

MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT
Office of Grants Management
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

**FY24 Resident and Community Gardening
Grant Program**

Program Summary: The Office of Food Systems Resilience (OFSR), in partnership with the Office of Grants Management (OGM), is soliciting grant applications for the County's FY 2024 Resident and Community Gardening Grant Program from organizations that expand resident and community food production capacity as a means of increasing local food security. \$200,000 in total grant funding is available for initiatives that will expand local food production through home and community farming and gardening. Funding may be awarded to new initiatives or expansion of existing programs.

The minimum award that applicants may request is \$10,000 and maximum award is \$50,000. The performance period for these grant awards is anticipated to be on/about May 31, 2024 to on/about August 31, 2025

Key Program Dates:

- **Program Opens for Applications:** Monday, April 22, 2024
- **MS Teams Live Online Grant Program Information Session:** Friday, April 26, 2024 from 10:00 to 11:00 AM
- **Submission Deadline:** **Monday, May 13, 2024 at 11:59 PM**

Key Program Resources:

- **Online Grants Application Platform:** <https://mcmdgrants.smapply.org/>
- **Program Page:** <https://mcmdgrants.smapply.org/prog/FY24Gardening>
- **[Click to join the Information Session OR for an event recording](#)**

Grant Program Details, Submissions, and Support: Application details can be downloaded and application may be submitted through the Online Grants Application Platform through the links above.

Applicants requiring an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation should contact the Office of Grants Management using the contact information below to discuss alternative submission options.

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SECTION I – BACKGROUND

A. Introduction

The OFSR is soliciting grant applications for the County’s FY 2024 Resident and Community Gardening Grant Program from qualified nonprofit organizations in Montgomery County that expand resident and community food production capacity as a means of increasing local food security. The funding for this grant program was allocated by Montgomery County Council through [Special Appropriation #24-37](#) to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan to End Childhood Hunger.

The [Strategic Plan to End Childhood Hunger](#) was initiated by the passage of Resolution Number 19-1235, which was introduced in the Montgomery County Council by then-Council President Gabe Albornoz in May 2022. County Council, County Executive Marc Elrich, the Department of Health and Human Services, the OFSR, and the Montgomery County Food Council collaborated to design a comprehensive strategy to end childhood hunger in the County, harnessing the expertise of more than 1,300 residents and organizations. The Plan includes 14 recommendations to address food access barriers and reduce food insecurity across all childhood age groups, and includes the expansion of existing, and establishment of new, community gardens and/or indoor gardens to provide educational opportunities and make fresh produce more accessible to children experiencing food insecurity.

Community gardens are an effective way for residents who have been historically and disproportionately impacted by food insecurity and poor health outcomes to grow their own fresh, local, and nutritious food. Community garden programs can also build community advocacy capacity for healthy food, connect neighbors around sharing resources and tips on gardening at home, and provide social and emotional benefits.

FY24 Gardening Grant award amounts will vary, with a maximum award amount of \$50,000. All funded activities must be implemented within the performance period of on/about May 31, 2024- August 31, 2025.

About the Office of Food Systems Resilience: Bill 20-22 established the OFSR as a non-principal office of the County’s Executive Branch. The OFSR works to make the County’s food system more resilient and equitable to improve the health of residents, the economy, and the environment. The Office serves as the liaison between County agencies and community partners with the goal of addressing the conditions which lead to food insecurity for residents. The OFSR will partner with the OGM to administer the FY24 Resident and Community Gardening Grant Program.

About the Office of Grants Management (OGM): OGM is the central point of contact for all grants that the County receives or awards. OGM also develops countywide policies and procedures regarding grants management and ensures these are consistent with the County’s racial equity and social justice goals, performs outreach regarding grants offered by the County and other grants functions. For additional information on other Montgomery County grant programs, please [visit the OGM website](#).

B. Target Population

The target population for this grant are individuals and households residing in Montgomery County who have been historically and disproportionately impacted by food insecurity and poor health outcomes in order to provide resources that facilitate access to and opportunities for growing their own fresh, local, and nutritious food.

C. Funding Areas

The goal of this program is to increase capacity amongst eligible non-profit organizations to provide resident access to yard, patio, and community gardening supplies, space, and education that will support broader food security initiatives within Montgomery County.

