, elders, and partners. The connections we build are the foundation for the work we carry forward beyond the fellowship. To honor everyone's time and contributions, we request that you commit to showing up fully, engaging deeply, and contributing in meaningful ways.

Below are some of the expectations to which we invite selected Fellows to commit. Please review them and consider your capacity to commit to them if selected.

## Commitments

Madrona Fellows commit to:

- Approach relationship-building with openness, care, and curiosity across their local hub, the full cohort, alumni, partners, and Fellowship staff.
- Maintain open and timely communication with Madrona Fellowship staff
- Model and uphold the fellowship's core values: care, courage, collective responsibility, and accountability — including direct communication and a commitment to working through conflict with honesty and accountability

- Devote the necessary time to participate and be fully engaged in all fellowship programming, including:
- **Three multi-day, land-based immersions for the full cohort.**  
*Held in-person at BFSC's farm near Chehalis, WA*
  - Fall Immersion (2 days): Friday, September 26 at 7:00 pm – Sunday, September 28 at 3:00 pm, 2025. Held in-person at BFSC's farm near Chehalis, WA
  - Spring Immersion (3 days): Friday, May 22 at 7:00 pm – Monday, May 25 at 1:00 pm, 2026. Held in-person at BFSC's farm near Chehalis, WA
  - Summer Immersion (3 days): Friday, August 22 at 7:00 pm – Monday, August 25 at 1:00 pm, 2026. Held in-person at BFSC's farm near Chehalis, WA

*Attendance at all seasonal immersions is mandatory.*

- **Six 90-minute online gatherings**  
*Held on Zoom on the third Saturday of the month from 10:30 am–12:00 noon:*
  - November 22, 2025
  - January 17, February 22, March 21, April 18, and July 18, 2026
- **Three local hub gatherings in-person at a location near your local hub (e.g. Portland, Seattle, Olympia, etc.)**  
*Held on the first Saturday of the month from 11:00 am–3:00 pm:*
  - November 1, 2025
  - March 7, 2026
  - June 6, 2026
- **A one-day fall harvest gathering for Madrona fellows, alumni, and community.**  
*Held in-person at BFSC's farm near Chehalis, WA on Sunday, October 11, 2025 from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm*
- **A one-day Summer Solstice gathering for Madrona fellows and alumni.**  
*Held in-person at BFSC's farm near Chehalis, WA on Sunday, June 21, 2026 from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm*

## Fellowship Goals

The Madrona Fellowship is designed to:

- Nurture transformative leadership grounded in relationship, land, and collective care
- Create space for slowing down, deep listening, and reconnecting with ancestral and land-based wisdom
- Foster connection, interdependence, and solidarity across a bioregional network of food, land, culture, and climate leaders
- Support personal and collective reflection that invites vision, resilience, and emergence
- Strengthen movements for cultural reclamation, ecological stewardship, and community-rooted systems change

## **Fellowship Offerings**

The Madrona Fellowship offers:

- Three in-person gatherings with cohort members in one of three regional hubs: Portland, Chehalis, or Seattle
- Three multi-day land-based immersions at the program's farm site near Chehalis (lodging, food, and travel are covered)
- Two one-day gatherings for fellows and alumni at the program's farm site near Chehalis (travel is covered)
- Six virtual gatherings with the full cohort
- A \$4,000 stipend distributed over the 12-month program to support participation
- Immersive learning experiences, including site visits, workshops, and gatherings rooted in land, place, and culture
- Post-fellowship access to the alumni network and continued leadership support

## **Fellowship Outcomes**

By the end of the Fellowship, participants can expect to:

- Deepen their connection to land, ancestry, and collective memory through seasonal, land-based gatherings
- Practice leadership that is rooted in slowing down, listening deeply, building authentic relationships, and honoring emergence
- Strengthen a sense of connection and interdependence within a growing bioregional network of peers, mentors, and community partners

- Clarify and affirm their leadership vision through reflection, storytelling, and shared experiences
- Access an ongoing alumni network for continued relationship-building, collaboration, and support

Rather than focusing on rigid outcomes, the Fellowship invites fellows to root their leadership in relationship and land and to trust what emerges through collective learning.

## **Application Process and Criteria**

*Applications open Friday, April 11 and close Friday, May 16 at 11:59pm Pacific.*

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by a selection committee made up of Madrona Fellowship staff, community partners, and alumni. The selection committee will evaluate applications based on the criteria listed below.

