

Growing Together Montana (GTMT) - 2021 Growing Season Project Description and Overview

Funding is available to active Master Gardeners in partnership with Montana State University 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 the families served by this project through direct and indirect means.

Due Date: By 5:00pm, March 12th, 2021

Application Form: <https://forms.gle/wUt24XtfSmMcS2YC8>

Notification of Award: March 22nd, 2021

Timeline: March 22nd - September 30th, 2021 (planning, planting, implementation, management, harvesting, donating, education, reporting, etc.) Funds must be spent by Sept. 30th, 2021, but donation of produce, tracking and reporting will continue until the end of the growing season. Final reports will be due mid-late October 2021.

Amount: Funding up to \$2,000/per county is available

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

- Multiple communities may partner together and/or multiple garden projects may be supported within one county.

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 provide education in an active (direct) or passive (indirect) manner consistent with the Montana Nutrition Education Program and Montana Extension Master Gardener Program. 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 providing relevant fact sheets or recipes. 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 participate in monthly training and team building webinars beginning in April 2021. You are encouraged to use this opportunity to form a working meeting out of these experiences, and include your Extension partners, Master Gardeners, and emergency food access (food pantry, food bank, backpack program or free meal service) contacts. Site visits by the GTMT State Leadership Team may also be conducted during the 2021 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 low-income 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, as well as individuals residing in communities with a significant low-income population". Families that visit food banks or other emergency foods 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, facilitate donation & indirect education, track reporting metrics, work as group to complete project.
- Montana Extension county 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.

Applications from Montana communities with high poverty rates and/or food deserts will be prioritized in the application scoring process. Additionally, applications with a proven capacity for long-term sustainability will be prioritized.

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, 2021. Any misuse of funds or any funds spent above the approved budget amount will need to be covered by another funding source.

What if the budget isn't approved?

If the review committee denies your application for funding, they will provide you with communication detailing the reasons for the denial. The communication will detail whether you will be allowed to resubmit your revised budget.

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.

What about taxes?

Montana State University Extension and SNAP-Ed are tax exempt entities. Please ensure when you are purchasing items for this project, you are not charged taxes.

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 regarding funding 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 Lydia Sakowski at 406-994-6022 or email her at lydia.sakowski@montana.edu.

Allowable Expenses (no single item to exceed \$500)	Unallowable Expenses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seeds, plants & seedlings (fruits, vegetables, and 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)	<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"> • Printing of educational materials for target audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child care or transportation services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food, space and 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 	<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 mid to late-October 2021.

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 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. Lydia will provide technical assistance to ensure the reporting items are properly collected via email.

Application

To fill out an application, please follow the link: <https://forms.gle/wUt24XtfSmMcS2YC8>. A PDF version of the application is also available upon request. Please feel free to reach out to Lydia Sakowski at lydia.sakowski@montana.edu or 406-994-6022 if you have any questions.