



## **2018 Community Growers Grant Program**

### ***Amended Questions & Answers***

**Q: The RFP indicates a May 21, 2018 due date; however, the Grants Gateway indicates May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Which is the correct date?**

**A: As stated on the cover page of the RFP, proposals are due *Monday, May 21, 2018*, not later than 4:00 pm. The incorrect date on the Grants Gateway has since been corrected.**

**Q: Where is the upload or browse button for letters of support?**

**A: You may upload your letters of support into the Grantee Document Folder.**

**Q: One of our budget items is for a salary for our farm manager. We are providing a 50 percent match, but the form does not allow us to add the match amount.**

**A: The Grants Gateway will not allow you to add the match amount because it is not an eligible match. If you look on page 2 of the RFP under section 1.2 titled "Funding Available," the second to last sentence states that in-kind labor is not an eligible match. Further, in-kind salary, for the purposes of the Community Growers program, means that the salary of an individual from the applicants' organization is not allowed as match.**

**Q: Is this a matching grant program, or what percentage does an applicant match?**

**A: Per the Request for Proposals (RFP) on page 2, section 1.2 under Funding Available, "Grant recipients must provide a minimum of 10% of the project costs. 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."**

**Q: Do you have a specific definition for Community Garden?**

**A: New York State Agriculture and Markets law, Article 2-C, 31.g defines community gardens as "public or private lands upon which citizens of the state have the opportunity to garden on lands which they do not individually own."**

The Department articulates in this grant that community growing spaces are characterized as: 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.

**Q: Must the garden be open and accessible to the public, or could it be located at a site with restricted access that serves a specific population? For instance, a Head Start garden?**

A: It can be either. Noted under the Eligibility and Scope on page 3 of the RFP under 'Eligible Projects' includes: Eligible projects will establish new growing spaces, expand infrastructure in existing community growing spaces, and/or build capacity through programming and staff.

Also, the project will be assessed in some of the following ways, related to food access and need of the demographic served. This can be referenced in the evaluation criteria on page 6 of the RFP, under Project Description & Plan of Work:

- How the applicant will achieve the goal of increasing access to healthy food in the geographic area of impact?
- Who the project aims to serve?
- What neighborhoods, municipalities and/or counties does this project propose to impact?
- Describe the need of the people through this project

**Q: Can an organization serving two counties submit two separate proposals, one for each county?**

A: Yes, if applicant eligibility criteria is met. Applicant eligibility and ineligibility is in Section 2 under Eligibility & Scope on page three of the RFP.

**Q: Can an organization submit multiple applications for different projects?**

A: Yes, if applicant eligibility criteria is met. Applicant eligibility and ineligibility is in Section 2 under Eligibility & Scope on page three of the RFP.

**Q: My question is whether the Community Growers Grant Program only funds growing projects that distribute food within communities, and whether the Program would be interested in supporting an urban farm focused on providing education, with food and agriculture incorporated into its programming?**

A: The Community Growers Grant Program can fund both infrastructure and capacity-building (or programming) projects held at the community growing space. Please refer to Section 2, Eligibility & Scope criteria, on pages 3-4 of the RFP, which outlines eligible applicants, and eligible projects and costs.

**Q: Could this grant pay for curriculum that goes with a garden? There is a whole tower garden program at a local college that at least one school is interested in.**

A: Yes, this grant can pay for curriculum. Under section 2, Eligibility & Scope, on page 3 of the RFP states that eligible projects include projects that build capacity for programming and staff.

**Q: In terms of match, could a school use the BOCES funds?**

A: Yes, a school can use their BOCES funds as match. More details about matching funds may be found on page 2, section 1.2 of the RFP and on the instructions page, available on the Department's website and Grants Gateway.

**Q: Will the Community Growers Grant consider enhancement of an existing community garden?**

A: Yes, as stated in the RFP on page 2, section 1.1, "The Community Growers Grant Program will have funds available through a competitive process to support the development and expansion of a community garden..."

**Q: Can we apply as a network for 4 gardens, on 4 campuses under a single application (and thereby ask for more than \$25K), or must we apply as 4 different entities with one garden per location?**

A: As defined in the RFP under Eligibility & Scope on page 3, eligible projects will establish new growing spaces, expand infrastructure in existing community growing spaces, and/or build capacity through programming and staff. There could be multiple projects within a larger project that one entity applies for, as long as the request is \$25,000 or under.