### **Selection Criteria**

We are committed to building a regionally-rooted cohort that reflects diversity across ethnicity, gender, age, geography, skillset, and focus area. We're seeking applicants who:

- Have at least 2 years of experience in food, land, climate, and/or adjacent areas
- Demonstrate a strong personal, cultural, or community connection to the bioregion spanning from the Upper Willamette Valley to the Lower Salish Sea
- Are based in Oregon or Washington, ideally within 30 miles of one of the three regional hubs: Portland, Chehalis, or Seattle
- Show a willingness to grow through reflection, relationship-building, and land-based learning
- Bring personally and professionally relevant experience, perspective, and/or relational energy to the cohort; express interest in peer connection, mutual support, and learning in community
- Articulate a vision for food, land, or climate that reflects an understanding of broader systems change
- See their work as part of a regional movement for community and ecological transformation

- Demonstrate a commitment to direct communication, collaboration, and navigating conflict with honesty and integrity
- Are able to fully participate in all fellowship activities from September 2025 to August 2026, including in-person gatherings, virtual cohort sessions, and multi-day immersions at the program's farm site near Chehalis
- Reflect the fellowship's [core values](#): care, courage, collective responsibility, and transformation

Select applicants will be invited to participate in a video interview in June. All applicants will be notified of their status by the end of July. If selected, fellows will be asked to sign a fellowship agreement and participate in a virtual orientation session in August.

## Application Timeline

- **Applications open:** April 11, 2025
- **Application deadline:** May 16, 2025
- **Select applicants invited for interview:** June 2025
- **Interviews for finalists:** June 2025
- **Invitations to join fellowship:** July 2025
- **Fellowship term:** September 2025 – August 2026



# Program Schedule

## Madrona Fellowship Program Overview

Season & Theme	Month	Programming	Location	Dates	Time
		Orientation Session	Zoom	Saturday, August 23, 2025	11 am - 12 pm
Fall: Grounding & Rooting	Sept	Fall Immersion at the farm	Chehalis farm	Friday, 9/26-Sunday, 9/28	2.5 days
	Oct	Harvest Gathering at the farm	Chehalis farm	Sunday, October 12, 2025	10:30 am - 3:30 pm
	Nov	Fall Hub Gathering	Local Hub	Saturday, November 1, 2025	11:00 am - 3:00 pm
		November Full Cohort Gathering	Zoom	Saturday, November 22, 2025	10:30 am - 12 noon
Winter: Reflection & Visioning	Dec	Break for rest and reflection			
	Jan	January Full Cohort Gathering	Zoom	Saturday, January 17, 2026	10:30 am - 12 noon
	Feb	February Full Cohort Gathering	Zoom	Saturday, February 21, 2026	10:30 am - 12 noon
Spring: Pollination & Exchange	March	Spring Hub Gathering	Local Hub	Saturday, March 7, 2026	11:00 am - 3:00 pm
		March Full Cohort Gathering	Zoom	Saturday, March 21, 2026	10:30 am - 12 noon
	April	April Full Cohort Gathering	Zoom	Saturday, April 18, 2026	10:30 am - 12 noon
	May	Spring Immersion at the farm	Chehalis farm	Friday, 5/22-Monday, 5/25	3 days
Summer: Integration & Harvest	June	Summer Hub Gathering	Local Hub	Saturday, June 6, 2026	11:00 am - 3:00 pm
		Solstice Gathering at the farm	Chehalis farm	Sunday, June 21, 2026	10:30 am - 3:30 pm
	July	July Full Cohort Gathering	Zoom	Saturday, July 18, 2026	10:30 am - 12 noon
	Aug	Summer Immersion at the farm	Chehalis farm	Friday, 8/21-Monday, 8/24	3 days

# Curricular Framework

## Curricular Framework for the Fellowship

The fellowship follows a seasonal arc that mirrors natural cycles of growth and transformation. Each season invites fellows into a different level of engagement — from inner reflection to community-rootedness, ecosystem interdependence, and collective integration. Together, these cycles support the emergence of transformational leadership grounded in purpose, belonging, systems thinking, and shared vision.

