



National  
Farmers  
Union  
FOUNDATION

# 2018 Beginning Farmer Institute Application

- *Growing the Future of Agriculture* -

## **"IT'S A POWERFUL EXPERIENCE"**

**N**ational Farmers Union's ability to reach out to a broad cross section of farmers makes it different than other organizations. They teach at a level that opens eyes to a broader picture of where our farm fits into agriculture," says Erin, NFU

Beginning Farmer Institute (BFI) alum. "It's the content of their classes, the small group in a close-knit setting, visiting innovative farmers, talking with experts and learning from my peers from a diverse variety of farms across the country that gives me the opportunity

to learn different solutions. The NFU Institute makes a person think beyond his or her own farm. The NFU Institute is where 'top down and bottom up' come together. It's a powerful experience."

*Apply Today!*

**Download the application at [www.nfu.org/education](http://www.nfu.org/education)**

**Applications must be postmarked by April 30, 2018.**

### **APPLICATION TIMELINE**

#### **APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED**

NFU's Beginning Farmer Institute (BFI) will start accepting applications February 1, 2018.

#### **DEADLINE**

Applications must be postmarked by April 30, 2018.

#### **CLASS ANNOUNCEMENT**

The 2018-19 BFI Class will be announced by May 31, 2018.

#### **SPONSORS**

This program is brought to you the National Farmers Union Foundation, Farm Credit, FUI Foundation, CoBank, Farm Aid, and CHS Foundation.

### **WHO IS ELIGIBLE?**

- There's no age limit for the Beginning Farmer Institute - anyone over the age of 18 is eligible to apply.
- Applicants should be currently farming or planning on starting within the next year.
- You do not need to own your own operation to apply.
- We welcome women, veterans, people of color, and other minority candidates.
- Operators of any operation type and size are eligible to apply.
- This program is open to residents of the contiguous United States, Hawaii, Alaska, and Puerto Rico.

**Beginning Farmers Institute questions can be directed to NFU Education Director Melissa Miller, 202-554-1600**

# National Farmers Union Beginning Farmer Institute

## Application and Selection Process

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We are pleased that you are applying for the NFU Beginning Farmer Institute. Described below are the procedures for applying as well as the process for screening and selecting candidates for the program. Please read the directions carefully and be sure to return all required materials. All application materials must be submitted in a typed format. For your convenience, you may duplicate the pages of this application or recreate them on your computer.

## Application Expectations

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Each individual participant is required to submit a completed application, including a short essay on his or her beginning farming experience and why he or she would like to participate in this program. Those who apply as a partnership must submit separate applications. In addition to the completed application and typed essay, each applicant must also include the following:

1. A current resume that lists accomplishments.
2. One letter of reference (in support of your candidacy for the NFU Beginning Farmer Institute) and the name of one additional reference including their title, organization and telephone numbers. Application postmark deadline is April 30, 2018.

SEND MATERIALS TO: National Farmers Union

Attn: Beginning Farmer Program 20 F St NW, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20001

## Screening

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Each application will be carefully reviewed and analyzed for content and completion by a screening committee. A team of people who have hands-on farming experience will score applications.

## Selection, Expectations, and Fees

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Final selections for participation in the NFU Beginning Farmer Institute will be based on application analysis. Candidates will be notified of their status no later than May 31, 2018.

Those selected to participate are required to attend all three sessions. One session will be September in Washington, DC. One session will be November in Northern California. One session will be March outside of Seattle, Washington. Please consider this commitment before applying.

NFU will cover the majority of the remaining costs of the NFU Beginning Farmer Institute including travel, lodging, and meals during the event. NFU's expectation is to have each institute graduate become an inspiration to and actively mentor similar individuals in their area, or to become candidates for local boards and other community opportunities. NFU plans to provide ongoing support to participants after they return to their farms.

# Beginning Farmer Institute Application

Are you applying as an individual or as a farm partnership (spouses, business partner, family members, etc.)?  Individual  Partnership

*If applying as a partnership, please provide separate applications for each person and mail them in the same envelope. Keep in mind that space is limited and all members of a partnership may or may not be admitted.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm operation name, if applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

Is your farm incorporated? Yes  No

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Education obtained: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you own, or have you ever owned, directly or indirectly, an interest in a farm operation or farmland?

Yes  No Please describe. If you need additional space, please attach a separate page.

Have you farmed or raised livestock for less than 5 of the past 10 years?  Yes  No

Please describe. If you need additional space, please attach a separate paper.

Current Farm Acreage: owned \_\_\_\_\_ rented \_\_\_\_\_

Livestock Number of Head: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Employees: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Operation:  Grain Farming (wheat, corn, soybeans, etc.)  Dairy  Cattle  Poultry

Cotton  Fruit  Fishing  Farmers Market Retail  Vegetable Farming  Other

Describe your farm operation. If you need additional space, please attach a separate page.

Are you or have you ever been a member of a cooperative?  Yes  No If yes, please describe.

How did you hear about the Beginning Farmer Institute?

Are you a member of Farmers Union?  Yes  No (desired, but not required)

## Beginning Farmer Institute Essay Question

Please write an essay answering these questions:

- Why I should be selected for the Beginning Farmer Institute?
- Where do I envision my farm operation in 5 years and how do I plan to achieve this goal?
- What do I expect from this Institute?

Your essay should be one to three pages, typed and double spaced. Responses must include page numbers and your name on each page in the upper right-hand corner. Include your essay in your application packet.



# Beginning Farmer Institute Sample Agenda

*Each institute will be tailored to the participants' needs as determined by a pre-attendance survey.*

## Sample Agenda Topics

Top Five Tips for Beginning Farmers

Business Planning: Plan Your Ag Business in its Entirety

New Opportunities in Agriculture

Organic and Local Food Systems

Sole Proprietorship, LLC or S Corp?

Record Keeping and Tax Preparation for Farmers

Taking the Reins: Direction After the Family Farm is Transitioned

Land Acquisition

What Insurance Do I Need On My Farm?

Find a Mentor/Be a Mentor

Employee Hiring and Management

Financing 101: How to Sit Down with Your Banker and Ask for a Loan

Financing 101, Part 2: How to Plan for and Survive a Tough Year

How to Write a Business Plan

Profit = Volume x Price - Costs

Finding Capital

Cutting Costs, Reducing Inputs

Marketing Your Crop (Wholesale)

Direct Marketing Your Crop (Retail)

Marketing, Public Relations and Advertising Your Business

What is Sustainable Agriculture?

Renewable Energy on Your Farm

Wind Power Basics

Cooperatives 101

How to Conduct Research

Understanding USDA Programs

How to be Effective on a Board of Directors and Why it is Important that Your Voice is Heard

Present Yourself Professionally and Influence Other

How to Increase Your Ability to Get Things Done

How to Improve Positive Thinking with New Visions, New Ambitions

## Sample Tours

Farms that Found a Niche

Farms that Set an Example

Ag-focused Cooperatives