

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your inquiry about staff-practitioner positions at Cloud Mountain Retreat Center. We are interested in talking to you about the possibility of having you join us as a staff member.

The staff both live and work at Cloud Mountain, so developing and supporting harmony is essential. This is especially important given the work we do of supporting the people who come on retreat to engage in spiritual practice. We seek individuals whose aspirations, skills, and level of spiritual development are in accord with the rest of the staff. It is important to be sure, from your side and from ours that we have a good fit. We encourage you to stick with the application process as the rewards and spiritual support of living and working at Cloud Mountain are worth the effort. The impact of your gift of service in supporting people who come and practice on retreat is incalculable, as are the deep and lasting benefits to you.

The following material should begin to give you a general sense of what it means to make a commitment to the lifestyle and mission of Cloud Mountain by joining the staff. It is possible to come to Cloud Mountain from any spiritual tradition. However, it is preferable that you have a regular meditation practice in place, that you are interested in developing one or – if you come from a different spiritual tradition – you are willing to wholeheartedly support others in developing theirs. One of the greatest benefits of being on staff at Cloud Mountain is to use the opportunities here to deepen spiritually. Your own commitment to spiritually maturing will be the most solid foundation and support for your work at Cloud Mountain.

Our experience has shown us that, in general, individuals who do not already have their own meditation practice or retreat experience are confronted with significant difficulties in adapting to the silent retreat environment. Those who lack an understanding of Buddhism may have difficulty aligning themselves with many of the operating principles and values we uphold in our work. We would also suggest that you carefully review our retreat schedule and the description of the teachers and retreats. You will notice that most of the teachers come from the Theravadan Buddhist tradition. You may want to consider whether you feel that the teachers and retreats offered here would be in line with and helpful to your own spiritual practice.

Staff members have the opportunity, as the work schedule allows, to meditate with and interact one-on-one with most of the teachers on our retreat schedule. Since the typical group retreat schedule has meditation sessions from early morning through late evening, there are opportunities, as the work schedule allows, to join the group retreat for meditation. You will also have the opportunity to sit in on some of the instruction sessions and most evening Dharma talks. Staff members are almost always welcome to participate without restriction in the retreats to the degree that the work schedule permits. This is one of the major benefits Cloud Mountain has to offer, and acts as one of the greatest supports to deepen one's meditation practice.

To cover some practical and logistical matters: Cloud Mountain is located in rural southwestern Washington. The retreat center is set on fifteen acres of peaceful, wooded property. There are a few neighboring houses on the road, which is a dead-end, so we have little traffic, and we are set amidst many acres of land owned by timber companies, so the area is sparsely populated. Castle Rock is the nearest town (population about 2000), about 10 miles from the center, and Longview is the nearest small city of 30,000, about 20 miles away. Portland, Oregon, is the closest metropolitan area, about 60 miles south of Castle Rock, Olympia is a little over 60 miles north, and Seattle is 125 miles north. For lovers of the

outdoors, we are within easy reach by car of abundant outdoor recreation including hiking, skiing, and water sports.

For residential staff, housing is provided at no charge. Each staff-practitioner has a private living suite consisting of a downstairs living area with a bathroom and an upstairs meditation/sleeping loft. A kitchenette area provides a refrigerator, electric tea kettle, microwave and toaster. Utilities are also provided free of charge. The main staff residence building is conveniently located on the retreat property.

Cuisine is lacto-ovo vegetarian (i.e., includes eggs and dairy) with an emphasis on using unprocessed, whole foods and nutritional balance. Some of our recipes include dairy and eggs, but we provide wheat-free, dairy free and vegan options as needed. We provide three meals per day. The main retreat meal is served at midday. A complete breakfast with hot cereal for the morning meal and offer soup and bread for the evening meals.

For residential staff, when onsite, food from our standard inventory is provided at no cost. For non-residential staff, food is provided during your work shift. All meals are provided when retreats are in process. When retreats are not in process, staff members may eat leftovers or prepare food for themselves out of the standard kitchen inventory.

