

MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT
Office of Grants Management

**FY23 Resident and Community Food Gardening
Grant Program**

Program Opens for Applications: Wednesday April 26, 2023 at 12:00 PM

Grant Program Information Session*: Wednesday May 3, 2023 from 3:30-5:00 PM

* A link for the Information Session will be available on the Office of Grants Management application portal. The event will be recorded and posted in the same location on the website.

Submission Deadline: **Wednesday May 24, 2023 at 9:00 AM**

Grant Program and Submission Details: Application details can be downloaded and application may be submitted through the Montgomery County Office of Grants Management - Grants Application Platform. Online submissions only. Applicants requiring an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation should contact the Office of Grants Management to discuss alternative submission options. Incomplete applications or those submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.

FY23 Community Gardening Grant Application:

<https://mcmdgrants.smapply.org/prog/FY23Gardening>

Grants Application Platform: <https://mcmdgrants.smapply.org/>

Link to Information Session Event and Recording: [Click HERE](#)

For technical support, please contact the Office of Grants Management using the contact information below:

Point of Contact:

Ali Hoy, Outgoing Grants Program Manager
Office of Grants Management
240-773-3384
Ali.Hoy@montgomerycountymd.gov

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section I	Background	3
	Introduction	3
	Target Population	3
	Funding Areas	4
	Eligible Organizations	4
	Award Amounts and Duration	5
	Application Review & Awards	5
	Award Notification	5
	Submission Guidelines	5
	Information Session	6
	Contact Person	6
	Terms and Conditions	6
Section II	Scoring of Applications	7-8
	Scoring Criteria	7-8
	Miscellaneous	8
Section III	Certifications, Acknowledgements, & Assurances	9-10
Section IV	Application Details	11-14

SECTION I – BACKGROUND

A. Introduction

The Montgomery County Office of Food Systems Resilience and the Office of Grants Management are soliciting grant applications for the Resident and Community Food Gardening Grant Program for qualified nonprofit organizations in Montgomery County that expand resident and community food production capacity as a means of increasing local food security. Community and home gardening promotes food sovereignty, healthy living, civic engagement, and racial and social justice by creating opportunities for residents to create their own food sources, thereby reducing barriers to affordable and culturally-appropriate food access. 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. Through this program, Montgomery County is granting funding to initiatives that will expand local food production through home and community farming and gardening.

FY23 Community Gardening Grant award amounts will vary, with a maximum award amount of \$15,000. All funded activities must be implemented within 12 months and all grant agreements must be finalized by June 30, 2023.

In 2023, Montgomery County launched a newly created Office of Food Systems Resilience (OFSR), to streamline and coordinate the County's efforts to address local food system challenges. The OFSR was created based on the recommendation of the Montgomery County COVID-19 Food Security Task Force and established by the County Council in July 2022 under Bill 20-22. The mission of the Office of Food Systems Resilience is to develop and implement interagency budgetary, regulatory, and operational strategies to build a more equitable, efficient, resilient, and sustainable food system in Montgomery County.

As charged in Bill 36-19, the Office of Grants Management provides a central point of contact regarding the grants that the County receives or awards. Office of Grants Management also develops countywide policies and procedures regarding grants management and ensures these are consistent with racial equity and social justice goals, performs outreach regarding grants offered by the County and other grants functions.

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 and disadvantaged in access to opportunities to grow their own fresh, local, and nutritious food.

C. Funding Areas

The goal of this program is to support and strengthen the core capabilities of nonprofit organizations providing services in Montgomery County by providing management grants as unrestricted funds. Eligible Montgomery County 501(c)(3) organizations, or collaboratives/community groups with nonprofit partners serving as project fiscal agents, can apply for up to \$15,000 to increase organizational capacity to provide resident access to yard, patio, and community gardening supplies, space, and education. 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; and
- Provide planting materials, containers, seeds, seedlings, gardening supplies and/or education to residents to enable them to grow their own produce in yards and/or on patios.

The Office of Grants Management will seek proposals from organizations that:

- Exhibit cultural proficiency;
- Are inclusive of the LGBTQIA+ community members; and
- Use a racial equity lens in providing services.

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 maximum award of \$15,000. The grant will be awarded for up to a one year (12-month performance period) and all grant agreements must be finalized by June 30, 2023. Programs must be run and be evaluated during this period. This Grant Program does not commit Montgomery County to make an award.

