

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP): Agricultural Use and Management of Historic Gardens

SITE NAME: Canterbury Shaker Village

LOCATION: Canterbury, New Hampshire

ISSUE DATE: December 4, 2025

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: Rolling – open until filled or withdrawn

SITE VISIT (MANDATORY): By appointment

POINT OF CONTACT: Erin Hammerstedt, Executive Director, ehammerstedt@shakers.org

1.0 Project Overview and Background

In the interest of preserving the historical garden space and honoring the deep and rich history of Shaker agrarianism, Canterbury Shaker Village (CSV or the Village) collaborates with farmers who actively use a portion of the property to facilitate and support local, organic food production while adding aesthetic value and historical interpretation to the landscape. The primary goal of this initiative is to activate the historic gardens for productive agricultural use while ensuring the preservation of the site's significant historical and cultural values. The selected proposal must be compatible with the site's mission, vision and values, and contribute to the visitor experience. *(See attached Strategic Plan Summary for more information).*

With the departure of our current farmer at the end of the 2025 growing season, CSV is seeking proposals from qualified farmers to utilize, manage, and cultivate the designated garden area within the National Historic Landmark property. CSV will provide use of a portion of its land, buildings and equipment and provide an opportunity for a local farmer or farm business to operate on CSV's grounds. In turn, the farmer (Tenant) will grow and maintain an orderly and visually pleasing garden using organic practices to provide interpretive and aesthetic value for CSV and its visitors. The museum is open seven days a week from 10 am to 4 pm from mid-May through October, and on weekends through November, with occasional activities and events outside of those regular business hours.

2.0 Scope of Agreement and Objectives

The selected farmer/entity will be responsible for all aspects of agricultural production, including planting, cultivation, harvesting, and marketing of products, in a manner consistent with the Village's strategic plan *(see attached)*.

CSV can provide the following rights and resources:

Land Use

CSV permits the Tenant to grow produce (annual plantings with a preference for vegetables) in the historic garden space delineated on the attached map. The size of the cultivable area available is flexible, likely in the range of 2 – 4 acres for the coming year.

The Tenant agrees to keep the gardens orderly and to grow following regenerative organic standards. Organic certification is possible but not required. This land has been certified organic for the last several years. The land would be eligible for organic certification. Obtaining future organic certification on this land is the responsibility of the Tenant. No-till farming is preferred.

To support the historic character of the Village, vehicle usage on the property is limited. Tenant will be granted limited vehicle access to the garden area via the dirt road on the eastern side of Shaker Road. Parking of vehicles not in use will not be permitted outside of the parking lots on the east side of Shaker Road. Tenant may store organic materials (e.g. leaves, wood chips, compost) along the stone wall on the southern edge of the gardens. The existing electric fence will remain and may be used by Tenant. Tenant will be responsible for maintenance of the fence.

Building Use

CSV grants the Tenant use of the 1000 square foot Garden Shed and non-exclusive use of a portion of the 30' by 40' Garden Barn. The Tenant will keep these spaces clean, tidy, and free of hazards.

CSV also provides the Tenant exclusive access to two high tunnels on the property, but Tenant is responsible for any necessary repairs and maintenance to these structures, as well as propane for heating them. Additionally, the Tenant is permitted to use one walk-in cooler in the Dewey School basement for produce storage and will keep the cooler clean and sanitary. *CSV will consider developing a wash & pack station in this space, if requested by the Tenant.*

Water Use

CSV grants the Tenant unrestricted access to irrigation water from Turning Mill Pond, as well as use of the existing drip irrigation system. Maintenance – including draining the irrigation system at the end of the season - and improvements of the irrigation system will be the Tenant's responsibility. Overhead irrigation is not permitted.

CSV also provides water from the on-site well for washing produce, currently at an outdoor station near the high tunnels. *CSV will consider developing a wash & pack station in this space, if requested by the Tenant.* The Tenant agrees to use water responsibly.

Tractor and Equipment

The Tenant will be allowed to share use of the CSV tractor and farm-related equipment. The Tenant will contribute to the performance of basic maintenance on the tractor (e.g. engine oil changes) related to general wear and tear on the vehicle. Tractor repair costs will be split evenly between the Tenant and CSV. A cost estimate must be agreed upon by both parties before repairs are conducted.

Housing

CSV has housing on site and will consider renting living space to the Tenant. Potential housing units can be visited as part of the site visit, if requested in advance when scheduling the site visit.

