

Request for Proposals: Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS) People's Garden Project

Submissions accepted beginning **Tuesday, January 31st, 2024 at 9:00am**. Submissions are due electronically to:

Bristol and Newport County Applications (Eastern RI Conservation District):
Sara Churgin, schurgin.ericd@gmail.com , <https://www.easternriconservation.org/>

Kent and Washington County Applications (Southern RI Conservation District)
Gina Fuller, gfuller@sracd.org , <https://sracd.org/>

Providence County Applications (Northern RI Conservation District):
Gennifer Keller, gkeller.nricd@gmail.com, <https://www.nricd.org/>

Chosen projects will be notified of funding as soon as possible.

Maximum funding available per project: \$10,000.00

(Project requesting the maximum award \$10,000.00 will receive higher priority),

Background and Requirements:

Each of the Rhode Island Conservation Districts (Eastern, Southern, and Northern) are seeking organizations in urban, suburban, or rural areas to install community gardens or high tunnels and maintain them for the duration of the project. This project is funded by an agreement between the RI State Conservation Committee (RISCC) and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS). A maximum of \$10,000.00 is available to fund each proposed project; funding can be spent on items such as tools, soil, seed, fertilizer, soil additives, irrigation materials, garden materials, lumber, high tunnels, pollinator plants, etc. Although funding *cannot* be used to maintain existing gardens, it may be used to create new garden beds at a site where other gardens already exist. An existing garden is defined as one that produces produce for human consumption during the 2023 growing season (beginning of May through to the end of October).

Organizations receiving funding must agree to the following requirements, set in place by the USDA NRCS:

- Entities must have and maintain control of the land (such as a deed, lease, or written agreement with the landowner) where the garden and/or seasonal high tunnel will be established for the duration of the selected project.
- All awardees must complete their People's Garden Project no later than Monday, September 16, 2024. Pending USDA NRCS approval, there may be an extension to complete projects by Tuesday, September 16, 2025. Awardees will be notified if approved.
- The recipient is responsible for maintaining the selected community garden site for the duration of their People's Garden Project.
- The recipient must provide their Conservation District with two written stories about its garden project at the end of each growing season (beginning of May through to the end of October), and include five photos showing progression/installation of the project. Awardee must provide



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on-camera release forms for any people in the photos. Photos will be shared and may be used by USDA NRCS. The Conservation District may provide release forms for recipients to use.

- The recipient must install signage at the garden or high tunnel site acknowledging USDA NRCS along with other partnering organizations who provided support for the community garden or high tunnel. Agreement funds may be used for the installation of signage, and Conservation District staff is available to assist with the creation of signage.
- The recipient must agree to host one educational workshop at its garden site.
- Each installed garden must have an irrigation system. Agreement funds may be used for the installation of the system. A maximum of \$500.00 for small projects or \$1,000.00 for larger projects should be budgeted for a combination of irrigation and fencing.
- The use of raised beds and imported soil is required for sites where soil is contaminated. Raised beds may also be used to increase accessibility. Agreement funds may be used to pay for these costs.

Funds may not be used for staff time, and will be dispersed on a **reimbursement basis**. This means that recipient organizations will document purchases with receipts, paid invoices, and/or canceled checks, and then receive reimbursement from their Conservation District. Although reimbursement is generally processed within 1-2 weeks of receiving required documentation, unexpected events such as government shutdowns can occasionally cause longer delays.

Required Match: For every dollar of funding that you apply to receive, you must agree to provide one dollar of *matching funds*. Volunteer time is currently valued at the rate of \$31.80/hour. Examples of volunteer time that can be counted as match include time spent planting, building garden fixtures, or tending to gardens. If a paid employee acting within their job capacity helps to build or maintain the garden (such as a volunteer coordinator overseeing volunteers, a teacher building a garden with students, or a town DPW employee delivering mulch), their time can be valued at their actual rate of pay. The value of donated materials such as soil, plants, beds, or any other material that is not funded by federal sources can also be counted as match. Conservation District staff will be available to assist you with properly documenting your match commitment. Match must be funded by non-federal sources.

