

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS
REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
for State Assistance Payments for
Community Garden Organization Capacity Building Grant Program

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (the Department) invites applications for financial assistance to strengthen existing community garden organizations and support local garden coalitions.

Applications must conform to the format and content specified in this Request for Applications (RFA).

Facsimile and e-mailed proposals will not be accepted. Envelopes should be clearly marked: **“Community Garden Organization Capacity Building Grant Program”**.

Four (4) copies of the application must be delivered to:

Lucy Roberson, Director
Division of Fiscal Management
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
10B Airline Drive
Albany, New York 12235

Proposals may be hand-delivered to the receptionist at the Department’s offices at 10B Airline Drive, Albany, NY.

Questions Concerning the RFA

Questions about requirements contained in this RFA must be **submitted in writing** (facsimile or e-mail will be accepted) to:

Ann McMahon
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
10B Airline Drive
Albany, New York 12235
Fax: (518) 457-3087
E-mail: Ann.McMahon@agmkt.state.ny.us

All questions must be submitted to Ms. McMahon. Applicants should note that all clarifications are to be resolved prior to the submission of a proposal. A list of questions about the program that are received from potential applicants, and answers to those questions, as well as any changes, additions or deletions to the RFA, will be posted, along with the electronic version of this RFA, in the “Funding Opportunities” section of the Department’s web site, www.agmkt.state.ny.us. **Applicants are urged to check the Department’s web site frequently for notices of any changes, additions, deletions to the RFA and/or continued availability of funding.** If you are unable to access the web site, please contact Ms. McMahon to arrange for alternate delivery. All questions and answers shall become a formal addendum to the RFA.

1. GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Description

The Community Garden Organization Capacity Building Grant Program will strengthen existing community gardens and support local garden coalitions through this one-time grant offering. These small, flexible grants can be used for capacity building efforts such as leadership development and organizational planning, membership recruitment activities, and strengthening a community garden's role within its neighborhood.

Funding Available

- There is a total of \$50,000 available state-wide for the program.
- The program will be divided into the Upstate Region and Downstate Region. A total of \$25,000 will be available for each region.
- Each applicant may apply for and receive up to \$5,000.
- There are no matching requirements.

Important Application Dates

- The Department will not accept applications received prior to 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 4, 2009.
- The Department will not accept applications received after Monday, May 4, 2009.

2. ELIGIBILITY

Applicant Eligibility

- Applicants must be a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation **OR** must be sponsored by a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation or municipality to act as a fiscal agent for the grant funding. The fiscal agent will contract for and administer the grant.
- Eligible 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation acting as the applicant or the fiscal agent **MUST** have a New York State Attorney General Charities Bureau Registration number or an Exemption Certificate issued by the New York State Attorney General Charities Bureau explaining why the organization is exempt from registering with the Charities Bureau. **Documentation must be included with the application for grant funding. Applications submitted by a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation acting as the applicant or included in an application acting as the fiscal agent without the above referenced documentation will be automatically rejected.**
- Applicants having any questions concerning eligibility are strongly encouraged to contact Ms. McMahon as soon as possible.

Community Garden Organization Eligibility

- For the purpose of this grant program a “community garden organization” is defined as an organization that manages a community garden on public or private lands upon which citizens of New York State have the opportunity to garden on lands which they do not individually own.
- Applicant must be an existing community garden organization or multiple garden organizations working in partnership as a coalition.
- Garden organizations or garden coalitions must have at least 10 members.
- Gardens must be member operated.
- Gardens must be located in either the Upstate or Downstate region, in one of the following incorporated cities which have population of 45,000 or more:
- The Upstate Region:
Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, Schenectady, Utica, Niagara Falls, Troy, and Binghamton.
- The Downstate Region:
New York, Yonkers, New Rochelle, Mount Vernon, and White Plains.

Eligible Projects

The following activities will be considered for funding:

- Outreach Materials (examples include brochures, garden directories, pamphlets, maps, garden signs to recruit new members and promote garden programs)
- Organizational Planning (examples include facilitated planning meeting(s), training on how to develop an organizational plan or manage a planning process, a planning retreat, a community teach-in, focus groups/research on members priorities, feasibility study assessing new program options)
- Community Programs (examples include workshops/technical training on planting, composting, canning, rainwater harvesting, bee keeping; instructional children’s garden programs, partnerships with emergency food providers)
- Leadership Development (examples include training courses, workshops, train-the-trainer programs, community garden forums or meeting to increase collaboration and sharing among local gardeners and municipal agencies)
- Fundraising Training (examples include training on fundraising strategies/techniques)

Eligible Costs

- Salaries and wages directly related to an eligible project
- Workshop/course materials
- Consultants (facilitator, trainer, organizational planner, designer, project/program manager)
- Printing
- Postage

- Meeting Space

All eligible costs must be directly related to the eligible project.

