



FirstLine Schools: Americorps NETWORK GARDENER

Creating and inspiring great open admissions public schools in New Orleans

About FirstLine Schools

In 1998, FirstLine Schools started the first charter school in New Orleans. FirstLine now operates five PreK-8th grade schools. ***Our mission is to create and inspire great open admissions public schools in New Orleans.***

Our faculty is a diverse and talented group dedicated to our students' success and to their own growth as teachers. Our schools are led by leaders who hold themselves accountable for student achievement and teacher development.

About ESYNOLA

Founded in 2006, Edible Schoolyard New Orleans (ESYNOLA) envisions generations of New Orleans children who have healthy relationships with food, the natural world, themselves, and their community. ESYNOLA's mission is to teach children to make healthy connections through food. Our goal is to improve the long-term well being of our students, families, and school community, by integrating hands-on organic gardening and seasonal cooking into the school curriculum, culture, and cafeteria programs.

We believe that:

- Food education should be taught in conjunction with core academics
- Children learn by doing
- Health and wellness contribute to the success of the whole child
- Beauty is the language of caring
- Local farms and sustainable farming practices are vital
- School food reform is an integral part of the education we offer our students
- Families and communities are integral to our success

Position Summary

The role of the **Americorps Network Gardener** is to support ESYNOLA garden teaching teams at multiple schools with physical gardening tasks. In collaboration with the garden team (one full-time garden, greenhouse, and volunteer associate and one part-time network gardener, all supervised by the ESYNOLA program manager), the corps member ensures that all four ESYNOLA school gardens are maintained as student learning spaces and productive edible gardens. On occasion, Saturday mornings are required to support community volunteer days and special events. This position is ideal for someone who wants to grow in their urban gardening and horticulture skills and experience, is comfortable working in all manner of Louisiana weather, and can consistently maintain a positive rapport with community volunteers and FirstLine students. This position requires a valid driver's license and a vehicle.

Position Responsibilities:

Garden & Horticultural

- Works alongside lead garden educators at 2-3 schools to learn the routine maintenance of the gardens, and directly assists in garden maintenance
- Carries out daily gardening tasks independently
- Prepares the garden for daily visitors, ensuring that the garden and surroundings are well maintained, safe, and attractive
- Leads individual and small groups of volunteers to carry out weekly gardening tasks
- Performs and supports horticultural practices that encourage overall plant health and soil nutrition, to include sustainable gardening and integrated pest management practices
- Attends bi-weekly walk-throughs with site-based lead garden teachers to assess and maintain garden health, safety, and aesthetics, with the objective of creating a short and long-term to do list
- Picks up garden supplies from vendors and delivers to sites using the ESYNOLA truck
- Maintains horticultural tools and supplies, and keeps storage spaces organized
- Maintains records of work, garden maintenance, and plant health as required
- Alerts lead garden educator(s) to garden problems, and handles pest outbreaks, wasps, etc
- Weeds all garden areas and removes debris from garden
- Attends seasonal team trainings and professional development workshops
- Works occasional Open Garden Days on Saturdays and the annual An Edible Evening Fundraising Event

Other

- In rainy or inclement weather, provides support on ESYNOLA special projects: garden signage, land use history research, design and communications work, and documentation systems and administrative duties

Education & Experience:

- High school diploma
- Prior farming and/or gardening experience preferred
- Experience with irrigation systems is a plus, but not required
- Valid driver's license, and ability to drive a truck. Training to drive with a trailer will be provided.
- Good sense of humor and positive rapport with kids
- Belief in FirstLine's mission and vision
- Passionate interest in urban gardening and agriculture
- Dedicated to working hard and receiving feedback
- Excitement to learn through direct experience
- Great attitude in the heat and cold weather

Desired Qualities & Characteristics:

- Believe in every student's ability to achieve in a rigorous college or career prep curriculum
- Achieve results based on agreed-upon expectations
- Take personal responsibility
- Highly detail-oriented
- Collaborate effectively with a range of stakeholders
- Share a commitment to creating great schools in New Orleans
- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Model the FirstLine commitments of Service, Learning, Collaboration, Safekeeping, and Results

Physical Requirements:

- Ability to lift, push and/or pull objects, which may be approximately 50 pounds
- Ability and willingness to work outside in varying weather conditions, including heat and cold
- While performing the duties of this job, the employee may be required to sit, walk, stand, talk, and hear.

Example of Typical Day of Service

8:00 a.m.	morning watering / animal care at one of four school gardens*
9-10a.m.	attend walkthrough with garden team to assess garden needs
10-10:30a.m.	garden to-do list creation from walkthrough, and planning for this and next week's work
10:30-12p.m.	specialized gardening task, such as: amending soil, turning beds, or preparing a harvest table
12-12:30p.m.	lunch
12:30 p.m.	prep for garden volunteers** : plan jobs, prep tools, make whiteboards with info, get water.
1-3 p.m.	garden work with volunteers: teaching them to weed, harvest, plant, etc., and then moving between volunteers to ensure everyone is on task, all jobs are going smoothly, and everyone feels cared for
3-3:15	clean up from volunteer work: put away tools, make notes for volunteer to-do list next week
3:15-3:30	water / snack break
3:30-4:30	finish garden duties.

NOTES:

* *The corps member will work between multiple locations: Langston Hughes Academy, Samuel J. Green Charter School, Arthur Ashe Charter School, and Phillis Wheatley Community School. Some work will be independent while some hours will overlap with the network gardener &/or greenhouse associate for professional development and greenhouse support.*

** *The corps member may co-manage (with part-time network gardener and greenhouse associate) weekly garden volunteers of typically no more than 6 people. Some of these volunteers are students, neighbors, parents, etc. They come weekly to work in the garden with a variety of experience. The corps member will co-manage (with the network gardener, lead garden teacher, &/or greenhouse associate) groups of 10-30 people from service organizations, businesses, school groups, and etc, with a variety of experience for 2-3 hr volunteer projects.*

How to Apply: Please apply through [Notre Dame Mission Volunteers Americorps](#)

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