F. Application Review & Awards

Office of Grants Management uses an independent review panel that will submit recommendations for funding. The review panel is composed of neutral, qualified individuals from Montgomery County Government selected for their experiences in the grant program's subject area, grants administration, and project management. The panel members will review and score applicant proposals based on the criteria outlined in this program 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, which may include: updated consideration of how well the applicant has performed on prior programs; and the input and expert opinion of grant administrators with prior experience with applicants and relevant department and office Directors.

G. Award Notification

Award notification letters are expected to be released roughly one month 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

The **ONLY** method to submit an application is through the SM Apply online portal linked on the first page of this document. Applicants requiring an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation should contact the Office of Grants Management to discuss alternative submission options.

Applications are due no later than Wednesday May 24, 2023 at 9:00 AM. 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 funding agency will not be accepted after the deadline. Applications with

incomplete, illegible, or corrupted files or digital material will not be considered.

The grant application will be available through the Montgomery County Office of Grants Management - Grants Application Platform through the links posted on the first page of this document. Once the applicant clicks on the link, they will be prompted to create a SM Apply account, select the FY23 Community Gardening Grant Program, and then will be able to access the grant application.

I. Information Session

A FY23 Community Gardening Grant Program Information Session will be held (see 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 for this program linked on the first page of this document.

J. Contact Person:

Ali Hoy, Outgoing Grants Program Manager
Office of Grants Management
240-773-3384
Ali.Hoy@montgomerycountymd.gov

K. 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 – SCORING OF APPLICATIONS

Scoring Criteria

Applicants' submitted proposals will be reviewed against the following criteria with a maximum score of 100 points.

Criterion A: Soundness of the Proposal (20 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 (20 points)

- The proposal's goals are in line with the overall goals of the FY23 Community Gardening Grant Program;
- The proposed activities/expenses are clearly defined and linked to both the proposal specific goals and that of the overall FY23 Community Gardening Grant Program; and
- In line with the priorities for the FY23 Community Gardening Grant Program, the proposal:
 - Increases food production, education, and access in Montgomery County. Priority will be given to programs that:
 - Increase the supply of culturally diverse foods and those that are more difficult to access in retail and food assistance settings and food production educational opportunities in the County; and
 - Support 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
 - The application demonstrates existing relationships with Montgomery County's food system network.

Criterion C: Program Evaluation (10 points)

- Applicant demonstrates in their Performance Plan a clear process to measure/evaluate its program; and
- The chosen Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)/metrics, milestones, and/or other evaluation methods are relevant and realistic measures for the proposal's goals.

Criterion D: Organizational Capability and Relevant Experience (20 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 (10 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, 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 FY23 Community Gardening Grants Program, the proposal:
 - Demonstrates how the program will be maintained long term, beyond the grant term;
 - Has demonstrated readiness to be able to use these funds within the designated time frame.

Criterion F: Community Outreach (20 points)

- Applicant demonstrates a strong relationship with their target community; and
- Applicant demonstrates the ability to perform outreach within their target community to promote, engage, and/or connect community members with the proposed project.

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 III – 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.

SECTION IV – APPLICATION DETAILS

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.**

A. Program Summary

This section of the application should provide the reader with:

- The legal name of the organization as registered with the Maryland State Department of Assessment and Taxation (SDAT) (of lead organization, if more than one applying in partnership);
- Your organization’s mission statement;
- Your organization’s website (optional);
- Contact Information for the organization’s proposal point-of-contact (POC) and the person signing the application, if different;
- The name/title of the proposed program;
- An overview of the proposed program;
- The requested amount of funding from Montgomery County; and
- The total cost (includes funding from all sources, if applicable) for the proposed program.

B. Strategy Narrative

The proposal’s Strategy Narrative should answer the following questions within a document of up to four (4) pages. The Strategy Narrative should be uploaded as an attachment, (pdf preferred) within the application platform. If an organization prefers, they may submit their strategy narrative in an alternative format such as a video or audio recording. Because of upload size limits, please post your videos to Youtube or a similar platform and provide a hyperlink to the video within your application. The submission will still need to address the questions below. If a question below does not apply to your proposal, please indicate that it is not applicable within the Strategy Narrative.

- 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.
- How does or how will your organization increase the availability of culturally diverse foods through this program?
- 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?
- Explain the specific need that will be filled or supported with this funding.
- 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.
- What are the long-term plans and prospects of continuing this program beyond the grant period?
- What are the anticipated types and amounts of product that will be grown as a direct result of receiving this funding? Include types of Crops and Estimated Quantities, if possible.
- Tell us about community organizations and public and private agencies that you currently partner with or plan to partner with in Montgomery County through this program.
 - Note: if you intend to sub-grant any portion of the grant funds to partner organizations, those amounts must be noted in your project expenses and Letters of Commitment from those organizations must accompany this application.