Application Review Process: Proposals will be evaluated on a first-come-first served basis throughout Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 9:00am through Monday, April 1, 2024 11:59pm. Each Conservation District will be seeking to fund projects with a max of \$10,000 per project. Projects requesting \$3,000 or higher are highly encouraged. Priority will be given to (1) eligible entities that have previously applied to the People's Garden Project in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 that have not received funding, (2) project proposals requesting maximum award amount per project (3) eligible new applications (4) project proposals requesting maximum award amount per project. Previously 2020-2023 applied applicants MUST meet current requirements and reapply to the 2024 People's Garden Project to be eligible for funding. As many projects as possible will be funded until the funding from each district (\$63,000.00) has been allocated. Eligible proposals received after January 31, 2024 will be awarded funding on a first-come, first-



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served basis. A proposal is still required to ensure that all costs are allowable by our funders at USDA NRCS. Applicants can complete the attached application form or submit their own proposal that includes similar information.

How To Apply: Please submit a 1-3 page single-spaced proposal or fill out the People's Garden Project Application form and submit electronically to your Conservation District no earlier than Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 9:00 am. The last day the application will be accepted for the 2024 People's Garden Project is Monday, April 1, 2024 at 11:59pm. Your Conservation District contacts are:

Bristol and Newport County Applications (Eastern RI Conservation District):
Sara Churgin, schurgin.ericd@gmail.com , <https://www.easternriconservation.org/>

Kent and Washington County Applications (Southern RI Conservation District)
Gina Fuller, gfuller@sracd.org , <https://sracd.org/>

Providence County Applications (Northern RI Conservation District):
Gennifer Keller, gkeller.nricd@gmail.com, <https://www.nricd.org/>

Your proposal should include:

- The name of your organization, as well as the type of organization (i.e. school, nonprofit, business entity, or quasi public)
- The name, email, and phone number of your organization's contact person for the project.
- A description of your proposed community garden (i.e. beds required, materials that will be used, plants that will be grown) or high tunnel (i.e. size of high tunnel required, brand or source of high tunnel, what will be grown in the high tunnel).
- A description of how the project will benefit your organization's community.
- A proposed budget outlining how you will spend your requested funds and how you will provide match. A minimum of \$3,000 and a maximum of \$10,000 may be requested.
- A description of any other partners involved in the project.
- Indicate if your organization has applied to the People's Garden Project before and provide a description of the project if you received funding.

With any questions about preparing your proposal, please contact your Conservation District contacts listed above.

ERICD, SRICD, NRICD, RISCC, and USDA NRCS reserve the right to accept or reject any proposal submitted, or any portion thereof, for any reason.

USDA NRCS is an equal opportunity employer, provider and lender.



People's Garden Project 2024 Application

Each applicant is given priority for funding based on a **first come, first served basis** beginning on **Wednesday, January 31, 2024 at 9:00am through Monday, April 1, 2024 at 11:59pm**. Each Conservation District will be seeking to fund projects with a max of \$10,000.00 per project. Projects requesting \$3,000 or higher are highly encouraged. Priority will be given to (1) eligible entities that have previously applied to the People's Garden Project in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 that have not received funding, (2) project proposals requesting maximum award amount per project (3) eligible new applications, and (4) project proposals requesting maximum award amount per project. As many projects as possible will be funded until the funding from each district (\$63,000.00) has been allocated. Eligible proposals received after January 31, 2024 will be awarded funding on a first-come, first-served basis. A proposal is still required to ensure that all costs are allowable by our funders at USDA NRCS. Applicants can complete the application form or submit their own proposal that includes similar information. **Each applicant must meet all of the criteria stated in the People's Garden Project Request for Proposal to receive the People's Garden Project funding.** If the applicant does not meet all the requirements for the grant, then the applicant will not receive funding and priority will be given to the next received applicant.

Applicant Project: _____

Project Location:

Street: _____

Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Applicant Organization:

Name of organization:

Type of organization (i.e. school, nonprofit, business entity, or quasi-public):

Project Coordinator(s) - the contact person(s) for the project (Please provide the grant financial coordinator and project implementation coordinator if different):

Name(s): _____

Email(s): _____

3. Describe the proposed project (i.e. beds required, materials that will be used, plants that will be grown) or high tunnel (i.e. size of high tunnel required, brand or source of high tunnel, what will be grown in the high tunnel) and any other partners involved.

4. Describe how the project will benefit the community.

