

Mentee requirements and expectations:

Aspiring farmers (e.g. those who are new to agriculture) are more appropriately referred to educational resources and technical assistance. Therefore, for TOPP, mentees are transitioning producers who have existing farming operations where they are currently employees, managers, or owners.

Definition of a transitioning producer:

Transitioning producers must have at least two years' experience owning or operating a farm (or equivalent experience), and must have existing farming operations or be *employees or managers* who are:

- Planning to transition an existing operation to organic,
- In the process of transitioning an operation to organic,
- Adding new organic acreage,
- Adding new scopes of organic certification,
- And/or starting a new certified organic operation.

Expectations

Transitioning producers must:

- Intend to become certified organic;
- Have the ability to fulfill the time commitment of menteeship including regular communication with the mentor and mentorship oversight organization, travel and site visits;
- Have reliable access to a means for attending site-visits;
- Have access to appropriate technology for communication as determined by the mentor/mentee communication and meetings plan, created during onboarding. Technology could include video, telephone, text, email, video communications and in-person meetings);
- Cultivate curiosity about ecological farming.

In a mentorship year, mentees will:

- Commit to 45 hours per yearly program cycle (12 months)
 - Includes 2 on-farm visits per year (one at mentor farm and one at mentee farm, can be virtual if needed)
 - Includes at least 3 touch points during growing season with mentor
 - Includes mentee onboarding and end-of-year meetings
 - Suggested attendance with mentor at 1 community farm event
- Create Mentor/Mentee agreement to support the structure of the experience. The agreement will include:
 - Communication plan (*Expected modes of communication include video, telephone, text, email, video communications and in-person meetings*)

- Learning objectives
 - Self-certification of intent to develop an Organic System Plan
- Communicate timely and consistently with mentor and program staff.
- Participate in mid-year and year-end mentorship evaluations.