Please be aware of the following application guidelines:

- 1) It is our hope that individuals be willing to take on either a residential or non-residential staff-practitioner position for a period of 12 - 18 months. Although there is no implied commitment and this is an at-will position, due to the amount of training required to be successful in this position, a candidate's life circumstances should be open and flexible enough to allow for holding a position for 12 – 18 months.
- 2) In most instances, we ask that applicants be willing to come for a work visit (preferably for a minimum of five to seven days) as part of the interview process. It is important, from both your side and ours, that we have a good fit. The work visit allows the applicant to be able to see firsthand some of what may be involved in working and living at Cloud Mountain, and allows the staff and managers to be able to meet with the applicant. For us to be able to meet the person who may come on staff is especially important because we are a small community of usually no more than five or six people, and the arrival of every new person impacts the community to a strong degree.
- 3) We do not accept any pets.
- 4) We are not able to accept children of any age or a live-in partner or spouse.

An information letter can only cover so much material. We are happy to answer any questions that may not be addressed in this letter. Please email if anything seems unclear, if you have any questions about Cloud Mountain or about the specifics of the job for which you are applying.

If you are still interested in applying for a staff-practitioner position, please send us a work history or resume that covers at least the last 10 years, which would include:

- 1) Places of employment and addresses, with:
- 2) Job title and duties,
- 3) Skills learned in the job,

- 4) Dates with month and year job began as well as the month and year job ended and why
- 5) Supervisor's name or other work-related reference with contact numbers.

Please also include the name and phone number of three (3) work references and two (2) personal references.

We also ask everyone for a letter of interest in which we would like the following questions addressed. (For individuals applying for non-residential positions, you may modify your responses to the first three questions to focus on only the "working aspect," without the "living"):

- Why do you wish to live and work in a Dharma center?
- What benefits do you hope to receive from living and working at Cloud Mountain?
- Have you lived and worked in a spiritual center/community before?
- What is your understanding of the path of service?
- What is your meditation practice and path? Please provide details about the exact nature of your meditative practice, retreats you've attended, and teachers you've practiced with. Please be as detailed as possible.
- Are you going through a difficult life change/transition and how are you working with it?
- What is your ideal vision of your living and working life?
- How do you distinguish between "personal," "practice" and "work" time?
- What are your hopes or expectations about community living, work schedule, center or area activities, social environment and practice opportunities?
- Is there anything you would like to share with us about your life and personal circumstances?
- What do you do for entertainment and pleasure?
- How would you describe your social needs?
- Please comment on your willingness and ability to honor and live by the five precepts that are followed and practiced by Dharma practitioners the world over. See "Five Precepts" sheet enclosed.
- Have you ever been convicted of a felony?
- Do you have a disability that would require reasonable accommodation to perform the duties of the position for which you're applying?

You can email or fax the information requested, as that would expedite the process. We hope this information provides a thorough overview of the application process, and an adequate introduction to what is involved in joining the Cloud Mountain residential staff. We look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes,
Cloud Mountain Center Manager

Contact information for Cloud Mountain:

373 Agren Road, Castle Rock, WA 98611 Phone: 888-465-9118 or 360-274-4859 Fax: 360-274-9119 Email: info@cloudmountain.org

Staff Positions at Cloud Mountain

Integrating the activities of daily life with formal meditation practice is key to profound and lasting spiritual transformation. Mindfully observing ourselves throughout our daily activities allows us to deeply understand where our hearts and minds are open and where they are still closed. Cloud Mountain staff members have the opportunity to explore work as practice in a supportive environment. We strive to create a work environment where we see our work as an essential aspect of our spiritual practice. As such, we seek mature and responsible staff that have a commitment to the exploration of bringing the practice of mindfulness to bear on all activities of daily life, who have a stable and established meditation practice, who have a dedication to service in a retreat environment, and have a good work ethic.

