

New York State
Department of Agriculture & Markets

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

for the

Community Growers Grant Program 2018-2019 SFY

Competitive Grants

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must be submitted online through the Grants Gateway. This year's grant application is labeled AGM01-2018CG-2018. Proposals are due on Monday, May 21, 2018 at 4:00 pm. No late proposals can be submitted.

QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE RFP

All questions about this RFP must be submitted in writing (fax or e-mail will be accepted) to:

Meg McCabe
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
10B Airline Drive
Albany, NY 12235

E-mail: meg.mccabe@agriculture.ny.gov

All questions must be submitted to Ms. McCabe by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, April 30, 2018. Applicants must note that all clarifications must be resolved prior to the submission of a proposal. A list of questions about the program which are received, and answers to those questions, as well as any changes, additions or deletions to the RFP, will be posted in the "Funding Opportunities" section of the Department's website, www.agriculture.ny.gov, along with the electronic version of this RFP. Questions and responses may be posted as questions are received. All questions and answers will be posted by Wednesday, May 2, 2018.

1. GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

1.1 Program Description

The Community Growers Grant Program will have funds available through a competitive process to support the development and expansion of community gardens, school gardens and urban farms across the state. The Commissioner, in consultation with the New York State Community Gardens Work Group, has developed this grant program to recognize the important impacts of community growing spaces on food security and to promote the expansion and sustainability of these sites. This grant complements the work of the Department of Agriculture and Markets in providing technical assistance to community growing organizations statewide.

Community growing spaces have a myriad of benefits, some of which include: beautification of neighborhoods, creation of safe spaces that deter crime and development of environmental learning labs. Most importantly, community growing spaces help growers attain access to fresh, healthy food and combat food insecurity.

Across New York State, there are over one thousand community growing spaces in both rural and urban landscapes, and there is demand to establish more and expand existing sites. Most community growing spaces are in underserved communities and often, the mission to grow one's own plot is to feed themselves. There is little capital to help maintain these plots. Similarly, coordinators of these spaces are often not-for-profits with limited support to expand and sustain capacity, develop infrastructure and secure reliable tenancy to the land. This grant program was established as a strategy to improve food security by making resources available to ensure the viability and sustainability of these community growing spaces.

1.2 Funding Available

A total of \$500,000 is available for the Community Growers Grant Program. The State will cover up to 90% of the total project costs, with the total State contribution not to exceed \$25,000.

Grant recipients must provide a minimum of 10% of the project costs. *Please refer to the instructions page, which is posted on the Department website and available in the opportunity on Grants Gateway, for guidance in calculating your budget amounts and entering them into your application.* Matching funds may include cash or donated goods and/or services. In-kind labor is not an eligible match. The value of match must be documented by the applicant.

Once a contract is fully executed, grant funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis. Awardees may request, at the discretion of the Department, an initial payment of up to 25% of the total grant award. The department shall retain 10% of the budget amount to be dispersed to the contractor until the final report is accepted.

2. ELIGIBILITY & SCOPE

2.1 Applicant Eligibility

The following entities are eligible to apply for funding. Applicants must be prequalified in the NYS Grants Gateway prior to submitting an application.

- 501c3 not-for-profit organizations
- Educational Institutions
- Government Entities

2.2 Ineligible Applicants

The following entities are not eligible to apply for funding:

- for-profit entities
- individuals

2.3 Eligible Projects

Eligible projects will establish new growing spaces, expand infrastructure in existing community growing spaces, and/or build capacity through programming and staff.

2.4 Eligible Costs

Grant funds may be used for any of the following purposes directly related to the completion of an eligible project. Eligible costs include but are not limited to:

- **Equipment**

Examples include: gardening tools, rototillers

- **Supplies and materials**

Examples include: fencing, irrigation supplies

- **Salaries and Wages**

- **Trainings Costs**

- **Contractor and or Consulting costs**

- **Soft Costs necessary to establish a community garden, school garden or urban farm**

Examples include:

- Insurance
- Land use agreements necessary to access land

- Permits, licenses, etc.
- Soil testing

2.5 Ineligible Costs

Grant funds may not be used for the following:

- purchase of food
- salaries and wages unrelated to the proposal
- costs associated with preparing an application
- costs incurred prior to the award of funding at start of contract date

2.6 Project Duration

- Duration is 18 months from the date the grant is awarded.

3. DOCUMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Registration and Pre-Qualification

New York State vendors must register in the Grants Gateway and establish users in the system. To start this process, from the Grant Opportunity Portal (https://grantsgateway.ny.gov/IntelliGrants_NYSGG/module/nysgg/goportal.aspx), under Registration, click “Request Access Now!” to view your options.

For existing NYS vendors, there is only one step. You must submit a Registration Form for Administrators identifying a Delegated Administrator responsible for managing your organization’s profile and users.

To find out if your organization has already registered, enter its SFS Vendor ID number and search. If your organization is registered, the search result will include contact information for its delegated administrator, and you can contact this individual to request access to the system. If your organization is not registered, the search result will provide a link to the Request Form for Administrator, which you will need to complete and submit pursuant to the instructions provided.

If your organization is not currently doing business with NYS, you will need to submit a Substitute W-9 Form to obtain a NYS SFS Vendor ID, in addition to the Registration Form for Administrators, to register.

All not-for-profit organizations that intend to submit a proposal in response to this RFP must also be pre-qualified prior to the submission of your proposal(s). If you have not pre-qualified with the Division of Budget by the time that you submit your proposal(s), each proposal you

submit will be rejected and not considered for funding under this RFP. For more information regarding the pre-qualification process, please view [FAQs About Prequalification](#) as provided by the New York State Grants Reform Team.

For help with prequalification or submitting your application, please contact the Grants Gateway helpdesk. They can be reached by emailing grantsgateway@its.ny.gov, or by calling 518-474-5595.

If you have not yet registered (or, as a not-for-profit, prequalified), please do so immediately.

3.2 Workers' Compensation & Disability Insurance

New York State Workers' Compensation Law sections 57 and 220 require that the Department not enter into a contract unless proof of Workers' Compensation and Disability Insurance in a form satisfactory to the New York State Workers' Compensation Board has been secured.

Please refer to the Workers' Compensation and Disability Insurance Requirements posted on the Department's website, www.agriculture.ny.gov, under the heading of this RFP or visit the New York State Workers' Compensation Board website, www.wcb.ny.gov, for more information. You may contact the Board's Bureau of Compliance with any questions related to workers' compensation or disability insurance at (866) 298-7830.

3.3 New York State Charities Bureau Registration

All not-for-profits organizations contracting with the State or serving as a fiscal agent must be registered with the New York State Charities Bureau, unless a proper exemption is obtained. All applicants must, therefore provide either:

- The organization's charitable registration number and written documentation from the Office of the Attorney General that the charitable organization is currently up-to-date with its Charities Registration; or
- A statement from the applicant that the organization is exempt pursuant to one of the categories indicated on the Office of Attorney General's Request for Registration Exemption (Schedule E). The statement must identify the specific category under which the charitable organization is exempt.

To obtain written documentation of an organization's charities registration status, or if you have questions regarding the statutory requirements for registration, contact the New York State Office of the Attorney General, Bureau of Charities Registration, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271-0332, or call (212) 416-8402, email charities.bureau@oag.state.ny.us or visit their website at <http://www.oag.state.ny.us/bureaus/charities/charities.html>.

Eligible 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporations acting as the applicant must have a New York State

Attorney General Charities Bureau Registration number or an Exemption Certificate issued by the New York State Attorney General Charities Bureau explaining why the organization is exempt from registering with the Charities Bureau.

3.4 The Department and State Comptroller's Office reserve the right to audit the applicant's books and records relating to the performance of the project during and up to six years after the completion of the project.

4. PROPOSAL FORMAT

All proposals must be submitted online through the Grants Gateway (<https://grantsgateway.ny.gov>). The application is labeled AGM01-2018CG-2018.

1. Provide all information requested in the online Grants Gateway application form.
2. Attach all required attachments, drawings, photos, support letters, etc. at the end of the online Application.

4.1 Evaluation Factors

All eligible proposals will be competitively rated by a panel designated by the Department. A total of one hundred (100) points can be achieved from the following criteria. The evaluation panel shall consider the following factors in rating proposals:

1. Organizational Capacity and Mission (10 points)

- a. How has this organization implemented community growing programs and established long-term projects to meet the needs of low-income communities?
- b. To what extent does the organizational mission state support for the viability of community growing spaces?
- c. Describe the commitment your organization has made and is making to establish and sustain community gardening and/or urban farming projects.
- d. What structures are currently in place to support programming and planning around community growing space?