C. Program Budget

The budget for this proposal should contain detailed itemized cost information for all proposed expenses. The Program Budget will be uploaded as an attachment to the application, preferably in MS Excel format. The budget must separate operating and capital expenses within the submission. Please 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.

Even though this grant program focuses on expenses usually only covered by indirect or unrestricted funds, indirect costs are still allowed. Indirect costs are capped at a 15% rate and may include general administrative costs such as: legal, accounting, liability insurance, audits, and the like. The grant program does not require a standard budget template so applications should use whatever format meets the basic requirements, provides sufficient detail, and provides the best overview of expected costs under the proposed program.

If applying as a collaboration, please include the appropriate division of budget between the two or more organizations that are applying and include the justification for the allocation.

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.

D. Budget Narrative/Justification

In addition to a Program Budget, the proposal must include a Budget Narrative/Justification, one (1) page limit, that briefly describes the proposed expenditures. The Program Budget/Narrative Justification will be uploaded as an attachment, pdf format preferred, within the application platform. If an organization wishes to include quotes or back up for prices listed in the budget, they may upload these items in the Other Supporting Materials section of the application.

In addition to including the purpose of an expenditure and an explanation of how costs were calculated, applicants should also address the following, if applicable:

- **Project Expenses:** Provide a narrative description of your project's budget and expenses. Budgets should be based on research with cost estimates for specific item(s) to be purchased. Staffing costs should be broken down by employee and include the hourly rate, the number of hours worked per week, and the fringe rate (if eligible).
- Applicants should briefly describe their fiscal and grant management practices such as how finances are managed within the organization, what accounting practices they use, and how they track expenses across different grant awards.
- Please briefly outline the source of any cost-share identified in the Program Budget.
- 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.
- If your proposed budget funds recurring expenses (i.e. salaries, leases, annual audits, etc) that are expected to continue past the maximum performance period of the grant, please explain your organization's strategy to cover these expenses past the life of this grant.
- If your organization does work regionally, please provide us with information to reassure us that the Montgomery County funds will not simply enable you to shift current, non-County monies to operations outside the County but rather will allow you to expand your work on behalf of services in Montgomery County.

E. Program Work Plan/Timeline

This section should outline the implementation schedule of the proposed program over a maximum 12-month grant performance period. Proposals seeking multi-year funding should also provide a Program Work Plan/Timeline that covers the full proposed period. The Program Work Plan/Timeline should have a one (1) page limit and will be uploaded as a pdf attachment within the application platform.

The implementation schedule over the performance period should list:

- The program's objectives and related activities;
- Timeline for implementation and completion; and

- Responsible staff.

The performance period may assume specific start and completion date or cover a generic period of time. 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 June 30, 2023.

F. Performance Plan

The Performance Plan outlines how you will measure success for your proposed program. This section must include any relevant Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)/metrics, and/or milestones. The Performance Plan should have a one (1) page limit and will be uploaded as a pdf attachment within the application platform. Organizations should expect at least semi-annual reporting requirements as a condition of the grant that matches the proposed performance plan as well as brief general narrative reports on the program's performance.

- **KPI's/metrics:** Provide an outline of the metrics to be collected, targets for each metric, and the data collection method for each metric.
 - **Required metrics:** How many individuals will be directly impacted by this funding? Please provide the total number of people who will garden as well as the number of people who will receive food as a result of this gardening.
- **Milestones:** List the specific milestone to be achieved, a target date to achieve it, and the impact achieving it will have on the organization.
- **Qualitative/Other Evaluation:** Outline any qualitative or other evaluation methods the program will be using.

As an optional set of metrics, applicants are encouraged to set targets and a collection method for demographic information on the population to be served; as feasible and without impacting the program outcomes.

G. Supporting Documents to be Uploaded

- Most recent IRS 990 Form
- IRS tax-exempt determination letter for nonprofit organizations
- Proof of Maryland SDAT Registration and Good Standing (print screen of organization's SDAT registration page is ideal. A certified letter is not necessary.)
- Current Board list with name, affiliation, and contact information
- Collaborative partner materials, if applicable
- Stories of Success: Please share relevant success stories from recent years (2020-2022) and include newsletters, media articles, etc., as applicable.
- Program Related Materials (optional)
- Other Supporting Materials (optional)