**Q: What are considered donated goods/services for the purposes of the requisite match? Are examples available?**

A: Examples of donated goods/services include, but are not limited to:

- Examples of hard costs: fencing, soil, wood, shovels, lighting
- Examples of soft costs: assessment of what a contractor (who volunteers to help with a garden build) would charge for building a shed; volunteer educator (cost assessed based on what they would charge for their time).

**Q: Can a municipality apply with a partnering nonprofit, and the partnering nonprofit cover the match requirement? Or must the match requirement be covered by the applicant municipality?**

A: Yes, an eligible applicant can submit an application with subcontractors, and they can fall into the categories of municipality (lead applicant) and nonprofit (subcontractor), or other combinations. The guidelines for eligible applicants are located on section 2.1 on page 3 of the RFP. There is a ten percent match – cash or in-kind services – and it does not matter who covers this, as long as it is covered.

**Q: Can indirect be charged to this grant? If so, what is the limit?**

A: Indirect (or overhead) costs may not be charged to this grant. As stated in the RFP on page 3, under section 2.4, Eligible Costs – "Grant funds may be used for any of the following purposes directly related to the completion of an eligible project." Indirect (or overhead) costs are not directly related to a project.

**Q: Can you please confirm that garden program can apply for this funding through an eligible not-for-profit fiscal sponsor?**

A: Yes, a 501(c)3 not-for-profit is an eligible applicant, as are educational institutions and government entities.

- Q: Can a not-for-profit submit more than one application – one for itself, and one or more for other groups using it as a fiscal sponsor?**
- A: Yes, a not-for-profit can submit more than one application, as long as the applicant eligibility criteria is met.
- Q: If my organization already owns the land where the project takes place, do I need to show proof of ownership, or do I simply state that fact?**
- A: Yes, under section 4.1, Evaluation Factors of the RFP, under number 6, you will see that the applicant must provide proof that they have control of the site.
- Q: Would marine-based oyster gardens be considered eligible to apply for the Community Growers Grant Program, or is it purely land-based?**
- A: Yes, both land-based and marine-based projects are eligible to apply for the Community Growers Grant, as long as the applicant and project meet the eligibility criteria found on page 3, section 2, titled “Eligibility & Scope” of the RFP. Also, please look at page 6, section 4.1 of the RFP to learn more about the evaluation factors.
- Q: Our organization operates several programs related to community-based agriculture. Can an organization submit more than one application for each project, or is the grant limited to one application per entity?**
- A: Yes, an organization may submit more than one application, as long as the applicant and project meet eligibility criteria found on page 3, section 2, titled “Eligibility & Scope” of the RFP.
- Q: Are “educational farms” welcome to apply to the Community Growers Grant?**
- A: Yes, “educational farms” are eligible to apply for the Community Growers Grant, as long as the applicant and project meet the eligibility criteria found on page 3, section 2, titled “Eligibility & Scope of the RFP. Also, please look at page 6, section 4.1 of the RFP to learn more about the evaluation factors.
- Q: Do you have a preferred font and/or size type?**
- A: There is only one available font when you fill out the application on the Grants Gateway, and the Department does not a preferred font/size for any uploads you may attach.
- Q: I would like to apply for the Community Growers grant on Grants Gateway, however, I’m having difficulty understanding the application process. I can look at the opportunity, but I’m not able to find how to start the application.**
- A: It sounds like you are clicking on the portal, but should be clicking on the top of the page in blue “View Opportunities.” The portal is only to see what is available. The “View Opportunities” button is to search for grants, and start an application.



Welcome James

Grantee

[Change Picture](#)

**Instructions:**

Select the **SHOW HELP** button above for detailed instructions on the following.

- > Using System Messages
- > Understanding your Tasks

Hello James, please choose an option below.

## View Available Opportunities

You have 360 Opportunities available.

Select the **View Opportunities** button below to see what is available to your organization.

**VIEW OPPORTUNITIES**

**Click here to find opportunities that you are eligible to apply for and start an application**

## My Inbox

You have 2 new messages.

Select the **Open Inbox** button below to open your system message inbox.