2. Project Description & Plan of Work (25 points)

- a. Describe the proposed project and outline how objectives will be met.
- b. How will this organization achieve the goal of increasing access to healthy food for residents in your geographical area of impact?
- c. Who does this project aim to serve?
- d. What neighborhoods, municipalities and/or counties does this project propose to impact?
- d. Describe the need of the people served through this project. (Metrics to cite could include: Census data, meal gap, narrative on lack of services offered to this demographic)

3. Project Evaluation and Quantification of Benefits (20 points)

- a. Please provide a baseline goal(s) with a detailed outline of how this/these goal(s) will be achieved.
- b. What are the project goals and how will they be measured?
- c. How many people will directly benefit from this project?
- d. To whom does this project plan to distribute surplus food that is grown?
- e. How is this project heightening awareness any of the following?
 - Nutrition education
 - Agricultural job training
 - Nutrition assistance and emergency food relief programs
- f. How will the program be sustained after the grant timeline has passed?

4. Personnel (10 points)

- a. Who are the key people involved in managing the project and how long have they been at the organization?
- b. What skills in community gardening, urban farming and/or program development do key people possess?

5. Reasonableness of cost relative to nature of work to be performed (20 points)

- a. Provide a detailed budget of all program expenses.
- b. Are budget costs reasonable compared to the work being performed?

6. Site Control and Outside Support (15 points)

- a. Provide proof that the applicant has control of the site for the proposed project. If proof is not available, is there a support letter from the landowner stating likelihood that the site may be accessed for the proposed project?
- b. Is the plan to obtain site control on new growing spaces secure?
- c. How has this organization been supported by local partners and municipalities?

5. AWARD PROCESS

The Department will first screen applications to ensure that they meet eligibility requirements. All proposals deemed eligible by the Department will be evaluated by a Department panel according to the funding criteria; scores will be averaged and ranked in order from highest to lowest. Those proposals receiving the highest numerical scores above the threshold score (55), continuing until available funds are exhausted, or until all proposals are funded, whichever occurs first, will be funded.

A contract defining all terms and conditions and responsibilities of the successful applicant shall be developed by the Department after the awarding of funds. The contract will incorporate project details and a budget approved by the Department, among its provisions.

Upon agreement by the awardee and the Department to the provisions of the contract, it will be submitted for approval to the Attorney General of the State of New York and the

Comptroller of the State of New York.

6. REIMBURSEMENT FOR FUNDING

Once the contract is fully executed, grant funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis.

Awardees may request, at the discretion of the Department, an initial payment of up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the total grant award.

The Department shall retain ten percent (10%) of the budget amount to be disbursed to the contractor until the final report is accepted.

A New York State Claim for Payment Form must be submitted to the Department for the contractor to be reimbursed for funds expended.

Payment to the contractor shall only be rendered electronically unless payment by paper check is expressly authorized by the Commissioner, at the Commissioner's sole discretion, due to extenuating circumstances. Such electronic payment shall be made in accordance with ordinary state procedures and practices. The Contractor shall comply with the State Comptroller of New York's procedures to authorize electronic payments. Contractor acknowledges that it will not receive payment on any Claim for Payment Form submitted under this agreement if it does not comply with the State Comptroller of New York's electronic payment procedures, except where the Commissioner has expressly authorized payment by paper check as set forth above.

7. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

7.1 Quarterly Reports

Awarded applicants will be required to submit brief quarterly reports to the Department to provide timely information on the success of the project. A quarterly report template will be provided by the Department and this template must be used to generate monthly reports. Claim for Payment Forms submitted will not be processed for projects that are not up to date with the filing of their quarterly reports.

7.32 Reimbursement Request Reports

The Department will monitor contract performance. An interim progress report that summarizes work completed on the project shall accompany each Claim for Payment Form request for reimbursement of project expenses. The Department reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the project.

7.3 Final Report

A final report in a format to be directed by the Department will be required within thirty (30)

days following completion of the project. The final report shall include a detailed description of the work completed; an assessment of the potential for future viability of the project; and a description of problems encountered, if any, which affected completion of the project. In addition, to the final report, the Department reserves the right to conduct a follow-up survey of funded projects to determine long-term impacts.

8. LIABILITY

The Department shall not be held liable for any costs incurred by any party for work performed in the preparation of and production of a proposal or for any work performed prior to the formal execution of a contract.

