

MSU Extension “Growing Together in Michigan” Mini Grant Guidelines (2019)

Mini grants will be available to **Michigan State University Extension Master Gardeners** (EMGs) who partner with one MSU Extension Health & Nutrition Institute staff person and one Agriculture and AgriBusiness Institute staff person in an effort to better serve the donation needs of food pantries, food banks, or other charitable food service sites (e.g., senior centers, women’s shelters, homeless shelters, community meal programs).

The mini grants are aimed at providing partial financial support to gardens that grow and donate food and teach others how to grow their own food, thereby supporting efforts that can increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables for those experiencing food insecurities in Michigan.

Due Date: Applications are due by **5:00 PM, May 1, 2019**. Applications can be obtained from Sarah Rautio (rautio@msu.edu) or Cindy Anderson (ande1172@msu.edu).

Timeline: Grants will be awarded on May 6, 2019. Grant funds will be available from May 13 through October 1, 2019. All purchases and invoices/receipts for expenses must be submitted on or before October 1, 2019.

Required Webinar: We will have an informational meeting for all grant recipients and their two MSU Extension support staff from **10:00-11:30 a.m. on May 10, 2019**. A recording will be made available for those who cannot attend.

Amount: In this pilot study, two \$500 mini grants will be available for each of the following focus locations in Michigan (a total of \$5,000 is available)*:

- (1) Two gardens in two rural low-income areas of the Upper Peninsula.
- (2) Two gardens in Northwest Lower Michigan that address food insecurities that impact Tribal Nations.
Note: If no tribal connected gardens are identified in this area in 2019, the funds will be made available after May 1, 2019, to any garden statewide that addresses Tribal Nation food insecurity.
- (3) Two gardens in Northeast Lower Michigan.
- (4) Two gardens in the Greater Lansing Area. *Note:* Although gardens located near donation sites are most ideal, gardens outside this area will be considered if they donate to a food pantry/service site in the Greater Lansing Area.
- (5) Two gardens in the Brightmoor District of Detroit. *Note:* Although gardens located in this area are ideal, gardens outside this area will be considered if they either (1) donate to a food pantry/service site in the Brightmoor District or (2) involve a tribal nation in Wayne County.

*Alternative sites will be considered if the above are not met.

Applicant: The application needs to be filled out by at least one MSU Extension educator (Consumer Horticulture and/or SNAP-Ed Educator) and one MSU Extension Master Gardener (the lead EMG). Upon its completion, it should be mailed to rautio@msu.edu. All applications **received** by the due date will receive equal consideration. They will be reviewed by at least one Consumer Horticulture representative and one SNAP-Ed representative.

Activities

The purpose of this funding is to better support MSU Extension Master Gardeners (EMGs) who currently grow and donate food, or who wish to develop new locations to grow and donate food, and thereby increase the availability of fresh produce to low income families. Each proposal can list one project or multiple projects utilizing the same mini-grant.

By mid April, we will have “Community Donation Gardening Toolkit” links that will have best practices and resources that can strengthen your project plan and application. We are currently developing this website and will share the link as soon as it is available.

Grant recipients will be asked to assist MSU Extension’s efforts to reduce food insecurities in the state by agreeing to the following:

- (1) [A SNAP-Ed staff person](#) will facilitate a relationship between the food donation site and a lead Extension Master Gardener from the donation garden, with a goal to best serve clients at the food donation site. The SNAP-Ed staff person will also work with Sarah Rautio to estimate a food pantry client “reach” associated and help promote nutrition and/or Pantry PSE efforts at the location, if possible.
- (2) [EMGs](#) working in the garden will make an effort to grow food that will best serve the food pantry; will view on-line “Food Safety” materials related to donation gardens; will implement at least one food safety practice at the donation garden during the year of the grant; and report their food donation data into the MSU Extension Food Donation Survey at the end of the growing season.
- (3) [The Consumer Horticulture Educator](#), in collaboration with Sarah Rautio, will support the needs of the EMGs working on the project and implement “gardening related” education or food growing educational messages that reach SNAP-Ed audiences.

Program Beneficiaries

All funded projects must demonstrate that at least 50% of the end beneficiaries of activities will be families with low-income. This is a requirement that is needed in order to report these data as SNAP-Ed efforts that reduce food insecurities for low income individuals and families. The project description provided in the application must communicate how the activities will benefit families with low-income. For this project, families with low income will be defined as families who make use of emergency food services such as food pantries, food banks or free meal services.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are MSU Extension EMGs who collaborate with MSU Extension staff and at least one representative from a recipient agency (for example, staff representing local food bank, food pantry, or free meal service). The recipient agency representative will not have to be identified in the application this year given the short time frame; however, if awarded, the representative will need to be identified as soon as possible and communicated to Sarah Rautio. The application only requires the applicant to identify the donation recipient site until a contact person is identified.

