

# Orange County Community Garden Grant Program



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# Orange County Community Garden (OCCG) Grant Program Guidelines

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## **Application for Collaborative Community Garden Projects**

The grant program assists community garden groups in developing new sources of agricultural prosperity through the provision of cost-share grants. Community Garden Grants are for new community gardens as well as upgrades to existing community gardens. Single grant limit is \$500 per grant proposal with a \$1,000 cap over 3 years. Applicants must be able to demonstrate that their plan is executable with a high probability of success, well thought out, including resources, labor, timelines, and alternatives, etc. to support the grant proposal. Once grant is decided, the recipient has 1 growing season to implement the plan.

## **Orange County Community Garden Grant Eligibility**

- **The land tract and community garden on which the funds are to be used must reside in Orange County**
- Collaborative/Group grants must include at least 3 gardeners and may include agricultural groups, agencies, and/or non-profit organizations.
- Grant funds may be used to purchase durable goods such as small tools, planters, cultivators, irrigation equipment, rain barrels, drip irrigation tape, etc. or expendables such as lumber for bedding, insect netting for row cover, plastic for high tunnels, etc.
- Funds cannot be used to pay workers, rent, insurance, etc.
- If funded, applicant agrees to allow access to the community garden to grant administrators. And allow photos to be taken of your project to be shared with the county leadership or for future marketing and advertising for the grant program.

## **Community Garden Grant Committee**

- The Orange County Community Garden Grant Committee will be made up of Three (3) members including:
- One member from the Orange County Cooperative Extension Staff (Horticulture Agent) Chair.
- One Master Gardener from NC Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program.
- One representative from an active existing Orange County Community Garden.
- Committee members may hold positions in multiple organizations (e.g. a Representative from an existing community garden may be a member of Extension Master Gardener).

## **Procedures**

1. Applicants will be referred to the Orange County Cooperative Extension Website, where they will complete and submit their application to the committee Chair either by email, in person, or by mail.

2. Applicant will be asked to meet the Horticulture Cooperative Extension Agent at the proposed garden site where the applicant can explain the concept of the gardening proposal. The agent will confirm the project is feasible, acceptable, and suitable.
3. Applicants will be provided interview dates and times (if required) approximately two (2) weeks prior to the Orange County Community Garden Grant Committee's scheduled meeting date. The applicant may be asked to present their proposal to the committee.
4. Community Garden Grant Committee Chair will provide completed applications to the committee for their review after the grant proposal deadline. Applications received after the closing deadline will be held for review during the next review period.
5. Grant proposal deadlines will be the first day of the month (February 1, May 1, August 1 and November 1). The OCCG Committee will convene its 'decision meetings' in February, May, August and November and will assess grant proposals until funds are expended for that funding year.



Note: Funding year is from July 1 through June 30. To ensure maximum access to funding, submission deadlines are off-set to take advantage of funding timelines.

6. The committee will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each grant application(s) and decide whether or not to support the proposal, based on the information provided. All Applications must be complete to include the budget form provided. Additional information may be provided if necessary to add clarity or better justification for how funds will be used. The OCCG Committee may request additional information for clarity if the grant proposal does not have sufficient information for the committee to 'make a decision'.
7. All complete applications submitted while county funds are available will be considered during the grant cycle. Applications that are submitted after funding is expended will be held for consideration until new funding is appropriated. Applications that were denied must be resubmitted for consideration.
8. The committee will approve, deny or request additional information from the applicant based on the strengths and weaknesses of the application.
9. The applicant will be informed in writing by the committee's chair of the decision to fund the grant, fund the grant with conditions, deny funding or seek more information. If the committee denies a grant request, it shall provide the applicant a reason the grant was denied.

10. Should the committee deny an application, the committee will not consider a second application from that applicant until the next application cycle. Should an applicant think that their application has been improperly denied, then the applicant must notify the committee chair in writing explaining their reasoning. The notice to the committee chair shall state why the applicant thinks the grant should be reassessed for consideration. If the chair determines additional consideration should be given he will resubmit the application with additional reasoning to the committee. The application shall then be given further consideration by the committee and its decision is final.
11. At its discretion, the committee may impose additional terms to a grant request. The committee may require an itemized budget detailing the proposed use of grant funds.
12. Applicants agree to utilize grant funds for their intended use. Each venture receiving a grant must provide an accounting of how all funds were used and key milestones reached by the venture **within one growing season**.
13. If an applicant fails to use funds as intended or fails to use them in a timely manner, the County has the right to require all grant funds be returned from the applicant, and may initiate legal proceedings against the applicant to collect the funds.
14. The committee upon request shall provide reports to the County Manager and the BOCC of the number of grants requested, approved and denied, and an analysis of the program's success metrics to date.
15. Documents, including but not limited to financial statements, garden plans, customer and supplier lists, description of inventory or assets, contractual obligations and existing liabilities, submitted as supporting documents during the application process shall be treated as confidential information and will not be returned to the applicant.

### **Expenses**

Suitable expenses are those associated with the production of diversified community garden produce, nuts, fruits and vegetables, or adding value to the crop to make it more shelf stable, assist with hygiene or like endeavors. Grant funds may be used to purchase durable goods such as tools, planters, cultivators, irrigation equipment, rain barrels, drip irrigation tape, etc. or expendables such as lumber for bedding, insect netting for row cover, plastic for high tunnels, or perennial plants, etc. Under no circumstance are funds to be used for gardener or help salaries or operational costs (utilities, insurance, rent, etc.). Funds should be used as stated in the applicant's proposal.

### **Funding Limits**

The maximum amount any applicant can receive within 3 years of initial funding is \$1000. Each application is capped at \$500. Multiple applications and subsequent awards of less than the \$1,000 limit may be made within the 3-year period by one community garden entity but may not exceed \$1,000 in total awards for the 3-year period.

## **Collaborators**

Collaborators and/or Mentors are not required, but increases the likelihood of success for your project. Therefore, it is encouraged for applicants to seek mentorship. Mentors may include County Extension Agents, Agriculture Economic Development Coordinators, farmers, marketing and production specialists, crop consultants, non-profit organizations, business and other agricultural advisors. Collaborators and mentors bring needed expertise to the project and have a clear role in helping the project succeed.