Priority for funding will focus on projects that:

- Establish new or renewed small-space food production locations, including:
 - Private land, such as those owned by community-based organizations, faith-based institutions, and educational institutions;
 - Underutilized, unused, vacant, or abandoned lots in neighborhoods and municipal centers;
 - Unused and abandoned plots in community gardens; and
 - Other creative opportunities for land access or growing spaces, such as (but not limited to) vertical gardening and rooftop gardening.
- Increase access to culturally appropriate foods in Montgomery County
- Provide gardening and nutrition education resources and engage community residents directly in food production;
- Demonstrate partnerships, including with the business community for in-kind or discounted supply purchases to increase the cost efficiency of programming;
- Provide planting materials, containers, seeds, seedlings and/or education to residents to enable them to grow their own produce in yards and/or on patios;
- Increase food access for residents in zip codes with high rates of food insecurity.

The OFSR will seek proposals from organizations that:

- Exhibit cultural proficiency;
- Are inclusive of the LGBTQIA+ community members;
- Use a racial equity lens in providing services; and
- Align with the OFSR's core values:
 - Equity: all efforts should address social injustice and racial disparities to build equity and food sovereignty in our community;
 - Systems-based: strategies should focus on identifying, maximizing, and addressing the interconnections of food issue areas, simultaneously contextualizing their benefits and their impacts on production, access, natural resources, education, and economy;
 - Innovative: to transform our food system, novel approaches, creative ideas, and best practices models from other jurisdictions are critical; and
 - Data-driven: strategic policy and investment decisions require intentional and reliable data collection and analysis, and solutions with clearly defined success metrics and measurable impact.

D. Eligible Organizations

Applicants must meet all of the following conditions:

- The organization must be a Federal 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status organization or a collaboration between two or more organizations with this status;
- The organization's principal place of business must be located in Montgomery County; if a national or regional organization, it must have a location in Montgomery County through which it provides related services. Any services or activities taking place outside of Montgomery County must be exclusively benefiting Montgomery County residents;
- The organization must be currently registered and in Good Standing with the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT);
- All activities and expenditures under this grant program must be provided in Montgomery County; and
- Current Montgomery County contract or grant award winners must be current on all reporting obligations for other awards and those reports must reflect substantial progress towards the goals of their awards.
- Proposed programs must be for a new service(s), expansion of existing services, or a combination of both. County funding cannot be used to supplant other funding for already funded services.

E. Award Amounts and Duration

Award sizes will vary with a minimum award of \$10,000 and a maximum award of \$50,000. Final funding amounts may be less than \$10,000. The grant will be awarded for up to a 15-month performance period. Programs must be run and evaluated during this period. This Grant Program does not commit Montgomery County to make an award.

F. Application Review & Awards

The OFSR will recruit an independent Review Committee that will develop and submit recommendations for funding based on their review of applications. The Review Committee will be composed of neutral, qualified individuals from Montgomery County Government, and possibly the broader Montgomery County community, selected for their experiences in the grant program's subject area, grants administration, project management, and/or ability to analyze programs from a Racial Equity and Social Justice lens. The panel members will review and score applicant proposals based on the criteria outlined in this NOFO and submit recommendations for awards. Final decisions will be made based on the scores and such other factors and considerations as the County deems relevant at the time of award.

G. Award Notification

Award notification letters are expected to be released roughly three weeks after the application deadline via email. For successful applicants, the Grant Agreement will contain funding restrictions; programmatic, administrative, and policy requirements; reporting documents including total budget along with the amount of grant funding for the program; and payment terms.

H. Submission Guidelines

Applications must be submitted through the Montgomery County Office of Grants Management - Grants Application Platform through the links posted on the first page of this document.

Applications are due no later than Monday, May 13, 2024 at 11:59 PM. All applications will be recorded upon receipt. Applications received after the deadline will be disqualified and will not be forwarded to the Review Panel for funding considerations. Any additions or deletions to an application, unless requested by the Office of Food Systems Resilience, will not be accepted after the deadline. Applications with incomplete, illegible, or corrupted digital materials will not be considered.

I. Information Session

An FY24 Gardening Grant Program Information Session will be held on April 26, 2024 (details on page 1). Potential applicants may participate in the MS Teams Live event or view its recording. The meeting link and event recording have been posted on the application page for this program, linked on the first page of this document.

