

GROWING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND FOOD ACCESS IN THE GARDEN

2024 PILOT GRANT APPLICATION

The [Land Access & Opportunity Board](#) (LAOB) and the [Vermont Housing & Conservation Board](#) (VHCB) are pleased to announce funding for projects advancing community and collective gardening. Eligible applicants are entities that work to increase equitable food access and food sovereignty for historically underserved communities including Black Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), People with Disabilities, Low-income People, LGBTQIA+ People, Refugees and Immigrants through community and collective gardening projects. VHCB has a minimum of \$50,000 available in funding for grants of up to \$15,000 for up to two year terms.

There will be two application rounds: a pilot round with applications due July 1st, and a second round with applications due September 9th. We do not expect to award all funds in the pilot round, and fully expect to have funds available to award after the September 9th deadline.

In this funding announcement, you will find:

- ❖ Application Instructions
 - Priorities for Funding
 - Applicant Eligibility
 - Eligible Costs & Timeline
 - Scoring Criteria
 - Award Timeline, Reporting, and Invoicing
 - Contact & Submission Instructions
- ❖ Application Form
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 - Narrative Questions
 - Organizational Documents (990 and 501c3 documentation)

INSTRUCTIONS

Priorities for Funding

VHCB and LAOB seek to support programming at affordable housing sites and other community based locations that: increases food security, improves access to nature and outdoor recreation, and fosters joy, health and resilience through community and collective gardening. These funds are intended to strengthen garden-based programming that empowers underserved communities to grow food, develop vibrant community spaces, reclaim their tools of food sovereignty, connect with the earth, and grow connections between housing/garden/food access practitioners.

We will prioritize the following projects types:

- Existing community gardens at affordable housing sites that seek to improve infrastructure and/or garden management, or otherwise expand or improve programming
- Existing community gardens that focus on serving historically marginalized and historically underserved communities
- New gardens that focus on serving historically marginalized and historically underserved communities

Applicant Eligibility

We will prioritize applications from applicants who demonstrate:

- Record of successful programming in the relevant project area
- Established focus on centering the needs and leadership of historically underserved communities
- Commitment to providing services equitably
- Ability to meet administrative requirements: financial record keeping, narrative and financial reporting – or commitment to working to create these systems (see reporting & invoicing guidelines for more info)
- Clear plan for use of funds

Eligible Costs & Timeline

Grants of up to \$15,000 are available for up to two year terms. The earliest start date of a term will be the date of the application deadline (July 1st of September 9th). Depending on the nature of your project, these funds could be used for a wide array of purposes. A list of items and services that could potentially be covered by this funding includes:

- Equipment & Supplies
- Personnel, benefits, and overhead
- Infrastructure
- Travel
- Consulting costs
- Participant stipends in some circumstances (if this is a critical part of your project, please reach out to discuss)
- Food purchases for demonstrations
- Gardening materials
- And other expenses directly related to improving collaborative programming – feel free to reach out if you have questions about eligibility of other costs

Scoring Criteria

All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and to ensure they match the program priorities (see above, Priorities for Funding). Should these funds become competitive due to high interest, VHCB and LAOB will assess the applications with the following criteria:

Need: The proposed project meets a clear, identified need in the community, and these grant funds are clearly a very critical part of the funding to make the project happen. Community buy-in for the project is high.

Impact: The proposed project will clearly have positive impacts on the community. The proposed project clearly addresses the priority areas for funding on page 1 of the grant application instructions.

Quality: The proposed project has clearly been well-planned and there is a clear budget, timeline, and path to success for the project. This criteria does not mean your application needs to be written by a professional or be extremely polished – it does mean that we will be prioritizing projects with clear plans, and projects that best meet our eligibility criteria.

Grant Timeline, Reporting & Invoicing Requirements

Should you be awarded a grant, the next steps would be as follows:

1. VHCB would work with you to establish and sign a grant agreement within 4-6 weeks from the application deadline
2. You would have up to two years to complete the project from the start date of the grant
3. VHCB and LAOB will supply you with a template and instructions for invoicing us
4. Payment will be on a reimbursement basis only
5. We will ask you to submit very brief narrative updates with each invoice, and a brief final report at the conclusion of the project.
6. If it's possible with your project, the preference would be to do only 1-2 payments over the course of the grant term. However, this may not be possible or feasible for your project! You can invoice as frequently as monthly if needed.

Contact: If you have any questions about this grant, please reach out to us! We're happy to talk through the application and priorities at any time. Email is the fastest way to reach our team, and we're available for phone calls or meetings if needed. Please reach out to Liz Gleason, liz@vhcb.org or 802-828-2117. The LAOB & VHCB team working on this grant includes:

Jean Hamilton, Land Access & Opportunity Board Co-Director
Ornella Matta-Figueroa, Land Access & Opportunity Board Co-Director
Betsy McGavisk, VHCB Farm & Forest Viability Program Coordinator
Elise Greaves, VHCB Housing Stewardship Coordinator
Liz Gleason, VHCB Farm & Forest Viability Program Director

Submitting your application: For the pilot round of applications due July 1st, please submit applications via email to Betsy McGavisk, betsy@vhcb.org. Our preference is to have one pdf document with all application questions and other documents combined. For the round of applications due September 9th, we may use an online application form. If that is the case, this form will be updated with the link.

2024 Pilot Grant Application

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Cover page - Applicant Information

Date: _____

Name of organization: _____

Address: _____

Contact person: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Other participating organizations/collaborators and contacts at those organizations, if applicable:

TOTAL REQUEST: \$ _____

Preferred start and end date: _____

Application Budget

Please include a budget for you project. If other funds are being utilized for this specific project, it would be helpful for us to know about them so we understand the full scope of funding needed to make your work happen. Other funding or match is not required and will not impact the competitiveness of your application.

If these budget categories do not match your application or organizational budgeting, please feel free to use another template. Our goal is to understand exactly what you are seeking funding for.

Category	VHCB amount	Other amount	Total
Salaries/Wages			
Benefits			
Contractors/Consultants			
Stipends			
Materials/Supplies			
Equipment/Infrastructure			
Other			
Overhead/Indirect			
TOTAL			

NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

For the following questions, please take the space you need to fully answer each question, but your responses do not need to be long. A range of one paragraph to one page per question should be enough for reviewers to understand the organization and project.

1. Briefly describe the history and overall purpose of the entity that is applying. This may be your mission statement.
2. Describe the proposed project. Please include a timeline, description of the participating community, and key individuals and organizations that will lead the project.
3. Budget Narrative: Please briefly explain the costs in your budget. For example, in Salaries/Wages you might say that one staff person will spend 5 hours per week for 14 weeks on the project, adding up to a total of \$XX.
4. Describe the challenges facing your garden project.
5. How does this funding fill an essential gap that will make your project more viable, more effective and/or more impactful towards your goals?
6. Please list and describe the role of other funding sources, if any, that will assist the implementation of this project. This is not a requirement, nor will it impact your score, but is helpful for us to understand if the project depends on a wider range of funding.
7. Would you be interested in convening with other applicants to learn from each other? If so, how might LAOB and VHCB facilitate this in a way that would be most useful and impactful?
8. Would you be open to LAOB and/or VHCB staff visiting this project?

ADMINISTRATIVE DOCUMENTS

Please attach your 501c3 letter/documentation as well as your organization's 990.

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

Please add any additional, relevant information about your organization, your goals, collaborations or the project itself that you would like us to know. Please feel free to upload pictures or other materials here.