What we are looking for in the person seeking any of these positions is someone who:

- Works gently and kindly with people
- Can work independently and efficiently without supervision
- Has excellent communication, organizational and time-management skills
- Can effectively coordinate volunteers
- Takes pleasure in teamwork and achieving a common goal
- Has the ability to prioritize tasks, but is flexible in adjusting to changing circumstances
- Is willing to consider offering 12 - 18 months of Dharma service in this position
- Has strong spiritual aspirations and can utilize the available resources to deepen his or her practice
- Has a stable meditation practice in place, or is committed to establishing one
- Has sat at least one silent meditation retreat, preferably at least a 7-day silent meditation retreat
- Is willing to give 6 - 8 weeks' notice before leaving a position

Benefits for Residential Staff-Practitioners include:

- Competitive compensation package
- Health Insurance, including vision and naturopathic coverage
- A private living suite, with sleeping area, living area, bathroom and kitchenette
- Food provided while on site (we serve vegetarian menus with dairy and eggs)
- Use of facilities (laundry, staff lounge, weight room, Internet)
- An approximately 32-hour workweek, designed to provide time for spiritual practice and participation in retreats
- The opportunity to participate in a variety of retreats at no cost
- Opportunities for one-on-one discussions with teachers of diverse traditions and lineages.

Benefits for Non-Residential Staff-Practitioners include:

- Competitive compensation package
- Health Insurance, including vision and naturopathic coverage (if working a 32-hour workweek)
- Food provided while on site (we serve vegetarian menus with dairy and eggs)
- Use of facilities (staff lounge, weight room, Internet)
- A workweek designed to provide time for spiritual practice and participation in retreats
- The opportunity to participate in a variety of retreats at no cost
- Opportunities for one-on-one discussions with teachers of diverse traditions and lineages.

Position Descriptions

The following positions at Cloud Mountain are described below. Since we are a small staff, the tasks and duties of each staff member may change according to the priorities of what needs to be done. There is a degree of fluidity in the staff positions at Cloud Mountain since the needs related to serving the retreats, the retreatants, fellow staff members, and supporting the purpose and mission of Cloud Mountain can extend beyond our ability to comprehensively list.

Kitchen Manager: Responsibilities include:

- cooking for groups of up to 50 people from established and pre-planned vegetarian menus
- training, coaching and supervising retreatants in their retreat chores, which include clean-up and some light food-prep tasks
- tracking inventory
- food ordering/procurement from multiple vendors
- maintaining high standards of cleanliness and hygiene in kitchen facilities and procedures
- maintaining kitchen facilities and procedures in accord with county health department mandates
- maintaining the established kitchen budget.

The ideal candidate has experience in cooking for groups. No formal kitchen management experience is required. If you have excellent organizational skills, very strong basic cooking skills, the ability to guide and manage retreatants in their working meditation tasks, and an aptitude for strategic and practical planning, we can train you. During periods between retreats or when there are longer stretches without retreats, the Kitchen Manager may be assigned other tasks or duties by the Center Manager, which may include projects in the office, on the grounds or assisting the housekeeping staff.

Cuisine is vegetarian with emphasis on simplicity. Some of our recipes include dairy and eggs, but we provide wheat-free, dairy free and vegan options as needed. We prepare three meals per day. The main retreat meal is served at midday. We provide a complete breakfast with hot cereal for the morning meal and offer soup and bread for the evening meals. (Please note: our kitchen operations and menu plans are long-established and function extremely well in their current form. This position does not offer creative opportunities for generating new menus or procedures except as instructed by the Center Manager.)

Retreatants assist with food preparation and do most of the clean-up. Candidates for this position must have excellent interpersonal skills and management aptitude.

During retreats, other staff members provide relief cooking. The kitchen manager is not responsible for providing meals for staff between retreats.

Hours vary according to retreat schedule but average 32 hours per week. Must be able to lift 50 pounds. Must have valid driver's license and be willing to furnish driving record. Must be able to obtain a Food Handler's Permit.

