

Community Garden Mini Grants

Spring Application



This mini grant opportunity is provided by United Way of Central Iowa. United Way of Central Iowa established a goal to improve the health of our community. One of the strategies for accomplishing this is to increase the availability of and access to healthy foods and fresh fruits and vegetables. United Way of Central Iowa is serving as the administrator and funder of the grants process with expert guidance from our Essential Needs Cabinet and community partners.

Eligibility

Applicants for the mini grants must be located in Polk, Dallas, or Warren County and serve the community as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, school, or government entity. For purposes of this funding, a **community garden** is defined as an area of land managed and maintained by a group of individuals to grow and harvest food crops for non-retail, personal or group use, consumption or donation. Community gardens may be divided into separate plots for cultivation by one or more individuals or may be farmed collectively by members of the group and may include common areas maintained and used by group members. For purposes of this funding, the garden cannot be used for retail or job training programs and cannot be promoted as a corporate giving garden.

New and existing community gardens are eligible to apply. Priority is placed on gardens that serve communities with limited access to healthy foods, such as high poverty or food desert neighborhoods. If awarded, the awardee will be required to report food production either on a monthly or end-of-season basis by pounds or count.

Attention School Gardens

If selected, all school gardens must have at least two volunteer or staff complete the ISU Extension School Garden 101 coursework. These courses will take place in the spring of 2025. Additional details to come upon selection.

Importance of Garden Plot Size Categories for Funding Established Gardens

The categorization of garden plot sizes into small, medium, and large is essential for several reasons, particularly in relation to funding existing gardens:

Size	Dimensions	Amount
Small	30 – 500 sq ft	Up to \$599
Medium	501 – 1200 sq ft	\$600 – \$999
Large	Above 1200 sq ft	\$1,000 – 1,500

- **Diverse Community Needs:** By offering different plot sizes, we can accommodate a wide range of gardening interests and skill levels within our community. This inclusivity ensures that everyone, from beginner gardeners to experienced ones, can participate and benefit from our mini-garden program.
- **Cost Management:** Each plot size entails specific costs for materials, maintenance, and resources. Understanding these differences allows us to allocate our funding effectively, ensuring that we meet the diverse needs of all participants.
- **Sustainable Growth:** Clearly defining these plot sizes aids in planning for future expansion and sustainability. As interest in the garden grows, we can evaluate the demand for larger plots or additional resources, enabling us to seek appropriate funding to support this growth.

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Guidelines

- Must be a community garden located in Polk, Dallas or Warren County.
- Funding may be used for a new or existing garden.
- Requests can be made for up to \$1,500, depending on the size of the garden as per grant eligibility criteria.
- Must serve the community as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, school, or government entity. **Please note** school gardens must have completed the ISU Extension School Garden 101 class in the past or complete it this spring.
- Allowable expenses include:
 - Seeds
 - Plants
 - Irrigation supplies
 - Harvest tools and packing supplies/materials
 - Water hydrant meter fees
 - Signage
 - Hoop house supplies
 - Other necessary items related to the infrastructure of the garden
 - Vertical garden supplies
 - Fencing
 - Raised garden bed supplies
 - Trellis materials
 - Greenhouse kits
 - Community education events and materials
 - Compost and compost delivery
 - Water retention systems (barrels and elevated platforms for containers)
- Funding will be awarded in the form of a one-time check payment upon receipt of a signed contract.
- Awardees will be required to report food production or estimations either on a monthly or end-of-season basis by pounds or count.
- Eligible funding will be released to awardees upon receipt of a signed contract no later than March 12th.

Apply: Complete the application via [UWCI Foundant grant management system](#), use access code: garden2025 and submit by 5:00 PM on **Wednesday, January 8th**. For questions on the grant submission process review the **Informational and Technical Assistance** recording at www.unitedwaydm.org/gardens-rfp.

Contact Info:

Eligibility or Foundant Support Questions: Diana Echeverria, Community Impact Manager,
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