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 every Friday 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. **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.

5. **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.

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. **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.

9. **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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.