Community Garden Mini Grant Program - Spring Application

This mini grant opportunity is offered by United Way of Central Iowa, which has set a goal to improve the health of our community. One of the strategies to achieve this is by increasing the availability and accessibility of healthy foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables.

Eligibility

Applicants for the mini grants must be located in Polk, Dallas, or Warren County and serve the community as a 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 personal or group use, consumption or donation–not retail. 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. Gardens used for job training or promoted as corporate giving gardens are not eligible.

New and existing community gardens are eligible to apply. Priority will be given to gardens that serve communities with limited access to healthy foods, such as high-poverty or food desert neighborhoods. The award amount will take into consideration the size of the garden, the need it serves, and the resources required to support its work. Please note that we cannot guarantee the full amount requested.

Guidelines

- Must be a community garden located in Polk, Dallas or Warren County.
- Funding may be used for a new or existing garden.
- •Applicants must serve the community as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, school, or government entity.
- Funding will be allocated according to garden size, the demonstrated need in the budget, and availability based on funding. Historically, the maximum funding amount has varied between $500 - $1,500, depending on several criteria.
- Allowable expenses include:
  - Seeds
  - Plants
  - Irrigation supplies
  - Signage
  - Water hydrant meter fees
  - Harvest tools and packing supplies/materials
  - 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 30th.

Application Process: To apply, please complete the application through the UWCI Foundant grant management system using the **access code: garden2027** and submit it **by Friday, December 18, 2026**.

For grant submission questions, view the Informational and Technical Assistance recording www.unitedwaydm.org/gardens-rfp.

Eligibility, Foundation Support, or Award Questions: Please contact **Diana Pawnell, Community Impact Manager,** at diana.pawnell@unitedwaydm.org or **Michael Berger, Community Impact Officer,** michael.berger@unitedwaydm.org.