



PO Box 17804, Asheville, NC 28816

[organicgrowersschool.org](http://organicgrowersschool.org)

828.772.5846

## PRESS RELEASE

January 19, 2016

### MEDIA INQUIRIES, CONTACT:

Cameron Farlow, Farmer Programs Coordinator

(828) 338-9465

[cameron@organicgrowersschool.org](mailto:cameron@organicgrowersschool.org)

### For Immediate Release

#### CLIF Bar Family Foundation Supports Training New Organic Farmers in WNC

Asheville, NC—Organic Growers School (OGS) is pleased to announce an award of \$5,000 from [The CLIF Bar Family Foundation](#). This grant will fund the OGS Farmer Programs. The Clif Bar Family Foundation's (CBFF) mission is to “support innovative small and mid-sized groups working to strengthen our food system and our communities, enhance public health, and safeguard our environment and natural resources.”



With the support from the CBFF, OGS plans to develop their [Farm Beginnings® Farmer Training](#) into a robust, comprehensive, whole-farm training program, designed to support beginning farmers through a 1-year curriculum, leading to a journeyman farmer certificate as an alternative to a four-year agricultural degree. Additionally, in conjunction with the OGS [Farm Pathways](#) partners, they plan to provide farmer-to-farmer networking and innovative land access opportunities. In this way, farmers of all experience levels in

WNC can access training to start, expand, or improve their farm business and production skills. OGS serves beginning & expanding farmers in WNC as well as in surrounding Southern Appalachian states - TN, VA, GA, SC, and beyond. Their programs are inclusive of farmers of all ages, races, & genders.

The Farm Beginnings® course will be expanded throughout the coming year, and the OGS Farmer Programs team will build the curriculum and infrastructure to continue to enhance the program by adding these components:

- Training of regional farmers as presenters

- Incorporating farm field days and hands-on components
- Include course components addressing labor management, rural revitalization, and communication skills
- Conduct a feasibility assessment of a farmer mentor matching program to provide graduates with support in their startup years
- Provide continuing education workshops on advanced farming topics to meet the training needs of more seasoned farmers
- Partner with other farmer support organizations to provide technical assistance for graduates in their startup years
- Create a certification process for graduates for access to loans, resources, and creative land tenure opportunities



These programmatic enhancements have been missing links in support for beginning farmers in WNC as they strive to transition from farm apprentices to farming. Both the OGS Farm Beginnings® Farmer Training and Farm Pathways partnership are helping to fill that gap ensuring success for organic and sustainable growers.. With this funding, OGS is poised to make a big difference in the lives of organic farmers by creating a cohesive trajectory for ongoing training and support in our region, and meet a shared CBFF priority of “expanding organic food and farming.”

“We are grateful for the support from CLIF Bar Family Foundation, and are working hard with our farmer leaders to develop Farm Beginnings® into a fully fledged training program that will significantly increase the success rate of new and beginning organic and sustainable farmers in WNC,” says Cameron Farlow, OGS Farmer Programs Director.



The 2016-2017 Farm Beginnings® Farmer Training program will start in October of 2016 and include 180+ hours of training to:

- Tap into knowledge of some of the most innovative & skilled farmers operating in WNC
  - Build a strong peer-to-peer farmer network for skill sharing, problem solving, and mentoring for success
  - Learn critical farm management skills such as creative financing and innovative marketing strategies
  - Experience sustainable practices on real farms under a variety of conditions
- Learn to view a farm as an interconnected system and how holistic goals help determine success.
  - Craft YOUR tailor made farm plan

The Farm Beginnings® class is a 12-month training session that helps beginning farmers clarify their goals and strengths, establish a strong enterprise plan and start building their operation. The course uses a mix of farmer-led classroom sessions, on-farm tours, and an extensive farmer network. Farm Beginnings® is designed for new and prospective farmers who want to plan a profitable farm business. Students do not

need to currently own land, but some farming or production experience is helpful to get the most out of the class. Applications will be accepted starting in May 2016.

Organic Growers School is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.