Operations Manager: This position involves responsibilities for fundamental aspects of retreat facilitation and logistics. Some specific responsibilities include:

- pre- and post-retreat set up of the center, including the meditation hall, teachers' quarters, retreatant sleeping areas, shower and bathroom facilities

- training, coaching and supervising retreatants in their retreat chores (done in conjunction with the Kitchen Manager) and coordination of center clean-up by volunteers
- checking in arriving retreatants and completing chore lists
- ongoing housekeeping and interior cleaning
- inventory and restocking of center supplies
- maintaining a high level of cleanliness, efficiency and organization within the physical facility
- up to 3 days of relief cooking per week as required by the retreat schedule. The work-week varies according to the retreat schedule, but averages 32 hours a week. The Operations Manager may occasionally be asked to assist in the office, on the grounds, or on other projects as the need arises.

Retreatants assist with ongoing upkeep tasks and do most of the final clean-up of the entire center at the end of retreats. Candidates for this position must have excellent interpersonal skills and management aptitude.

Hours vary according to retreat schedule but average 32 hours per week. Must be able to lift 50 pounds. Must have valid driver's license and be willing to furnish driving record. Must be able to obtain a Food Handler's Permit.

Staff Cooperation

Because of the nature of community living and working at Cloud Mountain, all staff members are expected to maintain a sense of service toward the overall operation of the center and toward the retreats and retreatants. This means maintaining an open and generous attitude toward all duties generally carried out by other staff members. There can be much overlap of activities and sharing of duties, while maintaining responsibility for one's own job. The more integration and sharing within and between the staff, the healthier and more alive the overall community will be, for both the sake of the staff members themselves as well as for the retreatants and teachers who come on retreat.

Personal Practice, Growth, & Development

It is anticipated that individuals who join the staff here at Cloud Mountain will have a sincere and genuine interest in developing themselves through meditation, mindfulness, service, study, and practice. We expect the staff of Cloud Mountain to hold these elements near and dear to their own hearts. Our individual and collective purpose for being here is to do what we can on a personal level as well as on a community level to help facilitate an environment conducive to practice, growth, and development for those traveling the spiritual path. For our mission to be successful, it must all start right here, with our own existence, as a matter of personal aspiration and as an example of practice in action for the retreatants.

The Five Precepts

These precepts are offered to guide the ethical behavior of the Cloud Mountain community. Retreatants, staff, teachers, board members, and volunteers are all requested to do their best to cultivate these precepts while at Cloud Mountain Retreat Center. They are intended as standards we can internalize as a foundation for our practice, as the Buddha intended. Living by the precepts is an act of great generosity to all beings we encounter.

1. Refraining from Killing:

Aware of the suffering caused by the destruction of life, I will cultivate the precept of not killing, and will not encourage others to kill. In undertaking this precept, I acknowledge the interconnection of all sentient beings.

2. Refraining from Stealing:

Aware of the suffering caused by exploitation, injustice and stealing, I agree not to take anything that does not belong to me or has not been freely offered, and to respect the property of others. I will be honest in my dealings with money.

3. Refraining from Sexual Misconduct:

Aware of the suffering caused by sexual misconduct, I will avoid creating harm through sexuality, and will avoid sexual exploitation or breaking commitments of sexual fidelity.

4. Refraining from False Speech:

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful and untrue words, I will undertake the training of speaking truthfully, with beneficial words. I will cultivate deep listening. I will refrain from gossip about others. I will attempt, with kindness and honesty, to resolve any conflicts I have with other people.

5. Refraining from the Use of Intoxicants:

Aware of the suffering caused by unmindful consumption of intoxicants, while on the Cloud Mountain property or when using Cloud Mountain equipment, I will refrain from using them, including non-prescription drugs, alcohol and marijuana (including “medical-use” marijuana).

We also ask that you bear in mind the principles of stewardship and generosity while at Cloud Mountain.

I will refrain from wasting the resources upon which other beings depend. I will not be possessive of people or things, but will undertake to give of myself for the alleviation of suffering and the well being of all.