Ineligible Costs

- Physical improvements to the garden space (including, but not limited to: seeds, starts, compost, fencing, raised bed frames)
- Garden equipment (including but not limited to tools: compost bins, rainwater harvest systems, shed)
- Advertising as a regular on-going general promotion of the garden
- Costs related to the day to day operation of the garden
- Costs incurred prior to the award of a grant
- Fringe benefits

Project Duration

- All projects must be completed within 1 year of the date of the issuance of the award letter.

3. APPLICATION FORM

Applicants must use the attached Application Form to provide the information requested about the project. All questions must be answered.

General Instructions for Completing the Application Form

- Provide all information requested in the application form. Type or print legibly.
- Submit four (4) copies of the application.
- Staple each copy of the application in the upper left hand corner of the application. Identify all pages in numerical order.
- Attach any supporting material at the end of the application.
- **DO NOT USE REPORT COVERS, BINDERS, or FOLDERS etc.**

4. FUNDING CRITERIA

The Department shall review all applications for eligibility and completeness and will consider the following in determining approval of applications.

- Application completeness. All questions must be answered and information provided as stated in and or required by the application and this RFA.
- Applicant eligibility in accordance with this RFA.
- Community Garden eligibility in accordance with this RFA.
- Project eligibility in accordance with this RFA.
- Cost eligibility in accordance with this RFA.

Rejected proposals will be returned to the Applicant.

The Department reserves the right to review and reject projects proposed and /or completed that do not comply with the stated and intended purpose of the grant program.

5. AWARDS

All eligible applicants shall receive funding for eligible projects until all funds designated for this purpose are exhausted or all eligible projects are funded.

Awards will be made geographically based upon the eligible garden's location.

Applications received will be categorized by the garden location according to geographic region: Upstate Region (cities of Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, Schenectady, Utica, Niagara Falls, Troy, and Binghamton) or Downstate Region (cities of New York, Yonkers, New Rochelle, Mount Vernon, and White Plains).

Applications will be reviewed for completeness and eligibility. Funding will be awarded on a first come first served basis in the order in which the applications are received (not postmarked) AND determined to be complete and eligible until funding is exhausted or all eligible projects are funded. If there is insufficient funding available to fund all eligible and complete applications received on the same day, those applications will be placed in a lottery and chosen for funding at random.

The Department will send written notice to each applicant of its funding decisions.

Grant funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis.

Reimbursable expenses must be incurred by the grant recipient prior to submitting a voucher to the Department for reimbursement. Grant funds must be spent by the last day of the month, 12 months from the date the award is made. Awardees must provide proof of payment via invoices or receipts in order to receive reimbursement for your expenditures. Vouchers, receipts for all expenses, progress reports, and project budget report must be received no later than the contract end date.

The Department and State Comptroller's Office reserve the right to audit the selected contractors' books and records relating to the performance of the project during and up to six (6) years after the completion of the project.

A contract defining terms, conditions and responsibilities shall be developed by the Department upon the Department's receipt and approval of a complete and eligible application.

The contract will incorporate the application, budget and budget detail approved by the Department, among its provisions.

6. LIABILITY

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

7. WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND DISABILITY INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

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

Recipients of grants under this RFA will be required to produce proof of Workers' Compensation and Disability Insurance in a form satisfactory to the New York State Workers' Compensation Board prior to the execution of the contract.

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

8. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Department reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all applications received with respect to this RFA;

- Waive or modify minor irregularities in applications received after prior notification and concurrence of the applicant;

- Utilize any or all ideas submitted in the applications received unless those ideas are covered by legal patent or proprietary rights;

- Request any additional information as deemed necessary to more fully evaluate the application;

- Amend the program's specifications after the release, with appropriate website notice to all potential applicants;

- Select only certain portions of applications for State funding;

- Make all final decisions with respect to the amount of State funding, and the timing of payments to be provided to an applicant; and

- Negotiate the budget.

All applications submitted in response to this RFA will become the property of the Department.

9. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

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

10. APPENDIX A (Standard Clauses for all State contracts)

Appendix A (6/06 version) which is posted on the Department's web site at www.agmkt.state.ny.us contains standard clauses which are required in all State contracts.

Appendix A will be a part of any contract awarded under this RFA, and successful applicants will be responsible for complying with the terms and conditions contained therein.