



Request for Proposals for Urban Agriculture Grant

Mid-Ohio Foodbank is dedicated to ending hunger one nourishing meal at a time and co-creating a community where everyone thrives.

OVERVIEW:

Mid-Ohio Foodbank is pleased to announce the availability of grant funds for urban agriculture projects that will help build sustainable community gardens, urban farms, and small scale agriculture projects within the City of Columbus, Ohio ("City"). This includes projects ("project(s)") involving the use of high-tunnels, that will provide residents in low-income neighborhoods with direct access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Funding to Mid-Ohio Foodbank to make these grants in support of projects has been provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service ("NRCS") pursuant to award number 68-5E34-16-798 and CFDA number 10.902 (the "award"). By making grants from award funds ("grant(s)") to assist community projects with the ability to improve the community's access to healthy fresh food grown within the community, Mid-Ohio Foodbank intends to further its charitable purpose of ending hunger one nourishing meal at a time.

PURPOSE & GOALS:

Through grants to projects, Mid-Ohio Foodbank and the U.S. Department of Agriculture will work together to provide more fresh fruits and vegetables to low-income urban communities by expanding urban farms and community gardens in underserved, low income, and food insecure communities. Ultimately, the goal of the grant is to enhance urban growing projects into productive, sustainable urban farms and gardens that provide low-income community members increased access to fresh produce.

To accomplish the foregoing, Mid-Ohio Foodbank seeks to make grants to fund projects that demonstrate commitment and ability to grow high-quality fruits and vegetables, especially by using high-tunnels. Additionally, applicants engaged in projects that also emphasize one or more of the following are encouraged to apply:

- Commitment to financial sustainability beyond the funding period of a grant
- Provide opportunities to young people and adults to learn job skills or entrepreneurship within the context of urban farms or gardens
- Community education related to conservation, healthy lifestyles, and how food is grown (i.e., vegetable plant identification)
- Commitment to on-going education, training, technical assistance and mentorship
- Provide opportunities for community engagement and service or volunteer work
- Ecological sustainability by increasing pollinators and other wildlife, conserving water, improving soil and air quality, and beautifying neighborhoods
- Improvement of vacant or underutilized or blighted sites



GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE:

Applicants whose project is located in underserved areas within the City or surrounding area are strongly encouraged to apply. The map set out in the appendix identifies low and moderate-income neighborhoods of the region as demonstrated by the percent of people who live at or below 200% of the federal poverty line.

ELIGIBILITY:

The following entities are eligible to apply for a Grant:

- 501(c)3 organizations that are tax-exempt under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code
- Organizations with a fiscal sponsor that is a 501(c)3 and has agreed to manage a grant
- State and local government agencies
- For-profit entities

PRODUCE DISTRIBUTION:

In order to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to low-income urban communities, a portion of the food produced from a project must be distributed to help those in need. Grant recipients must commit to providing a portion of the food grown at a project site to low-income households in the City pursuant to a delivery method or system determined by the grant recipient and included in the application. Such delivery method or system is not required to include distribution of food to Mid-Ohio Foodbank.

Innovative models are encouraged and may include distributing produce through the following strategies:

- Farm stands
- Farmer's markets
- SNAP & WIC redemption
- Mobile distributions
- Direct to consumer
- Donations of second grade produce
- Corner stores
- Community supported agriculture (CSA's)

AMOUNT AND USE OF GRANTS:

Applicants may request a grant of up to \$40,000. Applicants demonstrating interest and ability to install season extension techniques, such as a high-tunnel, are strongly encouraged to apply. Preference will be given to projects that include installation of high tunnels.

The application will require a detailed budget to be submitted. Funds can be used to support the purchase and installation of high-tunnels, as well as related supplies, materials, and contractual services to the project. Examples of expenses that could be funded include a high-tunnel kit and associated installation costs, irrigation lines, row covers, and hand tools.



Funds cannot be used for expenditures that do not comply with all federal laws, executive orders, regulations and policies governing the award. Examples include but are not limited to food, costs for lobbying activities, and costs of religious services.

If you have questions or concerns related to a specific expense item please contact:
mofgrants@midohiofoodbank.org

Partial grants may be awarded.

PROCESS & SCHEDULE:

Below is the anticipated schedule for making Grants:

- RFP Release Date – week of March 20, 2017
- RFP Due Date – Thursday, April 27, 2017
- Finalist Site Visits – Week of May 8, 2017
- Award Notification – Week of May 29, 2017
- Grant Period – through September 2017

Review and final selection of grant recipients will be completed by June 1, 2017. Following the final determination of grant recipients, each applicant will be notified regarding whether it will receive a grant.

If selected, grantees will receive funds through multiple disbursements in alignment to when costs are being incurred.

Projects that can be successfully planned and implemented before September 2017 are strongly encouraged to apply in this first year. Pending award funds availability, this grant will be made available to the community for a total of three years (2017 – 2019).

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

The selection of Grant recipients will be based on how well a proposal satisfies the following areas and factors of success:

- *Project scope alignment:* geographic location, commitment to project goals, ability to install and operate high-tunnel
- *Vision and plan:* clear purpose, vision, and mission with a business plan that articulates strategies, activities, organizational structure, expenses, income, and marketing/outreach needs
- *Feasibility:* the resources of the applicant to carry out the project long-term and the experience to build upon a Project
- *Capacity:* ability and time to implement a project, to track data and to manage finances



- *Community benefit:* project clearly meets a stated need; actively engages and benefits the targeted households through growing activities, delivery of a portion of food grown to low-income households, educational programs, training, and mentorship efforts

OTHER MATTERS:

Each recipient of grant funds will be required to:

- Meet with Mid-Ohio Foodbank to determine any necessary or appropriate technical assistance and training needs. Mid-Ohio Foodbank and each grant recipient will mutually agree on such additional assistance and training needed to successfully implement the project.
- Submit regular narrative reports describing the progress of the project funded, and financial reports and supporting documentation (i.e. invoices) summarizing how grant funds were used.
- Comply with applicable laws, regulations and commercially reasonable standards related to infrastructure improvements within the City and environmental standards and/or soil testing to ensure produce grown from project sites is safe for human consumption.
- Maintain sufficient insurance, as determined by Mid-Ohio Foodbank, for protection from claims that may arise out of or result from the acts or omissions of a grant recipient in connection with a Project or the use of Grant funds.
- Certify that it will comply with all federal laws, executive orders, regulations and policies governing the Award, including, but not limited to, those relating to (i) nondiscrimination, such as prohibitions on discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, age, and other nondiscrimination limitations that may apply to a Grant recipient, (ii) labor standards and (iii) minimum-wage and maximum hour requirements.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:

Applications and supporting information may be submitted through the online application website:

<https://urbanagriculturegrant.awardsplatform.com/>

Only complete applications will be considered.

Questions can be directed to: mofgrants@midohiofoodbank.org



Appendix

1. GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

Percent of the Population Eligible for Service in Franklin County

Percent Eligible
Based on 2014 ACS

- 0% to 9.99%
- 10% to 19.99%
- 20% to 29.99%
- 30% to 39.99%
- 40% to 49.99%
- 50% to 59.99%
- 60% to 69.99%
- 70% to 79.99%
- 80% to 89.99%
- 90% to 100%

Note: the percent of the population eligible for service is calculated by taking the total eligible population in a Census Tract and dividing it by the total population in that tract. Eligibility on these maps is based on 200% of the Federal Poverty Line.