**OPEN INBOX**

If you are still having issues, I would recommend calling the Grants Gateway helpline. They can be reached Monday through Friday, 8 am – 4 pm at 518.474.5595.

**Q: Is there a page limit for the written narrative?**

A: For the Plan of Work Summary, there is a 50,000 character limit, which is equivalent to about 12 typed pages in Microsoft Word. However, each question you will answer in the application has a 4,000 *character* limit.

**Q: Page 9-Item #11 – “Other Considerations,” Bullet 2 – How will the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets reserve the right to “waive or modify irregularities in proposals received” impact the scoring of an application?**

A: Any waiver or modifications the Department may have to make would not impact the scoring of an application.

**Q: As far as the MWBE requirement, if an applicant purchases the services of a not-for-profit, such as Cornell Cooperative Extension, must that amount be subject to the 30 percent target, or can it be excluded?**

A: If the contractor feels that there are items that cannot/should not be goal applicable they should complete the *MWBE EEO5-1 Request for Waiver Form* and submit a justification along with their *MWBE EEO5-3 MWBE Contractor Good Faith Efforts Certification* that outlines their reasoning. Once the Department MWBE Liaison has reviewed the Request for Waiver paperwork you will receive notification of your adjusted goal applicable budget subject to the 30% goal.

**Q: Can school bus transportation costs be excluded from the MWBE 30 percent requirement?**

A: If the contractor has reviewed the New York State Certified MWBE Listings, and found no other vendor availability, they may submit the Request for Waiver paperwork for review.

**Q: Can crops grown in the community growing space be sold to a farm stand?**

A: Yes, as long as the project description meets the criteria under “Eligible Projects,” on page 3 of the RFP. Please also look to the RFP under section 4.1 Evaluation Factors, number 3 on page 7 “Project Evaluation and Quantification of Benefits,” which indicated that an applicant’s score will also be contingent on how they plan to sustain their project past the deadline. If selling crops grown in a garden helps achieve this, then yes.

**Q: My company is in the process of taking on another company’s assets, so that we will operate under one roof. The closing of this transaction is expected after the application deadline.**

**If the other company were to be the applicant, they would be in the process of dissolving by the time a grant was awarded, we would need to transfer over the grant to my company. If my company is the applicant, we may not have all the related staff on our payroll at the point of application, and we may not have transferred over the license with the Parks Department yet.**

**What do you recommend, based on the shifting legal status at the moment?**

A: The Department recommends that if you would like to submit an application for the Community Growers grant program, you could apply in the name of the other company, and should you be awarded a grant, if necessary, a contract assignment may be executed.\

**Q: Would space costs be an eligible match?**

A: Spaces costs are considered indirect expenses. As stated in the RFP on page 3, under section 2.4, Eligible Costs – “Grant funds may be used for any of the following purposes directly related to the completion of an eligible project.”

**Q: Would the value of volunteer hours be an eligible match?**

A: The value of volunteer labor would be considered in-kind labor, and is not eligible for match.

**Q: I notice that the total amount of the award is \$25,000. Is that per year, or over the entire timeline of 18 months?**

A: The total award amount of the State award contribution not to exceed \$25,000 is for the 18-month period.

**Q: Could you clarify the maximum amount that could be awarded to an organization through this funding stream?**

A: As stated on page 2 of the RFP, section 1.2 titled “Funding Available,” the State contribution would not exceed \$25,000 per application. This is the maximum grant the State would allow under the Community Gardens Grant Program.

**Q: Can a grant be used to benefit more than one garden?**

A: Yes, an eligible project could include supporting more than one community growing space. Please refer to page 3 of the RFP to learn more about eligible project guidelines.

**Q: How many years has this program been funded, and how likely is it to continue to be funded in the future? Have grantees previously been awarded in consecutive years?**

A: This is the first year of funding for the Community Growers Grant Program, and it has not yet been determined whether the Department will continue funding in the coming years.

**Q: Our non-profit is interested in applying for a grant’ however, I find no instructions for non-profits to register with the site – just vendors. Since we are not a vendor, how do we register as a non-profit? Or don’t we have to?**

A: A vendor would be considered anyone doing business with New York State, and has no bearing on whether your organization is a not-for-profit, or a for-profit. As a not-for-profit, you would have to be registered and pre-qualified in Grants Gateway in order to submit an application to a grant opportunity. Instructions on getting registered in the Grants Gateway can be found both in the instructions page and the RFP (page 4, section 3.1) on the Department’s website here: <https://www.agriculture.ny.gov/RFPS.html>.