9. NYS OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION & HISTORIC PRESERVATION REQUIREMENTS

Projects which include ground-disturbing activities, construction of new buildings, or modification of buildings over 50 years old will be subject to further review by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). The Department reserves the right to request such additional information as is necessary to allow OPRHP to decide regarding the potential impacts of the project on historical sites or artifacts and possible alternatives which avoid or mitigate adverse impacts.

10. NYS ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW ACT REQUIREMENTS

Some projects may be subject to review under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The Department reserves the right to request additional information as needed to comply with SEQRA requirements.

11. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Department reserves the right to:

- reject any or all proposals received with respect to this RFP;
- waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification and concurrence of the applicant;
- utilize any or all ideas submitted in the proposals received unless those ideas are covered by legal patent or proprietary rights;
- request from an applicant additional information as deemed necessary to more fully evaluate its proposal;
- amend the program's specifications after their release, with appropriate written notice posted on the Department's website;
- select only certain portions of proposals for state funding;
- make all final decisions with respect to the amount of State funding and the timing of payments to be provided to an applicant; and

- negotiate the terms of the budget.

All proposals submitted in response to this RFP will become the property of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

12 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

All proposals submitted and all related contracts and reports may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Law.

13. DEBRIEFING

Pursuant to section 163(9)(c) of the State Finance Law, an unsuccessful bidder has the right to a debriefing regarding the reasons its application was not selected for award. Upon request, the Department will provide a debriefing to any unsuccessful applicant as to the reasons that the proposal submitted was not selected for an award. To request a review of an unsuccessful application, contact the Department at procurement.info@agriculture.ny.gov. A review should be requested by an unsuccessful applicant within thirty (30) days of the date of the notice that its proposal was not selected for an award.

14. MINORITY AND WOMEN BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

CONTRACTOR REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES FOR PARTICIPATION BY NEW YORK STATE-CERTIFIED MINORITY AND WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINORITY GROUP MEMBERS AND WOMEN

NEW YORK STATE LAW

Pursuant to New York State Executive Law Article 15-A and Parts 140-145 of Title 5 of the New York Codes, Rules and Regulations the **Department of Agriculture and Markets** (“**Department**”) is required to promote opportunities for the maximum feasible participation of New York State-certified Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (“**MWBEs**”) and the employment of minority group members and women in the performance of the **Department** contracts.

Business Participation Opportunities for MWBEs

For purposes of this solicitation, the **Department** hereby establishes an overall goal of 30 percent for MWBE participation, 15 percent for New York State-certified Minority-owned Business Enterprise (“**MBE**”) participation and 15 percent for New York State-certified Women-owned Business Enterprise (“**WBE**”) participation (based on the current availability of MBEs and WBEs). A contractor (“**Contractor**”) on any contract resulting from this procurement (“**Contract**”) must document its good faith efforts to provide meaningful participation by MWBEs as subcontractors and suppliers in the performance of the Contract. To that end, by

submitting a response to this RFP, the respondent agrees that the **Department** may withhold payment pursuant to any Contract awarded because of this RFP pending receipt of the required MWBE documentation. The directory of MWBEs can be viewed at:

<https://ny.newnycontracts.com>. For guidance on how the **Department** will evaluate a Contractor's "good faith efforts," refer to 5 NYCRR § 142.8.

The respondent understands that only sums paid to MWBEs for the performance of a commercially useful function, as that term is defined in 5 NYCRR § 140.1, may be applied towards the achievement of the applicable MWBE participation goal. [FOR CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS – The portion of a contract with an MWBE serving as a supplier that shall be deemed to represent the commercially useful function performed by the MWBE shall be 60 percent of the total value of the contract. The portion of a contract with an MWBE serving as a broker that shall be deemed to represent the commercially useful function performed by the MWBE shall be the monetary value for fees, or the markup percentage, charged by the MWBE]. [FOR ALL OTHER CONTRACTS - The portion of a contract with an MWBE serving as a broker that shall be deemed to represent the commercially useful function performed by the MWBE shall be 25 percent of the total value of the contract]

In accordance with 5 NYCRR § 142.13, the respondent further acknowledges that if it is found to have willfully and intentionally failed to comply with the MWBE participation goals set forth in a Contract resulting from this RFP, such finding constitutes a breach of contract and the **Department** may withhold payment as liquidated damages.

Such liquidated damages shall be calculated as an amount equaling the difference between: (1) all sums identified for payment to MWBEs had the Contractor achieved the contractual MWBE goals; and (2) all sums paid to MWBEs for work performed or materials supplied under the Contract.