J. Terms and Conditions

- County reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if the County determines it is in the best interest of the County to do so. The County shall notify the applicant if it rejects that applicant's proposal. The County reserves the right to suspend or terminate an outstanding Grant Program.
- The County reserves the right to issue addenda and/or amendments subsequent to the posting of a Grant Program, or to rescind the Grant Program.
- The County shall not be liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of applications in response to the Grant Program. Applicant agrees that all costs incurred in developing the application are the applicant's sole responsibility.
- The County may conduct pre-award on-site visits or request additional information to verify information submitted in the application and to determine if the applicant's facilities are appropriate for the services proposed.
- The County may enter into negotiations with an applicant and adopt a firm funding amount or other revisions for the applicant's proposal that may result from negotiations. The County shall provide the citations to the statute and implementing regulations that authorize the grant or sub-grant; all applicable federal, State, and County regulations; payment provisions identifying how the grantee will be paid for performing under the award; reporting requirements, including programmatic, financial and any special reports required by federal, state, or County law and/or the granting department; and compliance conditions that must be met by the grantee. If there are any conflicts between the terms and conditions of the Grant Program and any applicable federal, State, or County law or regulation, or any ambiguity related thereto, then the provisions of the applicable law or regulation shall control and it shall be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.

SECTION II – APPLICATION TASKS

Applicants are required to follow the content requirements and submission instructions listed within the online application platform and NOFO document. Please submit your proposal by filling out the data fields or uploading documents where applicable. Document uploads should be submitted as PDF documents with budgets uploaded as MS Excel file. **Applications will be considered incomplete if any part of any section is missing.**

This Grant application uses “Reusable Tasks” in the online grant application platform. Reusable Tasks can be completed once and be reused without further edits across most applications through this platform.

A. Applicant Information (Reusable) Task

Organizations must provide the following information and documents using data entry fields or uploads. The document uploads will be used to assess legal eligibility for the Grant Program and data fields will be used to populate any resulting grant agreement. Applicants should fill out this information as if they were drafting a contract using specific and exact information.

- Legal Name of Applying Organization as registered with the Maryland State Department of Assessment and Taxation (SDAT)
- Organization’s Maryland SDAT Department ID Number - Applicants can verify their SDAT status via this link: <https://egov.maryland.gov/BusinessExpress/EntitySearch>
- Organization’s Federal Tax Identification Number
- Organization’s Montgomery County Central Vendor Registration Service (CVRS) Vendor ID
- Organization’s mission statement
- Organization’s website (optional)
- Contact Information for the organization’s proposal point-of-contact (POC)
- Contact Information for the Organization's Legally Authorized Signatory
- Description of Organization's Grant and Financial Management Practices
- Description of Organization’s Data Collection and Management Practices
- Upload of IRS Tax Exempt Determination Letter for Nonprofit Organizations as applicable
- Upload of Most recent IRS 990 Form for Nonprofit Organizations or an explanation of why your organization is exempt from filing 990s
- Upload of Current Federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) (optional)
- Upload of Current board list with names, affiliation, and contact information as applicable
- Upload of Public Copy of Most Recent Independent Audit Report, Financial Review, Agreed Upon Procedures. If not available, please submit a brief statement of explanation.
- Upload of Most Recent Annual or other Organization Reports (optional)

Although proof of Good Standing is not required as a component of the application, it is critical that applicants remain registered and in Good Standing with SDAT as applicants will be disqualified from a grant competition, delay or even lose a grant award, and/or face delays in grant payments if they are not in Good Standing.

B. Applicant Background (Reusable) Task

The Office of Grants Management collects data through this Task for post-award analysis to understand application and award trends as well as how to support the diverse communities in Montgomery County. Data collected through this Task will **not** be visible to Review Committees and will **not** be used in evaluation and scoring of applications.

In line with Montgomery County's Racial Equity & Social Justice goals, the Office of Grants Management is collecting the racial and ethnic information on the leadership of nonprofit organizations. The structure of this portion of the survey is based on federal standards for collecting racial data. Given the County's significant diversity, this survey is also collecting ethnic data. Note that the information entered should be based on how the person identifies themselves.