**Q: We are proposing a greenhouse project located at a nearby community based garden. The students at our public school have maintained a partnership with this garden throughout the school year, and continue to participate in numerous school-based activities. Even though the grant proposal is not being housed at our school, we are engaged in a direct collaboration with the garden. Is this grant applicable to us?**

A: Yes, as stated on page 3 of the RFP under section 2.1 titled “Applicant Eligibility,” eligible applicants include not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions and government entities. Please look to the Evaluation Factors, section 4.1, on page 6-7 of the RFP for further reference on how this project is being evaluated.

**Q: Can you please clarify the anticipated start and end dates of the contract? It is unclear in the RFP if the contract will be aligned with the State’s fiscal calendar starting April 1, or if the contract is expected to start at a later date.**

A: The anticipated state date of the contract is June 29, 2018. However, we can’t be sure that will be the exact date until all the proposals have been rated, and the Department has decided which

proposals will be funded. The contracts will not follow the State fiscal year, and will be 18 months in duration.

**Q: Is there any limit on fringe costs/rates and salaries? Can we include allocations of existing part-time or full-time staff in our proposed budget? Are indirect costs allowed, and if so, what is the cap on these costs?**

A: Stipulations for use of funding is for the maximum requested to be \$25,000 and specifics are included on the RFP on page 2 under 'Funding' and page 3 under 'Eligible Costs'. Also, the state will pay up to 90% of total project costs, not to exceed \$25,000, and a 10% match is required. Indirect costs are not an allowable expense.

**Q: Are there any prescribed deliverables for this program?**

A: As stated in the RFP on page 2, under section 1.1 "Program Description," the objective of this grant program is to direct state funding to support the viability of school gardens, community gardens, and urban farms to help address food insecurity in communities across the state. Please refer to page 6-7 of the RFP under 'Evaluation Factors' for further direction on how these applications will be assessed.

**Q: If the project is being developed by a municipality (lead applicant), does a municipal representative have to be listed as one of the key personnel, or can the key personnel be comprised of community members only?**

A: As long as applicants meet the eligibility criteria and has the requisite skills, determining key personnel involved is at the discretion of the applicant. Please refer to section 4.1 on page 7, question #4 'Personnel' under the 'Evaluation Factors' for direction on how this grant will be assessed.

**Q: The estimated date of the award is not in the RFP. Is the anticipated award date still June 29, 2018?**

A: The anticipated state date of the contract is June 29, 2018. However, we can't be sure that will be the exact date until all the proposals have been rated, and the Department has decided which proposals will be funded. The contracts will not follow the State fiscal year, and will be 18 months in duration.

**Q: Will the award extend over one growing season or for two growing seasons?**

A: The contract will be of an 18-month duration from the announcement date of the awards.

**Q: What constitutes proof of site control?**

A: A copy of the front page of the deed or a letter on the organizations letterhead stating ownership, are two examples of what can be considered proof of site control.

**Q: If the proposed project is going to occur on land jointly owned by more than one municipality/organization, will proof of site control be satisfied by a letter of support from each municipality/organization?**

A: A letter of support from the landowner with details on timeframe in which the land is accessed will suffice.

**Q: Is it permissible for projects to charge a small fee to participants to offset land and materials use? This would help with sustainability beyond the term of the grant.**

A: It is at the discretion of the grant applicant how these sites generate revenue. Please look to pages 6-7 of the RFP under 'Evaluation Factors' for guidance on how this grant is being assessed.

**Q: Do drawings of proposed projects/site have to be professionally done, or will it be acceptable to use less formal renderings for purposes of the application?**

A: It is at the discretion of the grant applicant how they would like to have documentation prepared.

**Q: Under Contract Document Properties, there are options to attach document A1, Program-Specific Terms/Conditions and A2, Federal-Specific Terms/Conditions. Can you provide more information on what is being requested here?**

A: The A-1 and A-2 (if the program is Federally funded all or in part) are terms and conditions set forth by the Department for the A-1, and the Federal Government for the A-2, and are already uploaded into Grants Gateway. There is nothing for an applicant to upload.

