



# New City Neighbors is hiring teen leaders!

Are you a teen leader?

Do you want to make money and make a positive impact this summer?

Help us provide food for the community as a café or farm youth leader!

**Open Interviews  
@ 1115 Leonard St NE:**

**April 22<sup>nd</sup> 4-6 pm**

**April 29<sup>th</sup> 4-6 pm**

**May 6<sup>th</sup> 4-6 pm**

**Lock in your application!**



Summer Season is June 9th-August 14th

**\*Must be a high school student to apply\***

# New City Neighbors Youth Empowerment Program



newcityneighbors

March 2026 ed.

**New City Neighbors** was born out of a Christian church's youth programming. The youth empowerment piece began as after-school baking and grew into cultivating vegetables on a farm, and eventually into operating a farm-to-table café.

The nonprofit was officially established in 2007. In 2012, the farm was launched, including the introduction of paid positions for high school students. In 2017, New City Café opened as the organization's second social enterprise, deepening its commitment to food-based community development and youth employment.

Originally, our youth programming served students 2nd through 12th grade through after-school and day camp programs. In 2020, we refined our focus to serve youth ages 14–24, centering our efforts on the Youth Employee Program and the Farm Apprentice Program. While our primary focus is now older youth, younger students in K-12th grade continue to engage with us through school field trips and educational visits.

By engaging youth in the life of the community, we create opportunities for first-time jobs, leadership development, and a meaningful connection to food—using food as a bridge to build relationships with our neighbors. Our ultimate goal is to empower youth to reach their full potential through these 4 main areas.

**Career Ready:**

Youth develop foundational workplace skills, professional confidence, and real-world experience that prepare them for employment, education, or entrepreneurship.

**Community Development Ready:**

Youth understand their neighborhood systems and gain tools to meaningfully contribute to community change through food, service, and relationship-building.

**Leadership Ready:**

Youth build self-awareness, communication skills, and peer leadership capacity—learning to take initiative, collaborate across differences, and lead with integrity.

**Resourced for Next Steps:**

Youth have access to the relationships, training, land, capital pathways, and support needed to move forward into their next season of growth.



newcityneighbors

Our **mission** is to empower youth to reach their full potential. Our long-term **vision** is to grow neighborhood leaders. We hold **values** of radical hospitality, being youth-centered, and having a holistic ministry.

At New City Neighbors, empowerment is the active engagement of youth in a supportive, youth-centered environment that fosters sustained growth, builds leadership, and develops individuals who take ownership of their growth and are equipped to lead themselves and their communities. We do this through intentional work, training, and lessons that drive empowerment. We use a curriculum and field trips to teach our youth in every season. These are our main curriculum goals:

**Recognize diverse leadership in food systems** by studying urban farming and food justice leaders from varied cultural, racial, and community backgrounds and developing personal leadership skills through hands-on roles.

**Understand social issues connected to food access**, including food insecurity, environmental injustice, and systemic inequities, and analyze how urban agriculture can promote community health and equity.

**Apply asset-based community development principles** by identifying and mapping community strengths, local knowledge, and resources that support sustainable food systems.

**Engage in cross-cultural learning through food** by exploring, growing, and preparing culturally significant crops and dishes while honoring diverse traditions and histories.

**Develop practical urban agriculture and food preparation skills**, including planting, harvesting, composting, safe cooking practices, and reducing food waste from seed to table.

**Demonstrate civic engagement and reflection** by designing and presenting a youth-led project that connects urban farming to positive community change.

Our Summer curriculum themes rotate between **Living in a Diverse World** and **Food Justice**. A youth employee who attends 2 summers will have explored and have an understanding of these topics:

- Basics of DEI
- Ism's
- Diverse leaders
- Cross-cultural learning
- Asset-Based Community Development
- Social Issues
- Resource networking
- Good Food Practices
- Farming History
- Sustainability

newcityneighbors

**GRIL U** is a nine-month leadership development program (September–May) for teens, built on a Christian-based curriculum created by the Grand Rapids Initiative for Leaders. Our Leadership Training Coordinator, Avrey, facilitates NCN’s cohort with support from our Executive Director, Ricardo.