- Organization estimated staffing size serving Montgomery County in a given year
- Organization estimated budget, including by funding source, for Montgomery County programs, services, and other initiatives in a given year
- Organizational leadership, including CEO or Executive Director and Board Members (if applicable), race and ethnic information

Responding to these questions is optional and will have no impact on application reviews. Applicants are required to follow the content requirements and submission instructions listed within the online application platform and this Program Details document. Please submit your proposal, as broken out by each of the Task, by filling out the data fields or uploading documents where applicable. Uploaded documents should have clearly titled sections and sub-sections. **Applications will be considered incomplete if any part of any section is missing.**

C. Project Strategy Task

The Project Strategy includes each of the following components:

- **Project Title** – If awarded, Project Title will become the grant agreement name
- **Project Overview** – Brief description of the project (250 words maximum)
- **FY24 Resident and Community Gardening Grant Project Funding Request** – Total amount requested through this grant proposal
- **Total Project Cost** – Total cost of project from all funding sources
- **Zip Code(s) Currently Served** – Zip codes that your organization currently serves
- **Additional Zip Codes(s)** – Zip codes that your organization has the capacity to serve and/or anticipates expansion to, if awarded funding through this grant program.

The proposal's **Strategy Narrative** should answer the following questions and be uploaded as a separate document. If a question below does not apply to your proposal, please indicate that it is not applicable within the Strategy Narrative.

- Please describe how you will use this grant to expand home and community gardening in Montgomery County as an effective way of sustainably increasing the food supply.
- Outline how the program service delivery will work from start to finish, specifically addressing:
 - The food types that will be produced through the proposed project (please specify crop types and estimated quantities);
 - The frequency of services (planting/harvesting, educational, and food distribution opportunities);
 - Any onsite infrastructure needed to carry out the proposed program, including refrigeration, storage space, shelving, etc.
 - Data collection, reporting, and privacy considerations.
- How does or how will your organization increase the availability of culturally diverse foods through this program?
 - For reference, please refer to the survey results from the Montgomery County Food Council's Culturally Appropriate Foods Survey: <https://bit.ly/3lig6Tw>
- Outline the educational, technical assistance, and resident and community supports provided throughout the program period, including the relevant experience of the support provider(s).
- What is the language capacity that you have to ensure appropriate outreach and engagement with your community? What languages do you and your team (if applicable) speak?
- Please also describe the communities that will be impacted as well as how individuals within these communities will benefit from this funding, including a description of how this program will increase food access for residents in healthy food access priority geographic areas within Montgomery County ([identified here](#)).
- Tell us about the partnerships that your organization currently has with other community organizations and public and private agencies, or plans to partner with through this program.

D. Program Budget

The Project Budget Task includes each of the following components:

- Organization estimated staff size serving Montgomery County in 2024 (in total FTEs)
- Upload of Previous fiscal year budget to actuals
- Upload of Organization total current-year budget (revenues/expenses), including funding sources, for Montgomery County programs, services, and other initiatives
- Upload of Project Budget (No page limit, MS Excel format preferred)

The Program Budget will be uploaded as an attachment to the application, preferably in MS Excel format. The budget for this proposal should contain:

- Expenses: detailed itemized cost information for all proposed expenses, including quantities and prices, plus any indirect costs.
 - Staffing and fringe costs (as applicable);
 - Program expenses including seed purchases, transportation, infrastructure like refrigeration or shelving, and all additional operational costs for this program.
- Indirect costs, which may include general administrative costs such as: legal, accounting, liability insurance, audits, etc. If applicants have a federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), then they must use that rate within their application and include the NICRA as supporting documentation. Applicants without a NICRA may use an indirect cost rate of up to 15%.
- Revenues: include the value of any cost-shares such as donations, other grants received, and in-kind or pro bono services that you anticipate being donated and that are related to this proposal

In addition to other limitations set in this program, program funds **cannot be used:**

- For lobbying;
- To cover any expenses made prior to the grant award;
- To supplant (replace) funds from other grant sources; or
- To provide services that wholly occur outside of Montgomery County.

If your budget proposal includes funding for staff expenses, please submit a staffing plan in the section below.

E. Budget Narrative/Justification (2 page limit, PDF format preferred)

In addition to a Program Budget, the proposal must include a Budget Narrative/Justification that briefly describes how the proposed costs were calculated and their justification.

- Outline the purpose of the expenditures and an explanation of how costs were calculated.
- Please specify how your project would be affected if total funding awarded were less than the amount requested. State whether your project could be completed with a smaller amount, and how your projected outcomes would be affected by any funding reduction.
- Please describe how the proposed program will align with your current programs. How will this create new and/or expanded services for your clients?

If your organization provides services outside of Montgomery County, please describe in detail how your organization will ensure that funding provided through the Resident and Community Gardening grant program will exclusively benefit Montgomery County residents.