**Q: What is STD Work Week as it relates to “Personal Services – Salary”?**

A: STD Work Week means a standard work week. You can find a video explaining how to enter salary and personal services here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0b1btPFdHMU>.

**Q: How much detail do we need to provide for the utilities, equipment, operating expenses? Does each piece of equipment need to be a line item? Or can they be grouped together?**

A: The detail boxes for the non-personnel line items in Grants Gateway allow 125 characters. Your descriptions should give a reasonable idea of what types of items will be purchased in that line item.

**Q: What percentage of overhead can be acceptably charged to the grant?**

A: Overhead costs may not be charged to this grant. As stated in the RFP on page 3, under section 2.4, Eligible Costs – “Grant funds may be used for any of the following purposes directly related to the completion of an eligible project.” Overhead costs are not directly related to a project.

**Q: Can owned space/property be used as an in-kind contribution for the budget?**

A: Space/property cannot be used as in-kind match.

**Q: Are all projects required to be 18 months in duration?**

A: Should you be awarded a grant, the duration of the contract would be 18 months. You are not required to use the entire period.

**Q: Aside from Evidence of site control, Match Documentation, and Letters of support, what attachments are required?**

A: The only required attachments are proof of site control, match documentation, and letters of support. These can be uploaded into the Grantee Document Folder.

**Q: What type of documentation suffices for “match documentation”?**

A: The type of match documentation that would suffice depends on the type of match. For example, a cash match could be documented by providing a bank statement. A donated service can be documented by providing a statement of donation on the donors letterhead.

**Q: How/what type of documentation would be suitable for an in-kind match, such as utilities, owned property, operating expenses?**

A: Utilities, owned property, and operating expenses are indirect expenses, and therefore cannot be used as match.

**Q: If we provide proof that premises liability insurance, will the proof of workers comp requirement be waived?**

A: All vendors doing business with New York State are required to show proof of workers compensation insurance, and proof of disability insurance, or a certificate of exemption from either or both.

**Q: Will proof of the property owner’s workers compensation be required and/or sufficient for the application, even though it does not cover the project staff?**

A: Proof of workers compensation insurance, or certificate of exemption from, must be provided by the applicant.

**Q: Is some other form of insurance required in place of either workers compensation or general liability insurance?**

A: You can download the certificate of attestation of exemption (CE-200) from the Workers Compensation Board website ([www.wcb.ny.gov](http://www.wcb.ny.gov)).

**Q: We are now fiscally sponsored by a local non-profit that is not pre-qualified as a vendor to work with NYS. We are formalizing a relationship with a new fiscal sponsor, based in New York City, which we believe is pre-qualified as a vendor. If the new fiscal sponsor is already pre-qualified, and our relationship goes forward, what documentation will you need to establish that relationship? Or will we simply fill out the appropriate project registration paperwork, and move forward?**

A: The entity that starts and submits the application must be prequalified in the Grants Gateway.

**Q: As we are not a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization or corporation, we do not have a board of directors. Our Garden Committee has 7 members who serve as project advisors. Will this be considered our “board” for the purposes of evaluating our grant?**

A: Unless you are a 501(c)3, an educational institute, or a government entity, you would not be considered an eligible applicant.

**Q: May we use a portion of the grant funds to make initial payments to staff / consultants - e.g., use the funds for new salary / consulting fee lines related to the program? There is currently no budget line to pay program staff / consultants, and we wish to use this grant to initiate such compensation. We do not currently have the capacity to pay program staff until this grant comes**

**through; applying funds from this grant to such compensation would therefore not be a “reimbursement.” (We do have prior funding to pay interns only). Will we therefore be allowed to receive funds from the grant to compensate program staff / consultants?**

A: All eligible applicants can look to guidance on ineligible and eligible costs on page 3 of the RFP. Related to your question, costs associated with preparing the grant application are ineligible. Costs to pay staff for programming, whomever the staff are, is eligible and you can also look to the ‘Evaluation Factors’ criteria on page 6-7 of the RFP for more direction on program and personnel. Should your organization be awarded a grant, there is a 25 percent advance option on the total amount awarded.