Season	Theme	Focus	Level	Topics
<b>Fall: Grounding &amp; Rooting</b>	Preparing the Soil for Change	Connecting to land, lineage, and values — building trust within the cohort and rooting in shared purpose.	Self	identity, ancestry, connection
<b>Winter: Reflection &amp; Visioning</b>	Cultivating Resilience & Possibility	Explore community belonging, generational wisdom, and the conditions needed for resilience. Strengthen relationships and shape collective visions that root action in care and possibility.	Community	relationship building, mutual care, visioning, shared resilience.
<b>Spring: Pollination &amp; Exchange</b>	Seeding Change through Ecosystems	Engage with living systems—ecological, social, institutional — exploring how change emerges through interdependence. Cross-pollinating ideas and practices; planting seeds of transformation that move across sectors, species, and movements.	Ecosystems	systems thinking, interdependence, emergence, collaboration across difference.
<b>Summer: Integration &amp; Harvest</b>	Living the Collective Future	Reflect on our journey, celebrate transformation, and integrate learning. This season centers on embodiment — living the change, sharing wisdom, and shaping a future rooted in interconnection and care.	Collective	integration, legacy, emergent leadership

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

[Would children be welcome at the farm?](#)

[What is the cosmology of the fellowship?](#)

[How many people will be selected for the 2025 Madrona cohort?](#)

[What information feels most important to include on the accompanying resume?](#)

[Does the fellowship cost money?](#)

[Is there a priority for Black/Indigenous applicants?](#)

[Are letters of recommendation required?](#)

[Is there assistance to fill out the application?](#)

[What are some major highlights or learning moments experienced by fellows from previous cohorts?](#)

[Am I eligible to participate in the Fellowship if I work for a local nonprofit?](#)

[What kinds of backgrounds and experiences have past fellows brought to the program?](#)

[Do I need prior schooling or extensive farm experience to participate?](#)

[Is there a stipend to support participation in the program?](#)

[Does completion of the Fellowship provide any graduate benefits or certification?](#)

[Will there be opportunities to intern in Spring 2026?](#)

[How many people have completed the fellowship?](#)

[Are there ride shares available to the locations?](#)

[I would like to know more specifics. It is hard to tell from the promotional materials what exactly the Fellowship entails, including expectations, goals, and outcomes.](#)

[What are some alumni doing now after completing the Fellowship?](#)

## **Would children be welcome at the farm?**

We are not able to safely accommodate children of any age during multi-day immersions at the farm. Fellows are welcome to bring their families, including children, for daytime events at the farm such as the October 12, 2025, Harvest Gathering and the June 21, 2026, Soulstice Gathering.

## **What is the cosmology of the fellowship?**

While we don't have a fixed or formal "cosmology," the fellowship is guided by a set of values and rhythms that shape how we move through time, space, and relationship. We root our design in the natural world, following a seasonal arc that reflects growth, rest, reflection, and transformation. We believe in leadership that is relational, land-based, and emergent. This means we pay close attention to what arises through cycles, in community, and in connection to place. Rather than holding a single worldview or belief system, we honor the ancestral, cultural, and spiritual lineages that each fellow brings. The fellowship creates space for ritual, reflection, and meaning-making in ways that are open, invitational, and grounded in respect. In that sense, our "cosmology" is shaped by interconnection, ecological wisdom, and collective care.

## **How many people will be selected for the 2025 Madrona cohort?**

The 2025 Madrona cohort will include 15-20 fellows.

## **What information feels most important to include on the accompanying resume?**

The resume should highlight your relevant experience in food, land, climate, cultural work, or community leadership. Focus on roles (paid, volunteer, or grassroots) that show your connection to these areas, along with any leadership, organizing, land stewardship, or education work you have done. It does not need to be highly formal.

### **Does the fellowship cost money?**

No, there is no cost to apply for or participate in the Madrona Fellowship. In fact, we provide each fellow with a \$4,000 stipend to support their participation.

### **Is there a priority for Black/Indigenous applicants?**

There is no formal prioritization among eligible groups.

### **Are letters of recommendation required?**

No, letters of recommendation are not required to apply. However, each applicant must provide the names and contact information for two references.

### **Is there assistance to fill out the application?**

No, at this time the team does not have the capacity to offer individual assistance with filling out applications.

### **What are some major highlights or learning moments experienced by fellows from previous cohorts?**

We encourage you to join the info session on May 2, or watch the recording afterward, to hear directly from fellows about their experiences, highlights, and learning moments.

### **Am I eligible to participate in the Fellowship if I work for a local nonprofit?**

Yes, you are eligible to apply if you work for a local nonprofit. The Fellowship is open to Black, Indigenous, and other leaders of color working at the intersections of food, land, culture, and climate justice

### **What kinds of backgrounds and experiences have past fellows brought to the program?**

Fellows have come from diverse backgrounds, including farming, community organizing, public health, cultural stewardship, youth education, environmental justice, and food systems leadership. Read more about them [here](#):



<https://ecotrust.org/viviane-barnett-fellowship-for-food-system-leaders/>

**Do I need prior schooling or extensive farm experience to participate?**

No prior formal schooling or extensive farm experience is required.