F. Project Staffing Plan Task (2 page limit, PDF format preferred) (optional)

This section should detail the staff assigned for the program, staff positions, and percentage (%) of time spent on the program. **If staff costs are included in the project budget, completing this section is highly recommended.** If applying as a collaboration, please note the organizational affiliation of each staff member.

The Staffing Plan should detail at a minimum for the staff member(s) and/or contractor(s) to be supported by the project:

- The position title;
- Expected salary or hourly rate for the position;
- Fringe rate and summary of benefits provided;
- Percentage of staff time, in what phase of the grant period, will be dedicated to the proposed project;
 - If an employee is 100% dedicated to this project and fully funded through grant funds from this program, all of their professional time, over and above routine administrative tasks, must be devoted to the proposed program's eligible work. If the staff will at times contribute to organizational efforts outside the grant project, be sure to include only partial salary for that person in the staffing and budget proposals.
 - Do not double count staff time paid for by other Montgomery County, Federal, State, District of Columbia, or private foundation grants.
- Any relevant degrees, licenses, certifications, or other professional credentials related to the project;
- Outline of language skills and/or cultural competencies; and
- Description of the position role in relation to the proposed project.
- Resumes of incumbents in the positions and/or position descriptions of these positions may be uploaded as Other Program Materials if desired.

G. Project Work Plan/Timeline Task (1 page limit, PDF format preferred)

This section should outline the implementation schedule of the proposed program over the 15-month grant performance period. The Project Work Plan/Timeline must match performance period of the Grant Program listed on page 1 of this NOFO.

The implementation schedule over the performance period should list:

- The program's objectives and related activities;
- Timeline for implementation and completion; and
- Responsible staff (noting organization affiliation if applying as a collaboration).

The final performance period for an award will be contingent on when the actual grant agreement is signed by all parties. Due to the time needed to review applications and finalize grant awards, proposed programs should not assume a start date earlier than May 31, 2024.

H. Performance Plan and Milestone Estimates (1 page limit, PDF format preferred)

The Performance Plan shows how you will track and evaluate the proposed project's effectiveness. The OFSR will use this information to understand the expected and actual impact of your services.

Performance Metrics

The table below lists the key metrics (called Key Performance Indicators or KPIs) that the OFSR will use to measure the success of your program. The required metrics are indicated with an asterisk. In the Performance Plan, please describe:

- The methods you will use to collect data on the required KPIs;
- Any additional metrics you plan to track, beyond the required KPIs; and
- How you will measure whether the project achieves its goals.

Provide clear explanations and examples to show that you understand what each metric measures and why it is important for evaluating your project's success.

Section	Metrics
Capacity and Access Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional/New square footage of space in food gardening production, including through raised beds, expansion of in-ground plots, etc.* (note: only measure the total size of the plots where crops will be planted). • Total number of locations where new food gardening is occurring* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Address of each food gardening location supported by this funding. • Zip code(s) of locations where new food gardening is occurring* • Format(s) of gardening activities (ex: container gardens, community gardens, home gardens, etc.)* • Total pounds of edible crops harvested* • Total pounds of food donated* • Number of food distributions (if applicable)
Participation Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of residents engaged in gardening activities* • Total number of children (under age 18) engaged in gardening activities* • Total number of residents receiving food as a result of the project* • Races/ethnicities represented by population served, (self-identified by program participants)* • Total number of volunteers • Total volunteer hours contributed to the project*
Education Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hours of educational programming provided or number/types of materials distributed (if applicable) • Number of children (under age 18) engaged in nutrition education, unduplicated (if applicable)
Budget and Sourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of the grant budget spent to date*

Narrative Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative feedback on input collected from program participants about their experience with the program, including access to fresh produce.* • Narrative feedback on partnerships with Montgomery County food assistance providers, Montgomery County Public Schools, or other community-based organizations.* • Narrative feedback on challenges, success stories, etc. related to project implementation.* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative feedback on any strategies taken to ensure cultural proficiency, inclusivity of underserved community members, and the use of a racial equity lens in gardening decisions, crop selection, or crop delivery.
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Please note that the OFSR may adapt the final list of required and recommended metrics prior to making awards. Final reporting requirements will be included in all grant agreements. Required metrics must be reported by grantees at the mid-cycle and end-cycle points of the performance period; these dates will also be indicated in all grant agreements.