By submitting a bid or proposal, a respondent agrees to demonstrate its good faith efforts to achieve the applicable MWBE participation goals by submitting evidence thereof through the New York State Contract System ("NYSCS"), which can be viewed at <https://ny.newnycontracts.com>, provided, however, that a respondent may arrange to provide such evidence via a non-electronic method by contacting the Department's MWBE Liaison at 518-457-4619 or mwbe@agriculture.ny.gov. All MWBE Forms and Instructions are included in the Submission Documents.

Additionally, a respondent will be required to submit the following documents and information as evidence of compliance with the foregoing:

- A. Upon award of contract an MWBE Utilization Plan. Any modifications or changes to an accepted MWBE Utilization Plan after the Contract award and during the term of the Contract must be reported on a revised MWBE Utilization Plan and submitted to the **Department** for review and approval.

The **Department** will review the submitted MWBE Utilization Plan and advise the respondent of the **Department** acceptance or issue a notice of deficiency within 30 days of receipt.

- B. If a notice of deficiency is issued, the respondent will be required to respond to the notice of deficiency within seven (7) business days of receipt by submitting to the Department of Agriculture and Markets, a written remedy in response to the notice of deficiency. If the written remedy that is submitted is not timely or is found by the **Department** to be inadequate, the **Department** shall notify the respondent and direct the respondent to submit, within five (5) business days, a request for a partial or total waiver of MWBE participation goals. Failure to file the waiver form in a timely manner may be grounds for disqualification of the bid or proposal.

The **Department** may disqualify a respondent as being non-responsive under the following circumstances:

- a) If a respondent fails to submit an MWBE Utilization Plan;
- b) If a respondent fails to submit a written remedy to a notice of deficiency;
- c) If a respondent fails to submit a request for waiver; or
- d) If the **Department** determines that the respondent has failed to document good faith efforts.

The successful respondent will be required to attempt to utilize, in good faith, any MBE or WBE identified within its MWBE Utilization Plan, during the performance of the Contract. Requests for a partial or total waiver of established goal requirements made after Contract Award may be made at any time during the term of the Contract to the **Department**, but must be made no later than prior to the submission of a request for final payment on the Contract.

The successful respondent will be required to submit a quarterly M/WBE Contractor Compliance & Payment Report to the **Department**, by the 10th day following each end of quarter over the term of the Contract documenting the progress made toward achievement of the MWBE goals of the Contract.

Equal Employment Opportunity Requirements

By submission of a bid or proposal in response to this solicitation, the respondent agrees with all the terms and conditions of [Appendix A – Standard Clauses for All New York State Contracts including Clause 12 - Equal Employment Opportunities for Minorities and Women. The respondent is required to ensure that it and any subcontractors awarded a subcontract for the construction, demolition, replacement, major repair, renovation, planning or design of real property and improvements thereon (the "Work"), except where the Work is for the beneficial use of the respondent, undertake or continue programs to ensure that minority group members and women are afforded equal employment opportunities without discrimination because of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, disability or marital status. For these purposes, equal opportunity shall apply in the areas of recruitment, employment, job

assignment, promotion, upgrading, demotion, transfer, layoff, termination, and rates of pay or other forms of compensation. This requirement does not apply to: (i) work, goods, or services unrelated to the Contract; or (ii) employment outside New York State.

The respondent will be required to submit a Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise and Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Statement, (See Submission Documents, Form MWBE EE01), to the **Department** with its bid or proposal.

If awarded a Contract, respondent shall submit a Workforce Utilization Report and shall require each of its Subcontractors to submit a Workforce Utilization Report, in such format as shall be required by the **Department** on a quarterly basis during the term of the Contract.

Further, pursuant to Article 15 of the Executive Law (the “Human Rights Law”), all other State and Federal statutory and constitutional non-discrimination provisions, the Contractor and sub-contractors will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, creed (religion), color, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, military status, age, disability, predisposing genetic characteristic, marital status or domestic violence victim status, and shall also follow the requirements of the Human Rights Law with regard to non-discrimination on the basis of prior criminal conviction and prior arrest.

Please Note: Failure to comply with the foregoing requirements may result in a finding of non-responsiveness, non-responsibility and/or a breach of the Contract, leading to the withholding of funds, suspension or termination of the Contract or such other actions or enforcement proceedings as allowed by the Contract.