

The Urban Farmer & Gardener Assistance Mini-Grant Program from the New Castle Conservation District (NCCD) is designed to support and enhance new and existing urban farms and community garden projects in New Castle County. NCCD has funds to support projects such as community gardens, urban farms, greenhouses, or hydroponic operations growing fruits and vegetables that run for the benefit of the community.

Q: What are the selection criteria?

A: Does your project:

- Support a new or existing urban farming or gardening initiative?
- Plan for or increase your farm or garden's capacity and long-term sustainability?
- Priority is given to projects which were not awarded a NCCD Urban Farmer and Gardener Assistance Mini-Grant in the last two years.

Q: Who is eligible to apply?

A: This program is open to 501(c)3 nonprofits, religious organizations, schools, municipalities, organized neighborhood association, or for-profit businesses that want to start or maintain an urban farming or gardening project. Individuals are ineligible. Applicants and projects must be within New Castle County.

Q: What types of projects fall within each of the three categories?

A: Below is a noncomprehensive list of suggestions on what types of projects fall within each category. If you any uncertainty about which category your proposal falls under, please reach out for clarification.

Launch or Expansion: For new urban farm or community garden enterprises or major expansions to existing projects such as building new raised beds, high tunnels, greenhouses, drip irrigation systems, sheds, fencing, or other major additions.

Infrastructure Improvement: For existing farms or gardens seeking to enhance, upgrade, or repair current infrastructure such as replacing or repairing equipment or structures, significant soil replacement, adding complementary infrastructure components (i.e. low tunnels, automation, pollinator spaces or making site improvements that allow the project to better serve its community (i.e. shade structures, signage, etc.). Some projects like composting or wash stations might be included in this category or in "Launch or Expansion"

depending on scale.

Garden and Farm Support: ongoing and recurring project needs that are essential to maintaining regular farm or garden operations including seeds and seedlings, tool replacement, sustainable soil amendments, and other consumable or periodically recurring materials necessary for seasonal production.

Q: How many projects will be awarded per category?

A: While the exact number per category will fluctuate from year to year, we anticipate being able to award 3-5 "Launch or Expansion grants, 5-8 "Infrastructure Improvement" grants, and 3-6 "Garden and Farm" Support Grants.

Depending on the types the applications received and funding availability, some projects may be considered for partial funding.

Q: What is the maximum grant award?

A: The maximum grant award depends on the project category.

- Garden and Farm Support Grants - \$1,000
- Infrastructure Improvement Grants - \$3,000
- Launch or Expansion Grants - \$5,000

ranging from \$1,000 - \$5,000 Each project selected may be funded up to \$3,000 from NCCD. Depending on the number of applicants, grants may be partially funded.

Q: What are considered eligible expenses?

A: Eligible expenses include:

- Supplies
- Equipment
- Building materials
- Soil amendments
- Seeds
- Irrigation systems
- Season-extending materials
- Other consumable materials

Q: What expenses will not be allowed?

A: Grant funds cannot be used for salaries, fringe benefits, indirect or operating costs, vehicles, food and beverage, or capital projects.

Q: How will I receive the funds?

A: This is a reimbursement grant; no advances are given. Reimbursement for actual costs will be made after the signing of a financial agreement and submission of itemized receipts and narrative report on the use of the grant funds. The financial agreement will spell out this process. No reimbursements will be made without original itemized receipts. Please note that all expenses must be made during the agreement period to be eligible for reimbursement. Any project related expenses incurred before the agreement is signed will not be reimbursed.

Q: Are there any alternatives to the dollar-for-dollar match?

A: Applicants can provide matching funds through in-kind contributions of staff/volunteer hours, donated use of equipment or space, and donated supplies, equipment, buildings, or land. *Grantees must record volunteer time and document all donations for the match to be eligible.* The federal rate of \$34.79 per volunteer hour will be applied. Fair rates and market value, at the time of donation, will be applied for rentals and donations.

Q: On the front page of the application, what is the difference between "Amount Requested" and "Total Project Budget"?

A: The amount requested is the total amount that you are hoping to be awarded and is limited by the maximum award amount per category. The total project budget includes that amount plus all of the anticipated matching contributions. This means that the total project budget should be at least double the amount requested.

Q: I am planning on use some volunteer hours to make up my required match, but unsure how many

hours we will actually have. Is it alright if I make an educated guess?

A: Absolutely. Nobody can predict the future. Please use your best judgment based on research and the amount of anticipated work required to pull together your budget for your application. Rest assure that should you be awarded funding, you will be able to adjust individual line items (within reason.)

Q: When are applications due?

A: Applications are due 4:30pm, March 5th, 2026.

Q: When will applicants be notified?

A: All applicants will be notified of their grant status, regardless of decision, by March 27th, 2026.

Q: When do grant funds have to be spent by?

A: Grant funds must be spent by October 31, 2026. All itemized receipts, proof of match, and narrative reports must be submitted no later than November 23rd, 2026.

**For more information please contact Urban
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