Milestone Estimates: In the Milestone Estimates section, please provide estimates of the anticipated impact of your gardening program at the mid-cycle point (6 months into the project) and end of cycle (12 months into the project) for each of the following metrics

1. Total number of Montgomery County residents participating in the program
2. Number of Montgomery County households receiving food from the program
3. Number of Montgomery County children ages 0-18 participating in the program
4. Total new square footage used for food gardening production as a result of the program

The OFSR strongly prefers unduplicated counts - counting each household or person only once during the period, even if they participated multiple times.

If you cannot provide unduplicated counts, explain:

- The barriers preventing unduplicated counts
- How you will report the data instead

I. Performance History (2 page limit, PDF format preferred) (optional)

The Performance History is a separate document that is uploaded with your proposal. This document should describe past outcomes that demonstrate your ability to achieve the proposed program objectives. These can include:

- Results from previous County grants
- Outcomes from other funding sources
- Initiatives outside the County that your proposal aims to replicate
- Research or best practices supporting your approach

SECTION III – SCORING OF APPLICATIONS

Scoring Criteria

Applicant’s proposal submissions will be evaluated using the following confidence ratings based on the below weighted criteria. Confidence ratings provide evaluators the ability to look more holistically at the strongpoints and weak points of a proposal to capture raters’ overall confidence in the applicant’s likelihood to succeed, helping smaller organizations who may be stronger overall than some more seasoned larger organizations.

3 – Confident	The Reviewers are confident that the applicant understands the requirements, proposes a sound and relevant project, and will be successful in implementing the proposed project.
2 – Somewhat Confident	The Reviewers are somewhat confident that the applicant understands the requirements, proposes a sound and relevant project, and will be successful in implementing the proposed project.
1 – Not confident	The Reviewers are not confident that the applicant understands the requirements, proposes a sound and relevant project, and will be successful in implementing the proposed project.

Additionally, each criterion is attributed a specific weight out of a total of 100 points.

Criterion A: Soundness of the Proposal (1-3 rating; weighted at 20/100 points)

- The proposal, if funded, will result in the accomplishment of their stated goals;
- Applicant clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of their proposed activities/expenses in accomplishing their stated goals;
- The implementation plan within the proposal is realistic and achievable based on the proposed time requirements; and
- Applicant has contingency plans for altered operations in case of lower than requested funding amounts.

Criterion B: Program Goals, Objectives and Services (1-3 rating; weighted at 20/100 points)

- The proposal’s goals are in line with the overall goals of the FY24 Resident and Community Gardening Grant Program;

- The proposed activities/expenses are clearly defined and linked to both the proposal specific goals and that of the overall FY24 Resident and Community Gardening Grant Program; and
- In line with the priorities for the FY24 Resident and Community Gardening Grants Program, the proposal:
 - Increases food production, education, and access in Montgomery County, with a focus on:
 - Increasing the supply of culturally appropriate foods and food production-related educational opportunity in the County; and
 - Supporting diverse populations in the County
 - Outlines an immediately actionable model, including secured operational approvals for food production, location access, and confirmed partnerships;
 - Demonstrates relevant subject-matter knowledge and leverages best practices for food gardening programs; and
 - Demonstrates existing relationships with Montgomery County's food security network and other food system partners.

Criterion C: Program Evaluation (1-3 rating; weighted at 20/100 points)

- Applicant demonstrates in their Performance Plan a clear process to measure/evaluate its program in alignment with the required and recommended metrics;
- The milestone estimates demonstrate a significant impact for numerous Montgomery County residents; and
- Other evaluation methods and outcomes described are relevant and realistic measures for the proposal's goals.

Criterion D: Organizational Capability and Relevant Experience (1-3 rating, weighted at 20/100 points)

- Applicant demonstrates the use of a racial equity lens in both its overall operations and within this specific proposal;
- Applicant demonstrates the cultural, linguistic, and/or technical proficiency to work with their target community in the context of the proposed project; and
- Applicant demonstrates competencies, qualifications, and/or past experiences to serve or advocate for the target community in the context of the proposed project.