At the Farmhouse, we adapt the curriculum to align with our holistic ministry values and the unique needs of our participants. A key focus of the program is internalized leadership—challenging students to examine and strengthen their personal habits, schedules, and routines. Youth are immersed in an environment that encourages growth as cross-cultural leaders, equipping them to make a meaningful impact in their homes, schools, churches, and communities. No youth are required to engage in the faith-based aspect of this program at our farmhouse, but may interact with it more when all groups meet together.

Youth employees are paid hourly to participate in weekly small group sessions and monthly Saturday training, where cohorts from across the city gather together. Participants must be at least 15 years old and able to commit 2–5 hours per week for training and mentorship.

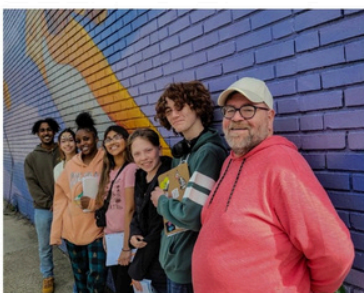
Through GRIL U’s dual enrollment partnerships with Cornerstone University or Kuyper College, students have the opportunity to earn up to four college credits. To receive credit, the student’s high school must register the course, and many schools cover the associated costs. If tuition is not covered, NCN offers a \$398 scholarship (half of the tuition cost), with the remaining balance covered by the student and guardian. We are committed to working with families to ensure finances are not a barrier to participation.

We have seen significant growth in every student who has completed the program. Graduates step confidently into leadership roles, discover new passions, and build meaningful connections within the community. In addition to preparing students for potential management roles at New City Neighbors, GRIL U equips youth to lead themselves and others through intentional training, discussion, and hands-on experiences.

Each participant is paired with an adult mentor. Mentors are selected from our staff and trusted community members. All mentors complete background checks, and parents are connected directly with them. We prioritize strong mentor matches and will continue searching until the right fit is found.

Throughout the year, students engage in three core experiences: Connecting with peers across the city to learn how local nonprofits and churches are creating community impact. Designing and implementing a “Be the Change” project focused on a social issue they care about. Completing a final “Breakthrough” project that reflects on their personal growth and outlines how they plan to continue impacting their community

Students also visit a college or university each year to explore future higher education opportunities. We have intentionally integrated GRIL U into our youth employee experience, and several of our adult staff members are program alumni. If you have questions, please email [info@newcityneighbors.org](mailto:info@newcityneighbors.org).



## What should I expect working on the Farm?

Working on the farm comes with a variety of tasks, including seeding, planting, bed prepping, weeding, harvesting, and washing. Youth who want to learn the basics of growing food, tending to land, working as a team, and working in a customer service setting should apply for this position.

The end of the work week, Thursday, is celebrated through the distribution of our food at our CSA pick-up. When people come to get their produce, it is a visual display of all the hard work that has been put into growing the food that people get to eat. Though not everyone is a part of CSA distribution through Customer Service, everyone has a hand in getting food to people, and that is why the above list of tasks is important to learn and continue to practice when you are a part of the farm team.

Within these tasks and throughout a Youth Employee's time working at New City, they can identify what areas they enjoy and work toward gaining leadership opportunities in those areas. For Example, YAM (youth assistant manager) or YA (youth assistant) in Harvest, Wash Pack, or CSA roles.

### Production Responsibilities:

- Seeding and potting up plants in the Greenhouse.
- Transplanting plants into the field.
- Prepping beds for plants to be seeded or transplanted into.
- Weeding and pest management through growing periods for plants.
- Harvesting produce through cutting, bundling, picking, and other methods of harvest.
- Washing and packaging produce with sanitation practices.
- Working as a team in a weather-dependent environment.
- Understanding of crop planning for the season

### Role Specific Responsibilities:

- Customer Service- CSA, focus share distribution, and Farmers Markets.
- Field crew- Planting, tending, and harvesting.
- Greenhouse crew- seeding and potting up.
- Washpack crew: washing, packing, and quality control.



## What should I expect working in the Café?

Working in the café involves a variety of kitchen tasks. Youth who are interested in learning basic kitchen and cooking skills are encouraged to apply for this position. Most of the work takes place in the kitchen, but there are also opportunities to help with off-site catering and special organizational events. Youth employees may also have the chance to create unique dishes for the café menu and experiment with different cooking techniques.

