



## **Request for Applications (RFA)**

**Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)  
Wellness and Nutrition Services Division (WNS)**

### **DC School Garden Grant (SGG)**

Announcement Date: November 22<sup>th</sup>, 2013

RFA Release Date: December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Pre-Application Question Period Ends: January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Application Submission Deadline: January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014

**LATE OR INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS  
WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.**

More information is available on the [School Garden Grant Webpage](#).



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## **Section I: General Information**

### **Introduction**

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), Wellness and Nutrition Services Division (WNS) is soliciting applications for the DC School Garden Grant (SGG) as mandated by the Healthy Schools Act (HSA) of 2010 (DC Law 18-209). The purpose of this grant is to increase the capacity and scope of DC school gardens as educational resources. As such, the grant promotes the use of the school garden by school personnel to facilitate meaningful learning experiences for students in the classroom, garden, and cafeteria. This three-pronged approach helps students gain exposure to new foods and insight into the source of their food and the myriad benefits of gardening and consuming locally grown produce.

### **Background**

Current estimates indicate that 35.4% of children in DC are overweight or obese (CDC) and 37.4% of children live in households that are food insecure (DC Hunger Solutions). The HSA aims to reduce obesity and improve the health, wellness, and nutritional status of the more than 80,000 public and public charter school students in the District of Columbia through healthy school meals, physical activity, and nutrition education. School gardens and farm to school efforts are an important component of this as they provide exposure to fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as an opportunity for students to connect to the sources of their food, which may help them to make healthier choices in the future.

To this end, the HSA requires OSSE to make competitive grants available to support school gardens in DC public schools (DCPS), public charter schools (PCS), and other organizations.

With ninety-three (93) active school garden programs, over a dozen school garden and farm to school focused non-profits, and both a School Garden Specialist and a Farm to School Specialist within WNS, the District is well-poised to support school garden and farm to school programs. Schools across the District use school gardens and cafeterias to engage students in nutrition, environmental, and science education. Most of these programs are spearheaded by a few champions of the school garden and farm to school movement, on top of their primary responsibilities. This model has proven unsustainable over time, as these individuals do not have the capacity to build and manage robust programs.

There is great potential to expand the reach of these programs to engage more students across all subjects. Data collected by OSSE shows the biggest barrier schools face in establishing and sustaining garden programs is the lack of a School Garden Coordinator (SGC). The DC School Garden Grant seeks to establish new garden and farm to school programs or expand existing garden and farm to school programs through the establishment of a SGC position in schools. A SGC is an individual who manages the day-to-day operation of the school garden program including program management, technical support, and instruction. The SGC works closely with the classroom teachers to plan and deliver nutrition-based lessons in the garden and the classroom.

A framework, which outlines the responsibilities of the SGC, is available [here](#).

### **Intended Population**

The intended population for the DC School Garden Grant is:

- Teachers or administrators in District K-12 public and public charter school.
- Garden and farm to school-based non-profits that work in partnership with schools.

### **Application Checklist**

Applications must meet the following requirements to be eligible for review:

- The completed Narrative Form has been submitted to Sam Ullery at [sam.ullery@dc.gov](mailto:sam.ullery@dc.gov) before 5:00pm on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014. The Application Form is in PDF format utilizing the form provided and attached to an email with the subject line "SGG2014\_schoolname\_app".
- The completed Documents Form has been submitted to Sam Ullery at [sam.ullery@dc.gov](mailto:sam.ullery@dc.gov) before 5:00pm on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014. The Documents Forms is in PDF format utilizing the form provided and attached to a second email with the subject line "SGG14\_schoolname\_documents".
- All required components of the application are completed.
- All components of the application have been thoroughly reviewed and signed by the appropriate stakeholders.
- Email size does not exceed 5mb.

### **Contact Information**

Sam Ullery  
School Garden Specialist  
Healthy Schools Act Initiatives  
Wellness and Nutrition Services Division  
DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education  
Government of the District of Columbia  
810 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: (202) 741-6485  
Email: [sam.ullery@dc.gov](mailto:sam.ullery@dc.gov)

## Section II: Award Information

### Award Period

The grant period is one (1) year beginning on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014 and ending on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015.

