

Growing Leaders: 5 Key Practices at East New York Farms!

1) Stay Connected:

Use alumni gatherings, social media, and reunion events to keep program alumni in your network. Invite them back as mentors, speakers, volunteers.

2) Promote Longevity:

Many of our alumni who joined the staff had already participated in the program for multiple years as returning interns or externs. This creates a culture of growth and connection to the program.

3) Do Research:

Alumni surveys can be useful for understanding long-term program impacts and outcomes, and it creates another way to connect with past participants.

4) Make space:

Consider creating positions that can serve as a bridge for alumni joining the workforce. We've hired alumni as market managers and farm managers as a way to gain experience. Be intentional about recruitment and hiring as well.

5) Provide flexibility and autonomy:

We structure our positions so that staff can manage their own time and workflow while working towards organizational goals. This is an important part of the growth process, and it also allows staff time to pursue other professional and educational goals outside of their work time.

For Funders: You can help encourage and support grantees to prioritize some of these practices and values. Consider asking grantees:

- What are you doing to create leadership and employment opportunities for program alumni?
- How are you creating a work culture that is attractive to program alumni and supportive of their growth?
- What support or resources would you need to hire more program alumni on to your staff?