Additional Requirements

We envision a 3 to 5 year lease but are willing to consider shorter or longer terms. The Tenant and CSV staff will meet once annually, or as needed, to determine whether the agreement is being upheld in a manner pleasing both parties, and to adjust if necessary.

Additional requests on behalf of the farmer/Tenant will also be considered.

3.0 Proposal Content and Organization

Proposals should be straightforward and concise, addressing all requirements thoroughly.

Objectives:

- Maintain the physical integrity and historic character of the garden landscape.
- Promote sustainable, environmentally responsible locally grown agricultural products.
- Provide an enriching experience for visitors including visible traditional farming practices.

Specific Requirements:

- **Production:** Describe the proposed crops or agricultural activities. The proposal should detail a plan for fully utilizing the farmable area.
- **Historic Preservation:** Canterbury Shaker Village is regulated by both a conservation and preservation easement. The farmer will be required to seek prior approval of any proposed physical changes or infrastructure development and coordinate with Village staff on obtaining the necessary approvals.
- **Maintenance:** Proposer is responsible for general garden maintenance, including weeding, composting, and upkeep of paths and boundaries.
- **Public Engagement:** Proposals should outline how the operation will enhance the visitor experience.

Submissions should be organized into the following sections:

Section	Description
A. Executive Summary	Provide a brief overview of the proposal, objectives, and anticipated outcomes.
B. Farmer/Organizational Qualifications	Introduce the individual(s) and/or business, explaining length of time in business and particular strengths or interests. Include experience with farming and marketing agricultural products (crops, methods, etc.).
C. Proposed Methodology /Work Plan	Provide a detailed plan for the agricultural operation, including proposed crops, planting schedule, pest management, and harvesting/marketing strategy.
D. Historic Compatibility Plan	Include a description of how the proposed activities will be compatible with the site's historic character and use of the site as a museum and place for education and relaxation.
E. Financial Plan & Rent Offer	Include documentation on financial capability, explaining how/why you believe this can be successful. Include the proposed rent or revenue-sharing model (e.g., percentage of sales, flat fee). Please include your preferred term for use of the property.
F. References	Provide at least three professional references with current contact information, preferably from similar projects or land use agreements.

4.0 Timeline

Proposals will be reviewed on a rolling basis. A site visit will be required. We recommend requesting a site visit before proposal preparation, since it will be a good way to gather information and clarify what is provided and required prior to submission of a proposal. CSV reserves the right to accept or refuse any proposal.

CSV aims to have the land in active use in the 2026 growing season. The resources can be made available immediately upon selection of a Tenant to enable seed starting and planting.

5.0 Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Compatibility** of the proposal's intended use with the CSV's Strategic Plan Summary and the historic qualities and visitors' enjoyment of the site.
- **Experience** and capability of the farmer in agriculture and, ideally, unique contexts such as this museum.
- **Financial capability** of the farmer to carry out the terms of the lease.
- **Environmental stewardship** practices outlined in the proposal.
- **Rent** - Financial benefit to the site.

6.0 Submission Instructions

Proposals must be submitted by email to Erin Hammerstedt at ehammerstedt@shakers.org.

Please email Erin or call 603-783-9511 ext. 201 with initial questions or to schedule a site visit before preparing your proposal.



Canterbury Shaker Village
Strategic Plan Summary
November 2025 - DRAFT

Canterbury Shaker Village is a 700-acre interdisciplinary museum where Shaker history, values, and craftsmanship inspire learning, connection, and renewal of the human spirit. As stewards of the Village, we protect and share this unique heritage, encouraging visitors to experience the historic site and consider the beliefs, actions, and impacts of the people who lived here.

Mission

Canterbury Shaker Village preserves and shares the legacy of the Canterbury Shakers to promote learning, connection, and renewal of the human spirit.

Vision

Canterbury Shaker Village is a vibrant, authentic village where Shaker values and culture inspire people through exploration, learning, and community connection—preserving the past while enriching the present and shaping the future.

Values

- **Stewardship** – Protecting and sharing the Canterbury Shaker legacy.
- **Community** – Welcoming all to find joy and inspiration through shared activities and experiences.
- **Authenticity** – Living our values with integrity.
- **Relevance** – Connecting Shaker heritage to today’s world.
- **Fortitude** – Consistently demonstrating courage, perseverance and patience.

Strategic Priorities

- **Preserve the Past** - Preserve and leverage our historic site and its buildings and artifacts for education and engagement.
- **Enrich the Present** - Animate the village by expanding activities, interpretation, and inclusive experiences.
- **Shape a Sustainable Future** - Strengthen finances through expanded endowment, earned income, and fundraising.