### Available Funding

The total funding available for this award period is \$300,000. Eligible schools and organizations may apply for an award amount of up to \$15,000 to fund new and active school garden and farm to school programs. To assist projects with initial expenses, 30% of each grant will be available as start-up funds within the first 30 days of the grant cycle. Subsequent payments will be in the form of reimbursements in compliance with OSSE grant policies and procedures. Organizations seeking funding must have sufficient alternate funds available to cover up-front costs for grant activities.

### Funding Restrictions

Funds may be used to support activities described in the program requirements of this RFA and/or included in the applicant's submission as part of their program plan. Up to 80% of the project budget must be allocated to the School Garden Coordinator's salary, which may not exceed a rate of \$30/hour. No more than 20% of the project budget can be used for student transportation (ex: field trips for students to a farm), garden supplies and curriculum, and to support the promotion of garden and farm to school lessons. Funding may not be used for meals or travel expenses (ex: hotels, airline tickets, and per diem).

### Audits

At any time or times before final payment and for three years thereafter, the District and/or the federal government may audit the applicant's expenditure statements and source documentation. The applicant cannot at any time prior to the application process nor during the award period be in violation of any previous grant obligations to the District of Columbia government or a United States federal agency.

### Pre-Application Question Period

To ensure an equal opportunity for all applicants, OSSE requests that applicants submit questions regarding the RFA electronically to [sam.ullery@dc.gov](mailto:sam.ullery@dc.gov) by 5:00pm on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Questions submitted after this deadline date will not receive responses. Answers to submitted questions will be made available through email by January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014. Please review the [FAQ page](#) before submitting a question.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to participate in one of the webinar information sessions below. A recording of the information session will be available upon request.

December 16<sup>th</sup>, 10:00-10:30am

Register here: <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/838767394>

December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2:00-2:30pm

Register here: <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/322447130>

## **Section III: Eligibility Information**

### **Eligibility**

OSSE will accept applications from DC public schools and public charter schools participating in the Healthy Schools Act (2010) in partnership with DC based school garden and farm to school focused organizations with 501(c) 3 status. OSSE will accept one application for each school campus, however an organization may submit up to four (4) applications with different schools.

A list of recommended non-profit organizations that have successfully managed past SGG grants is available [here](#). Applying schools may choose to collaborate with an organization that is not on the list; however, evidence that confirms that the organization has the experience and capacity to support the project must be provided. A letter of commitment is required from each partnering organization or school.

### **Fiscal Sponsor**

The fiscal sponsor may be either the school or a non-profit organization which has been endorsed by the school as the fiscal sponsor. If the grant is to be remunerated directly to a community-based organization, that organization is then designated as the fiscal sponsor and must have 501(c)3 status and must include their 501(c)3 Determination Letter as an attachment to the application.

### **Cost-Sharing**

Applicants must contribute cost-sharing funds equal to or greater than 20% of the grant amount. A detailed line-item breakdown of cost-sharing contributions should be identified in the budget. Volunteer time may not be used to satisfy this requirement. Applicants applying for less than \$5,000 are not required to contribute cost-sharing funds. All applicants are required to contribute resources to the accomplishment of project objectives and are required to limit indirect costs to 10% of the total funds awarded.

## **Section IV: Submission and Application Information**

### **Application Period**

The Request for Applications (RFA) was released on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The deadline for application submission is **January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014 at 5:00 PM EST**. All applications will be recorded and a receipt will be emailed to the contact provided by February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

### **Submission Requirements**

The application must be submitted electronically to Sam Ullery at [sam.ullery@dc.gov](mailto:sam.ullery@dc.gov). There are two required forms, the Narrative Form, and the Documents Form.

- The [Narrative Form](#) must be attached to an email with the subject line "SGG2014\_schoolname\_app".
- The [Documents Form](#) must be attached to a second email with the subject line "SGG14\_schoolname\_documents".

