



## Urban Agriculture Grant Request for Proposals

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

### OVERVIEW:

For the third year, 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 (“project(s)”) within the City of Columbus, Ohio (“City”).

Funding to Mid-Ohio Foodbank to make these grants 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)”), Mid-Ohio Foodbank intends to further its goal of ending hunger.

### PURPOSE & GOALS:

Through these grants, Mid-Ohio Foodbank and the U.S. Department of Agriculture will work together 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 this goal, Mid-Ohio Foodbank seeks to make investments into projects that demonstrate commitment and ability to:

- Utilize intensive vegetable production methods and strategies, including through the use of new high-tunnels, to optimize production and yields
- Prioritize the growing and distribution of fresh produce to low-income individuals

Additionally, Mid-Ohio Foodbank has expanded the purpose of this grant to support 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.

### PRODUCE DISTRIBUTION:

In order to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to low-income urban communities, a portion of the food produced from the project is required to be distributed to help those who struggle to afford and access fresh foods. *Preference will be given to applicants with a primary objective of growing and providing fresh fruits and vegetables to low-income urban individuals, during and after the grant period.*

Applicants will be asked to detail the delivery method for distributing such produce, and if funded, will be asked to capture data on individuals served through produce distribution activities. Technical assistance will be offered to grantees on collecting such data as necessary.



## **GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE:**

Applicants whose project is located in underserved areas within the City or surrounding area are strongly encouraged to apply. Underserved areas, as demonstrated by the percent of people who live at or below 200% of the federal poverty line, are identified in the map included in the Appendix.

## **ELIGIBILITY:**

The following entities are eligible to apply for this 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
- Schools

Projects who have received funding in past grant cycles are eligible to apply. However, please note that performance from previous grant cycles will be factored into the evaluation of applications. Additionally, in order to be eligible to receive funding from the Urban Agriculture Grant program in year three, the grantee must have delivered on its project goals and objectives, including the distribution of produce to low-income individuals and the installation of a high-tunnel, if funded for it, and adhered to relevant laws and regulations.

## **AMOUNT AND USE OF GRANTS:**

Applicants may request a grant of up to **\$25,000**. Partial grants may be awarded.

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.

Funds can be used to support the purchase and installation of high tunnels, as well as other infrastructure and operational improvements to enhance the project. Examples of expenses that could be funded include a high tunnel kit and associated installation costs, seed starting supplies, harvest supplies, irrigation lines, row covers, and hand tools.

Funds can also be used to support expenses associated with delivering education and training opportunities to low-income children and youth within the context of urban farms or gardens. Examples of expenses that could be funded include stipends for program participants, workbooks, and educational supplies. Grantees will be required to use a Mid-Ohio Foodbank provided form to report youth stipends.

The application requires a detailed budget to be submitted. Estimates for certain expenses are also required with the application in order to be considered for an award. This includes the following expenditures: any single supply valued over \$1,000, equipment valued over \$5,000, and any professional or contractual services.

Personnel to lead and execute improvements for growing projects and/or engagement opportunities is an allowable cost if it represents no more than 10% of total project budget. Grantees will be required to use a Mid-Ohio Foodbank provided form to report personnel costs.



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.

**Please note** that due to USDA regulations, Mid-Ohio Foodbank cannot allow grant funds to be allocated towards any type of a contractual relationship where an individual who is affiliated with the recipient organization (grantee) has a financial interest or receives a tangible personal benefit. This would be considered a conflict of interest and is therefore is an unallowable cost.

Awardees will be required to keep and submit all expenditure invoices and receipts to funder.

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

#### **CAPACITY BUILDING:**

Applicants looking to receive funding for a high tunnel *must attend a 1-2 hour introductory workshop*. This workshop will be organized and coordinated in partnership with OSU Extension and Mid-Ohio Foodbank, and will be hosted **January 9<sup>th</sup> 5:30 - 6:30 pm** at OSU Franklin County Extension Offices, 530 W Spring St #275, Columbus, OH 43215. Applicants unable to attend this workshop should contact Mid-Ohio Foodbank before the RFP application deadline.

In order to build the capacity and success of community projects, and recognizing the differences between growers, grantees will be offered a variety of trainings to select from and be required to *complete at least 2 trainings during their funding period*. In addition, grantees who receive funding for a high tunnel *will be required to participate in at least 1 advanced high tunnel training series* offered throughout the grant period. Trainings offered through Mid-Ohio Foodbank will be made available at no cost to grantees.

#### **PROCESS & SCHEDULE:**

Below is the *anticipated* schedule for making Grants:

- RFP release: Monday, December 11, 2018
- Information session: Wednesday, January 9, 2019
  - 4:00 – 5:15 pm @ OSU Franklin County Extension Offices
- High tunnel workshop\*: Wednesday, January 9, 2019
  - 5:30-6:30pm @ OSU Franklin County Extension Offices
- Deadline for questions: Friday, February 8 (email us by 12:00 noon)
- Applications due: Monday, February 11 (submit by 12:00 noon)
- Finalist site visits: On-going during between February 25- March 15
- Grant period: April – December 2018

(\*) Required participation to receive funding for a high-tunnel



We expect the review and final selection of grant recipients will be completed by early April 2018 after which each applicant will be notified regarding whether or not they have been awarded grant funds.

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

#### **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:* commitment to project goals, ability to install and operate high tunnel (if applicable), and geographic location
- *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, demonstrated ability to sustain 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:

- Submit regular narrative reports describing the progress of the project funded, 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.
  - To learn about complying with applicable laws, regulations, and commercially reasonable standards related to infrastructure, applicants are strongly encouraged to 1) look up project parcel in the Franklin County Auditor's Website: [www.franklincountyauditor.com](http://www.franklincountyauditor.com) to 2) identify Building and Zoning jurisdiction to then 3) contact Department to determine requirements.
- If applicant is not the property owner, applicant will be required to submit a letter from the land owner authorizing the use of land and project improvements.
- 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.
- 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 with all required attachments will be considered.*

#### **QUESTIONS:**

Grant questions can be directed to: [mofgrants@midohiofoodbank.org](mailto:mofgrants@midohiofoodbank.org). Questions will be accepted until **12:00 pm February 8, 2019**.

All questions and answers will be posted regularly on the MOF website at:  
[www.midohiofoodbank.org/urbanagriculturegrant](http://www.midohiofoodbank.org/urbanagriculturegrant)

If you have questions related to your growing project (relating to technical aspects of your project such as high-tunnel placement; irrigation system; row cover options), please contact Tim McDermott of OSU Franklin County Extension at ([mcdermott.15@osu.edu](mailto:mcdermott.15@osu.edu))

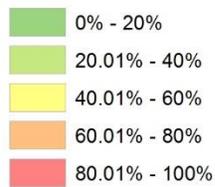


## Appendix

### 1. GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

Percent of the Population Eligible for Service in Franklin County

#### Percent Eligible



#### Notes:

1. Data are mapped for Census Tracts and are estimates from the 2016 5-year American Community Survey.
2. 200% of the Federal Poverty Line is the USDA pantry eligibility criteria and the eligibility criteria used in this map.
3. Map prepared by Rachel Reiser of the Mid-Ohio Foodbank. For questions or comments regarding this map, contact at [rreiser@midohiofoodbank.org](mailto:rreiser@midohiofoodbank.org).

