

Growing Together Montana (GTMT) – 2022 Growing Season Project Description and Overview

Funding is available to active Master Gardeners in partnership with Montana State University (MSU) Extension county offices. Funds will be provided to multiple local Master Gardener projects aimed at increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables for families experiencing food insecurity in Montana. Additionally, Extension staff will provide cooking, nutrition, and physical activity education to families served by this project through direct and indirect means.

Due Date: By 5:00pm on February 11th, 2022

Application Form: <https://forms.gle/7m9k2PLXdUPfm92Q6>

Notification of Award: February 25th, 2022

Timeline: February 25th, 2022 – September 30th, 2022 (planning, planting, implementation, management, harvesting, donating, education, reporting, etc.) Funds must be spent by September 30th, 2022, but donation of produce, tracking and reporting will continue until the end of the growing season. Final reports will be due by early-October 2022.

Amount: Funding up to \$2,000/community is available.

Applicant: Active Master Gardeners in partnership with MSU Extension county offices

- Eligible active Master Gardeners include:
 - Certified Active Master Gardeners (defined as a Master Gardener of any level having participated in and tracked volunteer activity during the current calendar year.)
 - New Master Gardener trainees pursuing certification hours
 - Master Gardeners seeking recertification hours
- Multiple communities may partner together and/or multiple garden projects may be supported within one county or reservation.

Grant Activities

The purpose of this funding is to enable Master Gardeners along with other community groups in Montana to engage in projects which increase the availability of fresh produce to families with low-income.

Grantees will start, convert, or maintain a donation garden which provides fresh produce to a food pantry, food bank, backpack program, or free meal service, as well as coordinate with the MSU Extension SNAP-Ed program to provide nutrition education. Direct education would be provided by the SNAP-Ed program in the form of in-person/online nutrition classes, whereas indirect education would be provided by Master Gardeners and/or Extension Agents in the form of fact sheets and/or recipes that originate from the Buy Eat Live Better website. Cooking demonstrations at food pantries can be done in collaboration between the SNAP-Ed program

and Master Gardeners. Additionally, grantees will track project activities by sharing success stories, and recording required measurements discussed in the Reporting section.

Each approved project will be required to complete a short series of self-paced pre-recorded trainings. The first pre-recorded training must be completed before purchases can be made. Site visits by the GTMT State Leadership Team may also be conducted during the 2022 growing season.

Program Beneficiaries

All funded projects must demonstrate that the end beneficiaries of the projects will be families with low-income per the requirements of federal funding. Low-income is defined as “SNAP participants and individuals eligible to receive SNAP benefits or other means-tested Federal assistance programs, such as Women Infants & Children (WIC) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), as well as individuals residing in communities with a significant low-income population”. Families that visit food banks or other emergency food sites would also be eligible beneficiaries. The project description provided in the application must communicate how the work will benefit families with low-income.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must include one of each of the following:

- Active Master Gardener Volunteer(s)
 - Roles: Complete and submit application, attend trainings, plant & manage garden, coordinate donation & indirect education, track reporting metrics, work as group to complete project.
- MSU Extension county or reservation office staff
 - Roles: Promote grant opportunity to Master Gardeners, provide support to MGs, serve as resource for connecting MGs to community organizations, provide assistance and input on grant application.
- At least one representative from a recipient agency (for example, staff representing local food bank, food pantry, or free meal service)
 - Roles: Receive & disseminate garden produce and education materials, weigh produce upon donation, work with MG on timeline for donations.

Priority will be given to applications that:

- Are requesting funds for garden space on public property; projects must be fully accessible to the public for the purposes of this project.
- That have a proven capacity to serve a large number of SNAP recipients/SNAP-eligible families in their community.
- Demonstrate community member involvement in project.
- Serve communities with high poverty rates and/or food deserts.

- Demonstrate capacity for long-term sustainability.

Diverse coalitions are encouraged. Supporting coalition members can include:

- Local food system partner
- Local public health department
- Other Montana Extension staff
- Food pantry or free meal program participant
- Local farmers or gardeners
- Area Agency on Aging or congregate meal sites
- Youth program (for example 4-H, summer youth programming, school garden group)
- Organization that serves minority or under-served populations
- SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator
- Health-related community partners
- Parks & Recreation Departments

Fiscal Processes & Budget

GTMT funds must be spent by September 30th, 2022. Any misuse of funds or any funds spent above the approved budget amount will need to be covered by another funding source.

Why do we need to be detailed in our justification?

As the committee reviews your budget, they need to be able to see who will be using the items, why they will be using the items, and how the items pertain to the goals of the project. Since this is a grant funded project, we need to demonstrate to our federal funders that the funding is being used in an appropriate manner that is within the scope of SNAP-Ed.

Example: 4 x Harvest Totes @ \$10.99 each from Montana Hardware Store
(www.exampleinternetlink.com)

What about taxes?

Montana State University Extension and SNAP-Ed are tax exempt entities. Our fiscal coordinator will work with you to ensure that items you wish to purchase are not taxed.

How do I make purchases?

If your project is approved, Master Gardener project leaders will need to work with the MSU state team to make pre-approved purchases for this project. If the state office is unable to purchase items on behalf of the grant recipients, funding may be provided for reimbursement of approved materials. Further information will be available upon notification of award.

Here are examples of the types of expenses that are allowable and unallowable. This is not an inclusive list. If you have a question about budget amendments or whether an expense is allowable, call Dara Palmer at 406-994-2120 or email her at dara.palmer@montana.edu.

Allowable Expenses (no single item to exceed \$500)	Unallowable Expenses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeds, plants & seedlings, (fruits, vegetables, herbs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental or purchase of land
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small gardening tools & supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental or purchase of equipment such as tractors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potting soil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure (i.e. tool shed, greenhouse)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fertilizer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large kitchen equipment (i.e. sinks)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden fencing & trellising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff salary or benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harvest supplies (i.e. colander, harvest bins, gloves, clippers, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial incentives to partners or participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food safety supplies (other supplies needed to carry out safe food growing, handling, & distribution best practices) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mileage reimbursement for volunteers to and from their home to the garden
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for project partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child care or transportation services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food, space, & materials for an education event for the target audience (families with low income) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of messages inconsistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotional materials (will be provided by SNAP-Ed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenses not clearly described in approved application
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil testing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any single item costing more than \$500

Reporting

Each funded project will be asked to report on their success by sharing stories and information about the impact of their grant activities at the end of the project. A project reporting form will be provided. Reports will be due by early-October 2022.

Reports may include photos and videos from the project, in addition to other metrics such as:

- # of Extension Master Gardener (EMG) volunteers engaged in the project
- List of each location that received produce
- Total pounds of produce donated
- # of participants reached/served at sites receiving produce (unduplicated count)

*As projects evolve, additional evaluation measures may be included. Technical assistance will be provided to ensure the reporting items are properly collected.

Application

To fill out an application, please follow the link: <https://forms.gle/7m9k2PLXdUPfm92Q6>. A PDF version of the application is also available upon request. Once you have submitted the application please email or call Dara Palmer at dara.palmer@montana.edu or 406-994-2120 to ensure that the application came through. Feel free to reach out at any time with additional questions.