Narrative Form contents:

- Applicant Profile
- Narrative (Description of how the proposed project meets the review criteria as outlined in Section VI: Application Scoring and Review Process)
- Budget and Budget Justification Narrative

Documents Form contents:

- Administrative Approval
- Certifications
- Assurances
- Letters of Commitment
- Acknowledgement of Compliance
- 501(c)3 Determination Letter
- School Garden/ Farm to School Photos

## **Section V: Program Requirements**

### **General Program Requirements**

Grantees are expected to facilitate high levels of student and community participation to create or maintain highly functional school gardens and farm to school programs that are well-integrated into multiple aspects of the school day. It is expected that this be achieved through standards-based classroom instruction, hands-on lessons, field trips, extracurricular club activities, and events.

### **Required Activities**

Grantees will be required to complete the following activities under the SGG:

- Grantees must have or establish a School Wellness Committee that convenes at least three times per year consisting of parents, teachers, students, administrators, staff, and community members and:
  - Integrates school garden and farm to school activities into the overall wellness mission of the school.
  - Assists the SGC in implementing the requirements of the grant.
  - Provides support to the SGC in the day-to-day operations of the school garden.
- Grantees must establish a School Garden Coordinator (SGC) position to oversee day-to-day operations of the school garden. The SGC must:
  - Participate in all School Wellness Committee meetings.
  - Manage the day-to-day operation of the proposed school garden and farm to school program including program management, technical support, and instruction.
  - Collaborate with at least five classroom teachers to plan and deliver farm to school and garden lessons.

- Partner with the food service vendor, to plan and implement at least three cafeteria-based events including, but not limited to, taste tests, cooking demos, or produce displays.
  - Participate in quarterly full day trainings.
  - Engage the school community to increase the scope of the school garden as an educational resource.
  - Facilitate their school's participation in Growing Healthy Schools Week (October), and Strawberries and Salad Greens Day (May).
  - Maintain a healthy school garden using sustainable agricultural practices as defined by the DC Healthy Schools Act.
- Grantees must provide two written reports and occasional informal verbal reports on their progress through:
    - Participation in two site visits in which a [School Garden Assessment](#) will be conducted with the SGC.
    - Submission of [Mid-Project](#) and [End-Project](#) Reports.

## **Section VI: Review Process and Application Scoring**

### **Review Process**

Applications will be screened initially by OSSE staff to determine whether all application and eligibility requirements have been met. Only applications that meet all eligibility and application requirements will be evaluated, scored, and rated by the review panel. OSSE may use internal peer reviewers, external peer reviewers, or a combination of both to review and score the applications received for this RFA. An external peer reviewer is an expert in the field or the matter. Scoring and recommendations of the review panel are advisory only. The final decision to fund applicants rests solely with OSSE. After reviewing the recommendations of the review panel and any other information considered relevant, OSSE shall decide which applicants to fund, as well as the funding amount.

## Application Criteria and Scoring

All applications that meet the application criteria will be reviewed and scored by a review panel using the following criteria:

Criteria	Scoring Weight (%)
<p><b><i>Project Vision and Implementation Plan</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Applicant describes the current state of the garden and farm to school program.</li> <li>2. Applicant describes the vision of the proposed school garden and farm to school project.</li> <li>3. The applicant provides a clear implementation plan, including a timeline, for the project.</li> <li>4. The applicant anticipates challenges and has a plan in place to overcome these challenges.</li> <li>5. The applicant has clearly described the role of the School Garden Coordinator and provides evidence that this person will receive adequate support to carry out the activities of the grant.</li> </ol>	30
<p><b><i>Curriculum Integration Plan</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The applicant indicates which school garden and farm to school curricula will be used and how school garden and farm to school concepts will be integrated into the classroom environment.</li> <li>2. The applicant clearly explains how students will be encouraged to make connections between the school garden, the cafeteria, and the classroom.</li> </ol>	25
<p><b><i>Student and Community Involvement Plan</i></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The applicant provides specific examples of how students will be impacted by the grant activities.</li> <li>2. The applicant provides specific examples of how the school community will be involved in the proposed project.</li> </ol>	25
<p><b><i>Cost-Effectiveness of Budget</i></b>  <i>In addition to the question below; the level of cost-effectiveness will be determined by the Budget and Budget Justification Narrative included in the Narrative Form.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The applicant is clear about how proposed costs were determined.</li> <li>2. The applicant has taken measures to ensure that the project is cost-effective.</li> <li>3. The applicant provides a clear explanation of the source and value determination of in-kind contributions.</li> <li>4. All proposed costs are described in the Budget and Budget Justification Narrative.</li> </ol>	20

