Urban Agriculture Grant

Question & Answer

The following Q&A was compiled from questions asked via email to mofgrants@midohiofoodbank.org. All further questions asked will be posted in updated versions of this document <u>every Friday</u> so that applicants have access to the same information regarding the grant. **Questions are accepted until noon on February 8, 2019.**

1. **Can projects be located outside of Columbus, but in Franklin County?**

   To be eligible to apply, projects must be located within the map set out in the RFP that reflects the Columbus metro-area. Applicants whose project is located in underserved areas within the City of Columbus or surrounding area are strongly encouraged to apply (please refer to the map we provided in the RFP). During the review process, each applicant's project location is identified and then factored into the scoring model.

   Also, as stated in the evaluation criteria portion of the RFP, the applications are also reviewed for their overall alignment to the goals of this grant, in addition to location.

2. **If I attended the 2018 High-Tunnel Session organized for this grant, do I need to attend the 2019 High-Tunnel Session to be eligible to receive funding for a high-tunnel?**

   If you attended the 2018 workshops on March 14 or 22 hosted by OSU Franklin County Extension, this will satisfy the requirement for 2019. That said, we strongly encourage applicants to attend the 2019 session. At this session, a representative from the City of Columbus will present information on the recently updated requirements for high-tunnels. Grantees will be expected to adhere to these standards.

3. **If funded, when will funds be available for projects?**

   Mid-Ohio Foodbank is currently aiming to announce the 2019 grant recipients in early April. Funds will be available to projects after the grant orientation session and each project has completion a grant agreement with Mid-Ohio Foodbank.

4. **What personnel can be supported through this grant?**

   Applicants are able to request funding to support personnel costs directly associated with the planning and execution of the project funded through this grant. This includes personnel costs related to youth and children engagement in the garden if that is part of your overall project. Funds are not intended to support on-going personnel costs.

   Personnel costs, whether it be to support the execution of site improvements or to deliver educational programming, cannot exceed 10% of the total grant request or award. Please note, for the purposes of this grant, all project personnel involved in the project shall be accounted for as personnel even if that individual is regarded as an independent contractor of the organization.

5. **What documentation needs to be submitted with the application to support personnel expenses?**

For the application, no further documentation or information is needed to request personnel support. If funded, the grantee will work with Mid-Ohio Foodbank to provide further documentation and information.

6. **Can funding be used to pay youth who are involved in educational programming in the garden? Can funding be used to pay a manager of the youth program? How will youth be paid for this program?**

A part of this grants purpose is to provide engagement opportunities for low-income children and youth to learn how food is grown, develop new skills, and be involved with food production, within the context of urban farms or gardens. To that end, applicants can request funding to support education and training opportunities for children and youth in the garden or urban farm. Funds can be used to provide youth scholarships or stipends for being engaged in such programming. Associated personnel costs for the management of such program is also an allowable cost but cannot exceed 10% of the total project budget (see response to question #5 too).

The administration of awarded funding for youth scholarships or stipends is to be managed by the grantee. That said, Mid-Ohio Foodbank will provide technical assistance on proper administration of funds for youth stipends and direction on associated reporting to Mid-Ohio Foodbank.

7. **If my project will provide stipends to youth for their participation in the garden program, does that count as personnel?**

For the purposes of this grant, youth stipends will not be included as personnel and will not be included in the 10% personnel threshold.

8. **For the youth and children educational services, is there a minimum or maximum requirement for number of participants?**

There is no set number of participants that must be engaged in your programming. While we understand gardens and farms often experience drop-in visitors, the use of funding for youth and children engagement is for organized and coordinated education and/or training opportunities.

9. **If I am requesting this grant to support my educational program in the garden, how should I include educational supplies in my budget? If I am offering gift cards for program participants, how should those be reflected in my budget? If I will provide youth stipends, do we have to list each participant by name in the application?**

All educational supplies you are requesting for should be included in your grant application within the budget form. Specifically, these expenses should be put under the "Supply" budget category. Within the budget form, project should convey the following information for each expense item: budget item, description, and amount. In the description section you can provide information about the expenditure. Examples of what this may entail include the number of youth receiving stipends or gift cards, payment amount, and frequency of payment.

