

Franklin County Urban Agriculture Critical Infrastructure Grant Frequently Asked Questions

This document is subject to updates and changes as more questions come in.

Where is the funding for this grant coming from? This grant was made possible using funding allocated by the Franklin County Board of Commissioners.

How did this grant come to be? FSWCD would like to thank Franklin County Board of Commissioners, City of Columbus, Franklin Park Conservatory, OSU Extension, Osteopathic Heritage Foundation, and the Columbus & Franklin County Local Food Board for their partnership throughout the planning process. This grant builds on and contributes to the ongoing efforts to implement the Columbus & Franklin County Local Food Action Plan.

Am I eligible for this grant? What are the eligible uses for this grant funding? What are the ineligible uses for this grant funding? Please review the [eligibility requirements](#), which are posted on our [website](#).

How will you be scoring each application? Who will be scoring the applications? A [scoring rubric](#) is available on our [website](#). A grant advisory committee has been working on the launching of this grant and they will also be scoring and voting on applications. The grant advisory committee is made up of local experts in the local food system. Their affiliations include Franklin County Economic Development and Planning, City of Columbus, Franklin Park Conservatory, OSU Extension, and the Osteopathic Heritage Foundation.

How much funding can I apply for? You may apply for up to \$15,000 of grant funding.

Can I apply for less than \$15,000? Yes! However, if your funding request is significantly lower than \$15,000, we may point you in the direction of other urban gardening grants that may be a better fit for you!

I want to start an urban farm! Is this the grant for me? This grant is intended for already established gardens and farms. However, we can point you in the direction of other grants and resources that may be a better fit for you!

I'm going to need some help throughout the planning and implementation process of my project. Can you help? Yes, Franklin Soil and Water staff will be available for technical assistance and site visits as needed throughout the project. We will also lean on some of our partners for assistance, such as OSU Extension. We will also put together a document of resources, covering everything from what Good Agriculture Practices training is to where to find small business assistance.

What are the reporting requirements? We will require you to provide monthly project updates while the project is being implemented. This ensures project progress, allows awardees to request additional assistance if necessary, and helps confirm that grant funds expenditures are properly documented. These updates will simply require a brief description of project activities and can be completed via email, telephone, or in-person. Upon completion of your project, we will require a one to two page report. Please document your progress along the way, and include any lessons learned, challenges, or surprises. This report should attempt to quantify how you have scaled-up production, whether that is

through increased yield, time saved, or other metrics. You will be required to weigh your harvest and include the cost of a scale in your grant application if you do not already own a scale.

Can this grant funding be used for planned maintenance? Yes! However, if your funding request is significantly lower than \$15,000, we may point you in the direction of other urban gardening grants.

Can the funds be used toward any engineering cost preparation for submitting permits or site development? Yes, but only 10% of your total ask may be used towards site design, planning, permitting, engineering, and engineering stamps.

Have you considered the equity question of competitive applications from 100% volunteer garden/farm vs gardens/farms with paid staff? Yes. We plan to consider the operational resources each organization has when scoring and ranking applications.

What is direct invoicing? Direct invoicing means that you have vendors or contractors send their invoices directly to Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District for direct payment.

What type of turnaround do you anticipate on direct invoicing? And reimbursement? Our payment terms are typically 30 days, although sometimes we can turn things around quicker than that. Turnaround on payment will depend on how quickly you and your vendors get us financial paperwork and proper documentation of expenses.

What can folks expect when they have questions throughout the application process? If you have questions, you can contact the FSWCD office at 614-486-9613 or at <https://www.franklinswcd.org/contact>. You may also reach out to the FSWCD grant contact directly. While we pride ourselves in responding to customer and landowner calls in a very prompt manner, please allow up to two business days for a response.

When do you anticipate award announcements being made? We expect grant awards to be made March 1st, 2024. This date is subject to change.

How soon after that could awardees begin submitting direct invoicing? This will depend on how quickly we can get a signed grant agreement with the grant awardee.

Will this grant be available next year? We sure hope so! Currently, this is a one-year grant and the opportunity to renew for next year will depend on us working together to tell a story about the value of this grant in the local food supply chain.

Can the money be split to two different locations, or can the money be split to two community gardens? Yes!

Can the infrastructure funding be used towards purchasing your land bank properties if you meet their criteria to do so? This grant funding is not intended to purchase property, pay rent on a property, or pay a mortgage. Please reach out to the [Land Bank](#) with questions about Land Bank properties.

How many organizations are expected to receive grant funding from this opportunity? This grant makes available \$150,000 for local growers. Each organization can apply for up to \$15,000.

When do I need to complete my project? Your project should be completed during the 2024

growing season.

My organization is based outside of Franklin County but serves vulnerable populations in Franklin County. Are we eligible? If the parcel where your project will be completed is within Franklin County, you are eligible for this grant.

What is an underserved community? An underserved community is a neighborhood or group of people that have been historically disenfranchised and are not given the same access to resources as other communities. Some of the areas City of Columbus focuses on are [Celebrate One](#) neighborhoods, [Opportunity Zones](#), or areas with [low tree canopy cover](#).

What is an invasive plant? An invasive plant is a species of plant that is: “1) non-native to the ecosystem under consideration and, 2) whose introduction causes or is likely in areas where they do not naturally exist.” Some examples of invasive plants in our area include Callery Pear, Butterfly Bush, Amur Honeysuckle, Burning Bush, or Tree of Heaven. Please refer to FSWCD’s [Do Not Plant List](#) for a list of plants we cannot provide funding for.