Diverse coalitions for these food gardens are encouraged. Supporting coalition members can include:

- Local Food Coalitions
- MSU Extension staff outside of SNAP-Ed and AABI Consumer Horticulture
- Food pantry or free meal program participants
- Local farmers
- Government Agencies (e.g. Area Agencies on Aging, Senior Centers, Health Departments, etc.)
- Youth programs (4-H, summer youth programming, school garden groups)
- Organizations that serve immigrants and refugees
- Nonprofit organizations, Community Foundations, and public institutions that are supporting efforts that decrease food insecurities.

Only applications from the five focus areas will be considered for a grant in 2019.

Fiscal Processes

During the pilot phase of this initiative, Sarah Rautio will be the fiscal agent for all of the mini grants. Grant money can be distributed to the lead EMG in either or both of the following ways:

- (1) As “reimbursement” to incurred costs, requiring upfront spending by the EMG, followed by submission of receipts (no later than Oct 1, 2019) to receive cost reimbursement. This method will require the recipient to be set up as an MSU vendor, which Sarah Rautio can assist with. The lead EMG will be asked to track purchases on a form, and submit the form with the receipts.
- (2) Sarah Rautio can also make “on-line” purchases for the lead EMG, and thereby charge the purchase directly to the award at the time of purchase. This method does not require upfront spending by the lead EMG.

Expenses

The following table is not an inclusive list. If you have a question about whether an expense is allowable, email Sarah Rautio at rautio@msu.edu.

Allowable Expenses

- **Seeds, seedlings, plugs, & potted plants** (fruits, vegetables, herbs, edible flowers-has to be edible)
- **Small gardening tools & supplies**
- **Potting soil, compost*, properly aged manure***
- **Fertilizer**
- **Garden fencing** & trellising**
- **Produce scale**
- **Harvest supplies**** (e.g. colander, harvest bins, gloves, clippers)
- **Food safety supplies**** (supplies needed to carry out safe food growing, handling, and distribution, such as hand washing sink & supplies)
- **Printing of MSU Extension outreach materials for the target audience** (low-income families)
- **Food, space and materials for an event for the target audience** (low-income families) **that is provided/delivered by an MSU Extension staff member.**

Unallowable Expenses

- Rental or purchase of land
- Rental or purchase of large equipment (e.g., tractors)
- Staff salaries or benefits
- Mileage reimbursement for volunteers to and from their home to the garden
- Financial incentives to partners or participants
- Lobbying
- Child care
- Transportation services
- Promotional messages inconsistent with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*
- Expenses not clearly described in approved application

****Allowable in 2019.***

*****Food safety best practice equipment.***

Grant Application

The mini grant application includes the following required fields. Please direct mini grant application questions to rautio@msu.edu.

- Name of County/Counties Involved
- Name and location of Donation Garden(s):
- Check one of the following to best describe **where the food will be donated**:
- Primary Master Gardener: First and last name; E-mail address
- MSU Extension SNAP-Ed Contact Staff Person: First and last name; email
- MSU Extension Master Gardener Coordinator Contact Person: First and last name; E-mail address
- Food Recipient Agency Location: Donation site and address
- Food Recipient Agency Staff: First name, last name and email (if known at time of application)
- I agree to submit a short project summary report by October 1, 2019 Y/N

Mini Grant Description

1. Describe how this project will increase healthy food access for Michigan residents with low income. (Maximum 800 characters)
2. What are the goals of this project? (Maximum of five goals; Maximum of 500 characters)
3. What donation activities will be utilized in this project? (Maximum 800 characters)
4. What educational activities will be utilized in this project? (Maximum 800 characters)
5. How will you collect data for the project? (Include how you will track data on pounds donated). (Maximum 500 characters)
6. What food safety best practices do you believe you may need at your garden? Will you agree to implement at least one Food Safety Practice in 2019? (Agree/Disagree)
7. Please list your project collaborators (partner organizations)
8. Describe the project collaborators' history (if this is an existing coalition) and roles. Diverse coalitions are encouraged and will be favored in application scoring. (Maximum 800 characters)
9. This project team will communicate and receive feedback from food service site on the types of produce to grow, their capacity for refrigeration, etc. Agree/Disagree
10. Include an estimated budget narrative describing what will be purchased and the approximate costs. Make sure all costs are necessary and allowable (see page 4 of this application). Describe very briefly how any infrastructure expenses will contribute to project longevity.
11. List any additional sources of funding for the project (if applicable).