10. **What type of information will funded projects need to collect about the food grown and distributed, and who food is distributed to?**

    In order to ensure projects have grown and provided fresh fruits and vegetables to low-income urban communities per the grants purpose, poundage data will be collected. Additionally, data on how many individuals were served with the produce grown at the project site will also be collected. If funded, grantees and Mid-Ohio Foodbank will work together to clarify expectations on what information can be collected and find ways to overcome any barriers to gathering this information.

11. **If I sell my produce at local markets, is selling produce to low income consumers using WIC vouchers or Senior Coupons an allowable distribution strategy to meet the requirements of this grant?**

    Individuals who receive WIC or Senior Coupons meet the administrators of those programs income guidelines which emphasize ensuring food access to low income individuals so yes, this is an acceptable strategy to link produce to this population per the grants requirements. If funded, projects should demonstrate a concerted effort to meet the needs of this population.

12. **If I don't own the property my project is located on, what do I need to provide?**

    The application requires you to attach a letter from the land owner authorizing *both* the use of the land and the projects improvements you are proposing to make to their land. If your project proposal includes activities at more than one site, this letter is needed for each parcel. If your project is located on a City Land Bank parcel, please contact Seth Brehm at SWHBrehm@columbus.gov

    If you own the property, please include a simple letter indicating this with your application.

13. **Where in the budget form should City permit fees be included?**

    Permit fees directly associated with the project improvements are an allowable expense and we recommend these costs be included in your application budget. These fees can be included under the "Supply" budget category or if being managed by a contractor performing related services for the project, they can be included under the "Contractual" budget category.

14. **If I am funded for a high-tunnel but the City of Columbus ends up changing requirements for installing a high-tunnel, how will this be handled?**

    The installation of a high-tunnel requires special considerations to be compliant with local code and regulations. As instructed, please look up your local jurisdiction office and contact the appropriate building and zoning department for more information on requirements and guidance on procedures. If for some reason there is an overhaul to such regulations you were previously given guidance on, and you are a funded project, you will be expected to contact us so that we can clarify and develop a plan to move forward.

15. What does the City of Columbus require to install a high-tunnel?

For guidance on requirements, please contact City's Building & Zoning Services. Generally, projects installing a high-tunnel in the City of Columbus will need to prepare a site map that is submitted to BZS for initial review and then a final site plan to be approved by BZS. Additionally, projects need to obtain a building permit for the structure which requires a licensed engineer or architects stamp to be on the structure drawings.

All applicants are strongly recommended to contact BZS as soon as possible to gain clarification and begin the process.

16. If I am applying for a high-tunnel, how should I budget the associated expenses to comply with City of Columbus requirements?

In addition to the high-tunnel structure and contractual costs to perform the installation of the structure, projects are allowed to request funding for other costs associated with the high-tunnel that are directly related to being compliant with City of Columbus building and zoning requirements. Permits related to zoning concerns can be included in your project budget, as well as professional fees needed to obtain a building permit. All professional fees should include an estimate as required in the attachments section of the application.

Permit fees directly associated with the project improvements, including permits and e-plot maps are an allowable expense and we recommend these costs be included in your application budget.

17. Can I request funding for three smaller high-tunnels instead of one larger high-tunnel?

While this grant opportunity does prioritize applicants that demonstrate commitment and ability to install and operate a high-tunnel, it is not a requirement that a project request a high-tunnel to apply. To that point, applicants should consider the overall goals and subsequent needs for their unique project. Based on this, the applicant should request funding for expenses accordingly.

Additionally, the goal of this grant is to enhance and improve urban growing sites so that they are more productive and sustainable and can improve access to produce for low-income communities. For this reason the funds are intended to be used for infrastructure, materials, and equipment that are needed for growing sites to be successful – this may include a request for three smaller high-tunnels instead of one larger structure.

