



**Position Title:** Ecological Garden Assistant

**Position Service Site:** Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (St. Joseph Ridge in La Crosse, WI)

**Service Time:** September 1, 2026 – August 14, 2027 (1,700-hour AmeriCorps Term, 50 weeks, 35 hours per week)

**Schedule:** Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM, with occasional evening, weekend and holiday hours required for events and programs. Hours will vary weekly but generally will not exceed 70 hours over a two-week period.

**Benefits:** Living stipend for the entire term totals \$23,000 (\$460 per week). The housing allowance for the entire term is \$6,250 (\$125 per week). An Education Award of approximately \$7,300 will be issued upon successful completion of service. **Health insurance** is available via WisCorps for individuals in 1,700-hour positions who are not already covered.

**Requirements:** COVID-19 vaccine and Tuberculosis (TB) test are required.

**OVERVIEW:** The goal of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (FSPA) is to provide young environmental leaders with the opportunity to gain relevant professional experience that serves the environment and the community by supporting healthy urban and rural ecosystems. The FSPA Integral Ecology Team stewards 200 acres of land with a greenhouse, garden, and orchard on St. Joseph Ridge, just outside La Crosse, that serves as an education model for conservation and regenerative land practices. FSPA puts strong Franciscan core values into everyday practice by engaging sisters, staff and others affiliated with their community in shared, sustained action that encapsulates their vision and provides an educational model for the public. The organization is also committed to working collaboratively with others to help them understand the intersection of a healthy planet and healthy people.

**SERVICE DESCRIPTION:** The Ecological Garden Assistant will help live out the commitment to care for Earth by engaging the community in educational programs, maintaining and improving the greenhouse and gardens, helping restore native ecosystems on the FSPA grounds, and generally supporting FSPA ministries related to integral ecology.

## RESPONSIBILITIES:

### *Community Improvement*

- Learn and educate to help build a strong resilient community.
- Maintain, improve, and develop partnerships with local and regional community partners.
- Increase environmental awareness, support land justice, and support FSPA at community outreach events.
- Assist in the development and teaching of FSPA ecological education programs for youth and adults including lesson planning, activity development, and lesson assessment and improvements.
- At least once during the service term, present to the local community and/or within FSPA to share what was learned through service with FSPA and how it benefitted people and nature.
- Identify and develop resources related to habitat management and land access in the Driftless region.

### *Programming*

- Assist FSPA land projects in the woodlands, prairies, garden, greenhouse, orchard, and tillable farmlands.
- Assist with garden preparation, planting, weeding, harvesting, field clean up, mulching, mowing, row covers and seasonal maintenance.
- Assist with designing, improving, and updating kiosks, signs, and brochures as related to the FSPA land.
- Assist with habitat management and restoration of native prairie, forest, oak savanna, and natural waterways, including prairie and tree plantings, water diversion strategies, and brush pile burning.
- Assist with identification and removal of invasive species, timber stand improvement, and brush removal.
- Learn, develop and implement regenerative land management initiatives for the FSPA land.

### *Program Marketing*

- Collaborate with the FSPA communications team to develop and share FSPA land efforts and stories.
- Assist with creating or curating simple “how-to” videos and instruction guides, including but not limited to natural landscape restoration, leave no trace principles and pollinator habitat support etc.
- Create and distribute flyers, brochures and signage for events and outreach in partnership with FSPA staff.
- Track progress and develop reports on land initiatives and other service tasks completed with FSPA.

### *Volunteer Recruitment*

- Explore community connections and create outreach plans used to support FSPA land initiatives.
- Assist in recruitment, training, and managing FSPA land volunteers of all ages for stewardship and service projects, including trail work, woodland and prairie restoration projects, garden, orchard, and greenhouse.
- Assist in volunteer and activity tracking for continual program improvement.

### **QUALIFICATIONS:**

- A citizen of the United States, a United States national, or a legal permanent resident of the United States
- A team player and good communicator with a flexible attitude and eagerness to learn
- Physically active and able to lift at least 30 lbs. (occasionally 50 lbs.) with stooping and bending
- Able to work in all weather conditions relevant to Wisconsin
- An intrepid curiosity and enthusiasm about the natural world and interactions within it
- Willing to interact inter-generationally and inter-culturally in a respectful manner
- Ability to take direction and accept constructive criticism
- Ability to prioritize and handle multiple tasks both independently and in a team environment
- Attention to detail and organizational skills
- Strong sense of responsibility and follow-through
- Education and/or experience in land conservation, ecological restoration, and community outreach is a plus
- Proficient in technology such as Google Workspace, Canva, and Microsoft Office
- Withstand the physical demands of work which involves lifting, carrying, bending and hiking on uneven terrain.
- Ability to perform the position's essential duties with or without reasonable accommodation
- Ability and willingness to safely use herbicides, pressure sprayers, chainsaws, and other power equipment
- Ability to multitask and shift schedule and priorities to meet changing conditions and priority needs of the land
- Upon hire, a criminal background check will be conducted. Service with WisCorps will be considered probationary until all results are returned and have been reviewed

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