**Is there a stipend to support participation in the program?**

Yes. Fellows receive a \$4,000 stipend to support their participation in the Fellowship, including travel support for land-based gatherings and immersion experiences.

**Does completion of the Fellowship provide any graduate benefits or certification?**

No, the Fellowship does not provide formal graduate benefits or certification.

**Will there be opportunities to intern in Spring 2026?**

No, internship opportunities will not be available in Spring 2026.

**How many people have completed the fellowship?**

The first fellowship cohort included 16 people. Read more about them here: <https://ecotrust.org/viviane-barnett-fellowship-for-food-system-leaders/>

**Are there ride shares available to the locations?**

Ride shares and travel support are coordinated for seasonal gatherings at our central farm site near Chehalis, Washington.

**I would like to know more specifics. It is hard to tell from the promotional materials what exactly the Fellowship entails, including expectations, goals, and outcomes.**

Please review the full [application guidelines](#). The information you are seeking—about program expectations, goals, and outcomes—is included there in detail.

## **What are some alumni doing now after completing the Fellowship?**

Please see below for a selection of profiles featuring Madrona Fellowship alumni.

### **Michelle Week**

Michelle Week is the owner and head farmer of xăst sq̓it ([Good Rain Farm](#)), an Indigenous-led farm dedicated to food sovereignty and cultural reclamation. Through her work, Michelle focuses on decolonizing diets, seed saving, and providing access to First Foods for Indigenous communities. Her farm operates on principles of community empowerment and environmental stewardship. Michelle recently partnered with East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District to secure her “forever farm.”

### **Mick Rose and esperanza spalding**

Mick Rose and esperanza spalding are the co-founders and co-directors of [Prismid Sanctuary](#), located in Portland, Oregon. Prismid is a place for Indigenous, Black, and all people of color artists and cultural workers to convene, rest, heal, and create.

Their leadership is guided by values that center Black and Indigenous relationships, generosity, placemaking as ceremony, land reciprocity, sovereignty, and collective learning. Prismid offers its space, residencies, and programming freely to its community, countering systems of scarcity and embodying practices of land stewardship, reparations, and liberatory relationship-building.

Through Prismid, Mick and ssperanza are cultivating a sanctuary where slowing down, spirit-led movement, communal healing, and future-building are honored as necessary practices for cultural and community thriving.

### **Aayaan Singh Jamwal**

Aayaan Singh Jamwal is a leadership development professional, intersectional facilitator, and founder of [Unearth Freedom](#). He also serves as the Director of Playshops for Flourishing Futures, where he designs transformative learning experiences rooted in connection, liberation, and collective flourishing.

Aayaan is a certified professional coach (iPEC) with a deep commitment to lifelong learning and personal growth. As a published writer, researcher, and impact leader, his work weaves together education, land connection, and leadership development to support systems change and community thriving.

Guided by a wayfinder spirit, Aayaan believes in the transformative power of education for the greater good. His love for trees, deep connection to land, and unwavering dedication to collective liberation inform everything he does. His practice centers on helping individuals and communities rediscover their inner wisdom, build resilience, and co-create futures rooted in freedom, justice, and joy.

Bea Yeh Ogden

Bea Yeh Ogden is the founder and lead consultant of [Luminous Together](#), a social justice consulting agency that produces events aimed at community healing and connection. With over 15 years of experience, Bea's work centers on food sovereignty, storytelling, and creating immersive experiences that honor cultural traditions and promote collective growth.

Alma Gaeta

Alma Gaeta is an organic orchardist at [Peachwood Orchard](#) in Hood River, Oregon. A first-generation Mexican-American, Alma's connection to farming was shaped early on, trailing after her grandfather in the cornfields of Zacatecas, Mexico. His physical strength, calm spirit, and the community he built through his work left a lasting impression and inspired her lifelong commitment to agriculture and social justice.

Alma holds a Bachelor's degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and is currently pursuing her Master's in Environmental Studies. Alongside her work as an orchardist, she is deeply engaged in community leadership through organizations such as Comunidades and CultureSeed, supporting Latinx leadership, environmental stewardship, and social justice efforts across the region. Alma's work is rooted in honoring land, culture, and community resilience.

Alisha Howard

Following the fellowship, Alisha Howard was hired as the first Farm to School Fellow at Ecotrust. Alisha now works as Ecotrust's Community Outreach Coordinator. In this role, she implements community engagement strategies to support BIPOC farmers and food entrepreneurs. Alisha is also the owner of [Deep Rootz Worms](#), LLC, a vermicomposting business, and actively participates in organizations like the Portland Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and the Black Food Sovereignty Coalition.