Criterion E: Sound Fiscal Management and Budget (1-3 rating; weighted at 20/100 points)

- Applicant demonstrates sound fiscal management;
- Applicant's budget with budget justification is reasonable and realistic to achieve stated goals within the proposal;

- Applicant will be able to submit a budget which reflects compliance with audit and other administrative requirements;
- Where applicable, if the applicant previously received a County award grant, it managed the funds transparently and responsibly for the award's intended purposes; and
- In line with the priorities for the FY24 Resident and Community Gardening Grants Program, the proposal:
 - Demonstrates how the project will be maintained beyond the performance period of this grant program; and
 - Demonstrates that the applicant is prepared to use allocated funds successfully within the performance period of this grant program.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Those persons scoring the proposals will confirm that they have no conflicts of interest.
- Neither the County Executive nor any elected official will be involved in the scoring of grants or determining winners and amounts of awards.
- Scores and award amounts are non-appealable.
- Scorers' comments and the scores themselves are deliberative and privileged and will not be released. However, winners will be announced publicly, and successful grant applications and award letters may be subject to release (with redactions as allowed by law).
- County officials may decline to debrief with unsuccessful applicants why their proposal was not granted, or their funding request was not granted in full.

SECTION IV – CERTIFICATIONS, ACKNOWLEDGMENTS, AND ASSURANCES

The applicant shall complete and return the Certifications, Acknowledgements, and Assurances listed with the application submission provided in the Application Certification section of the application in Fluid Review. The specific items in this section are listed below:

Montgomery County Ethics Questions

Note that individuals employed by partner agencies such as Montgomery College, Montgomery County Public Schools, and WorkSource Montgomery do not count as Montgomery County Government employees for the purpose of this Grant Program. If you are unsure if a position applies please contact the Office of Grants Management for clarification.

Does your organization employ current employees or contractors of the Montgomery County Government? This applies for employees that are paid by your organization but are also paid by Montgomery County Government.

Does your organization's Board of Directors include current employees or contractors of the Montgomery County Government? This applies to volunteer board of director positions.

If you answered yes to either question, please describe the employee(s) role and function as it applies to your nonprofit organization. Answering “yes” to either questions does **not** exclude your organization from being eligible to apply. Instead, we would like to receive this information upfront so that we can allow adequate time for the Ethics Commission to review.

Acknowledgements Agreed to by All Applicants

- ✓ Applicant acknowledges that this grant application may not be revised or altered after submission.
- ✓ Applicant acknowledges that if funding is awarded, the organization will enter into a non-competitive contract or grant with the County.
- ✓ Applicant acknowledges that awards may not be distributed as a lump sum, but may be reimbursed or provided on a fixed schedule after sufficient documentation is submitted to the administering County agency.
- ✓ Applicant acknowledges that any funds submitted for reimbursement must be spent **AFTER** the contract is finalized and a Notice to Proceed is secured.
- ✓ Applicant has cited in this application all individuals affiliated with the organization and this program who are employed by Montgomery County.

Assurances Agreed to by All Applicants

If the grant is awarded, the applicant assures that:

- ✓ The applicant will administer all awarded funds through this PBM Program.
- ✓ Funds received will be used solely for the documented activities within the submitted proposal.
- ✓ The applicant has read and will conform to the program guidelines and any other conditions imposed by the County in connection with the grant.
- ✓ The applicant organization intends to comply with the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, indicating that no person will be excluded from participation or be denied the benefits of any program, activity or service on the basis of race, sex, sexual preference, color, religion, ancestry, age, national origin, or handicap. The applicant further agrees to make every attempt to ensure that the program is accessible to persons with disabilities.
- ✓ Please note that applications are subject to the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) (found at Md. Code Ann., State Gov't., §10-611 through -628 (MPIA) and the County must comply with the disclosure requirements of the MPIA when a request for documents is received.
- ✓ The applicant understand that all grantees that receive awards under this Grant Program must show proof of insurance prior to receiving the funds., when requested, must be able to show proof of all insurance coverage required by law.
- ✓ The applicant agrees that any time before final payment and three (3) years thereafter, the County may have the grantee's expenditure statements and source documentation audited.
- ✓ If there are any changes that need to be made to the grant application after submittal or if the organization ceases operations or becomes a subsidiary of another organization, you have the responsibility of notifying the appropriate County administrator.
- ✓ The filing of this application is made by the undersigned individual, officially authorized to represent the applicant organization by its governing board.
- ✓ I hereby certify that information submitted in the grant application is a true and correct statement of facts. I, as a designated legal representative of the Organization, further certify that this Organization shall abide by and be subject to all applicable Federal, State and Local laws and regulations pertaining to any subsequent grant that may be issued.