18. Will the grant pay for internet services my project needs to operate or deliver programming?

The primary goal of this grant is to enhance and improve urban growing sites so that they are more productive and sustainable and can improve access to produce for low-income communities. For this reason the funds are intended to be used for infrastructure, materials, and equipment that are needed for growing sites to be successful. While funding can also be used to deliver educational programming for youth and children, on-going administrative operating costs such as internet services will not be supported through this grant.

19. What types of expenses should go under the "additional expenses" budget category in the budget form?

Nearly all your project expenses should and likely fit within into the budget categories provided. If you have a budget request that doesn't, you may use the additional expenses section.

20. In the "General Information" section, who should I list as the Director?

Please list the organization's Director. If the Project Leaders is different from the organization's Director, there is a space to provide that persons information. If your project has a fiscal sponsor, there is a space to provide that information as well.

21. What estimates are required to be submitted with the application for contractual services?

For the grant application period, only one contractual estimate is required to be submitted with the application, per contractual service you would hire for if awarded funding. If funded, grantees will be required to obtain a second quote for all contractual services but this requirement will be detailed at a grantee orientation session. All estimates or quotes your budget requires should be submitted with your application in the attachment section.

22. What type of documentation do I need for supplies and tools I plan to ask for?

For the application, expenditure estimates are only required for the following expenses: for any (1) supply valued over $1,000, (2) equipment valued over $5,000, or (3) any professional/contractual services. If under $1,000 in individual value, general supplies and tools do not require additional documentation for the application.

23. If my project is newly established, how do I answer the questions about the growing sites and its current production status?

The questions pertaining to your current growing site and production status are intended to provide an overview of what your current urban farm or garden operation entails. This information, in addition to the improvements you are requesting, provide a more comprehensive overview of what change you seek to make in relation to your current operation. Please answer the questions to provide the information requested based on your current operation even if that means you do not have past production data to provide. For example, if you recently installed raised beds and have not yet had a growing season in them, please indicate that when answering the questions related to this.

24. What does "infrastructure" mean?

Infrastructure refers to any physical structures and facilitates that the growing project either has or needs to support the operation of the growing project. Examples may include tool shed, water lines, high-tunnel, produce and wash pack station.

25. Can funds be used for site beautification and changes, like repairing a retaining wall?

The goal of this grant, as determined by the USDA, is to enhance and improve urban growing sites so that they are more productive and sustainable and can improve access to produce for low-income communities. For this

reason the funds are intended to be used for infrastructure,
materials, and equipment that are needed for growing sites to be successful. Even if a project is selected for funding we do not guarantee funding for expenses that are not directly related to the grants central purpose. However, if a project would overall be more successful if the site aesthesis were improved, than funds can be requested for these beautification purposes.

26. Does the federal government shutdown impact this grant cycle?

Based on the information Mid-Ohio Foodbank has obtained from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service representative it partners with, funding for this program is not currently nor expected to be impacted by the current federal government shutdown.

27. Do projects need to have liability insurance to apply and receive grant funding?

In order to receive grant funding, the grantee must have and maintain sufficient insurance policy 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. Proof of this liability insurance is required to be submitted with the application. This insurance policy should cover the calendar year, 2019, the grant period. If your project is located at a residential property, this insurance is different than homeowners insurance.

28. What needs to be included in the site plan drawing submitted with the application?

For the grant application, you are required to submit a site plan that can be created by the applicant by hand or using a computer program. For this reason, your site plan doesn't have to be at scale but the following items should be included in your site plan:

- the full site address and/or parcel number
- all improvements existing or planned for (please note the difference)– including raised beds, high-tunnels, water or electric lines, sheds, etc
- specific dimensions of all structures
- the distance between structures and all property lines

29. When will questions no longer be accepted?

Questions will be accepted until 12 pm today, Friday February 8th. After this deadline questions will not be responded to.

30. How is it that we access all the questions that have been asked?

Finally, all grant information, including Q/A is posted online at:
https://www.midohiofoodbank.org/urbanagriculturegrant/