## **Section VII: Award Administration**

### **Decision and Notifications of Awards**

OSSE reviews all applications for grant funds in accordance with DC competitive funding regulations. OSSE will notify all applicants of the final award decision no later than February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014. Each awarded applicant will receive a Grant Agreement Notice (GAN) that will include the award amount, award agreement, terms and conditions of the award, and any supplemental information required.

### **Monitoring**

The grant recipient's effectiveness is determined based upon the following information:

- Results from the [School Garden Assessment Tool](#).
- Responses to questions in the [Mid-Project](#) and [End-Project](#) Reports.
- Information provided in the [School Garden Tracking Tool Data](#).
- Responsiveness to requests and inquiries from OSSE.

### **Corrective Action and Termination of Funding**

In the event that programmatic, financial, or documentation conditions of the grant are not being met in an appropriate and timely fashion, progressive actions will be taken, at the discretion of OSSE, up to and including the termination of funding. A project which is terminated will be subject to the same requirements regarding audit, recordkeeping, and submission of reports as a project which runs for the duration of the project period.

### **Nondiscrimination in the Delivery of Services**

In accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, gender, or disability be denied the benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under, any program activity receiving funds from the School Garden Grant. In accordance with the District of Columbia Human Rights Act of 1977, no educational institution shall deny, restrict, or abridge or condition the use of, or access to, any of its facilities, services, programs, or benefits of any program or activity to any person otherwise qualified, wholly or partially, for a discriminatory reason, based upon the actual or perceived: race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, familial status, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, or disability of any individual.

### **Confidentiality**

Except as otherwise provided by local or federal law, no recipient of OSSE funds shall use or reveal any research, statistical, or personally identifiable information furnished under OSSE by any person, for any purpose other than that for which such information was obtained in accordance with the OSSE program funded. Such information, and any copy of such information shall be immune from legal process and shall not, without the consent of the person furnishing such information, be admitted as evidence or used for any purpose in any action, suit, or judicial, legislative, or administrative proceeding.

## **Terms and Conditions**

- OSSE reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if the Agency determines it is in the best interest of the Agency to do so. The Agency shall notify the applicant if it rejects that applicant's proposal. The Agency may suspend or terminate an outstanding RFA pursuant to its own grant making rule(s) or any applicable federal regulation or requirement.
- OSSE reserves the right to issue addenda and/or amendments subsequent to the issuance of the RFA, or to rescind the RFA.
- OSSE shall not be liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of applications in response to the RFA. Applicant agrees that all costs incurred in developing the application are the applicant's sole responsibility.
- OSSE may conduct pre-award on-site visits to verify information submitted in the application and to determine if the applicant's facilities are appropriate for the services intended.
- OSSE may enter into negotiations with an applicant and adopt a firm funding amount or other revision of the applicant's proposal that may result from negotiations.
- OSSE shall provide the citations to the statute and implementing regulations that authorize the grant or sub grant; all applicable federal and District regulations, such as OMB Circulars A-102, A-133, 2 CFR 180, 2 CFR 225, 2 CFR 220, and 2 CFR 215; payment provisions identifying how the grantee will be paid for performing under the award; reporting requirements, including programmatic, financial and any special reports required by OSSE; and compliance conditions that must be met by the grantee.
- If there are any conflicts between the terms and conditions of the RFA and any applicable federal or local law or regulation, or any ambiguity related thereto, then the provisions of the applicable law or regulation shall control and it shall be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.