Prep days involve planning and vegetable preparation for catering, prepared sides, and our café day. Café Days take place on Thursdays and include both front-of-house and back-of-house responsibilities. Roles these days include topping pizzas, operating the pizza oven, rolling dough, expediting orders, taking customer orders, serving customers at the counter, and using the register. Cleaning and ingredient preparation happen throughout the evening to ensure everything runs smoothly. Café Day can be busy and fast-paced, but it is also an important way we connect with our customers each week.

### Production Responsibilities:

- Develop recipes and menus for events and Thursday production
- Develop and adhere to cleaning guidelines and expectations
- Develop and adhere to kitchen safety guidelines and expectations
- Develop and adhere to food storage guidelines and expectations
- Support Catering through production and attendance of the event
- Operate kitchen equipment and appliances safely
- Manage responsibilities in a busy environment during Cafe Thursdays

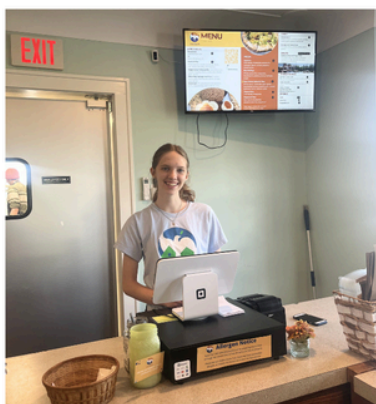
### Role Specific Responsibilities:

#### Front of House:

- Engage with customers and community members in a professional manner
- Understand and Operate the Point of Sale
- Understand how to set up and operate the front of house during Cafe Thursdays
- Know where supplies are stored and maintain stock

#### Back of House:

- Learn to operate each station of Pizza production
- Set up and close the kitchen with cleanliness and efficiency in a collaborative manner



## Youth Applicants

This is more than just a job where you show up and complete tasks. As a youth employee at New City Neighbors, you will be an active participant in our curriculum, attend field trips, collaborate with peers, and engage meaningfully with the community.

We are looking for young people who are excited to grow as future leaders and are ready to explore that potential through hands-on work on our farm and in our café. New City Neighbors will help you build valuable skills, strengthen your resume, and prepare you to step confidently into your next job opportunity.

Your first summer with us will introduce you to our values and give you a clear picture of what to expect if you commit to continuing into the fall season.

Our employment seasons are:

**Summer:** June–August, Tuesday-Thursday **Fall:** August–December, Tuesday and Thursday,

**Spring:** March–May, Tuesday and Thursday

Our primary hiring season takes place April-May, when we bring on up to 20 youth employees for the summer. Completing a youth employee application ensures you will receive updates about interview timelines and upcoming opportunities. If you have any questions, please reach out to us at [info@newcityneighbors.org](mailto:info@newcityneighbors.org).

## Parents & Guardians

New City Neighbors invites your child to commit to an experience designed to help them grow as individuals, community members, and future employees. We intentionally create a learning environment where youth develop responsibility, leadership skills, and workplace confidence.

We strive to be flexible and supportive around scheduling and extracurricular commitments whenever possible. However, to ensure youth receive the full benefit of the program, we require participation for at least 8 out of the 10 weeks during the summer season, and youth will work 2 days a week in the fall and spring seasons. This consistency helps maximize their growth and overall experience.

Parent orientations are held before the summer season begins, allowing you to meet our staff, learn more about the program, and ask questions. We also host a separate orientation for GRIL U families, where you can meet the mentors and program leaders.

New City Neighbors is open to the public on Thursdays from 4–7 PM, mid-April through mid-December, if you would like to see youth employment in action.

Please don't hesitate to contact us at [info@newcityneighbors.org](mailto:info@newcityneighbors.org) with any questions.



# NEW CITY NEIGHBORS 3-YEAR PLAN

## YEAR 1

**Summer-** Career Readiness

**Fall-** Career Readiness

**Spring-** Determine Youth Assistant focus area



## YEAR 2

**Summer-** Youth Assistant focus area mastery

**Fall-** Leadership Readiness and Community Development Readiness  
the Grand Rapids Initiative for Leaders youth curriculum

**Spring-** Youth Assistant Manager Training



## YEAR 3

**Summer-** Peer Leadership as a Youth Assistant Manager

**Fall-** Community Development Readiness through projects

**Spring-** Project Implementation

**Summer-** Resourced for next steps

