



DCHHS

Dallas County Health and Human Services

*Healthy People Healthy Communities
Health and Social Equity*



DALLAS COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Chronic Disease Prevention Division
Obesity Prevention Program

DCHHS Community Garden Mini-Grant Application Instructions



FY 2027

COMMUNITY GARDEN MINI-GRANT APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Application Period

Application period opens: **August 31, 2026**

Application period closes: **September 30, 2026**

Who Can Apply?

Any organization or group of residents in Dallas County that meets the following criteria is eligible to apply for the mini grant:

- **Garden Ownership/Management:** The garden must be operated by an established group or organization (e.g., school, church, neighborhood association, nonprofit, or other community-based organization).
- **Demonstrated Financial Need:** There is a demonstrated need for funding.
- **Location and Community Impact:** The garden or proposed garden must be physically located within one of the designated target ZIPcodes or identified food desert areas, or demonstrate that a substantial portion of its produce is distributed to residents within those designated communities
- **Compliance with Laws and Regulations:** The garden must comply with all applicable local, state, and federal ordinances, zoning requirements, and operational regulations. Documentation of site ownership or approval may be requested.
- **Sustainability Commitment:** The garden must commit to remaining operational and actively maintained for a minimum of three (3) years following receipt of grant funding.
- **Minimum Garden Infrastructure (New gardens only):** For newly established gardens, the proposed site must include at least two (2) raised beds or in-ground planting areas, with a combined minimum planting footprint of 16 square feet or greater at the time of installation.
- **Participation in Technical Assistance Program:** Grant recipients must agree to actively participate in the DCHHS/AgriLife Community Gardens Support and Volunteer Program. Participation includes engaging in technical assistance, training, volunteer coordination, reporting requirements, and other support activities designed to strengthen garden operations and long-term success.

**Applications which do not meet listed criteria may be administratively withdrawn without full evaluation.*

Program Requirements

To be eligible and remain in good standing throughout the grant cycle, participating community gardens must adhere to the following requirements:

- Completion of the Pre-Application Community Garden Training is required. At least one garden staff member must participate. *This requirement is considered met if a staff member (s) has completed appropriate training within the past two years.*
- The garden must dedicate 100% of its space to growing produce. A small area may be used for pollinator-friendly plants.
- The garden site must meet minimum suitability standards, including adequate growing space, 6–8 hours of direct sunlight daily, and access to a water source or documented ability to extend an existing water line to the site.
- The total weight (lb) of produce harvested as a result of the grant must be reported for the applicable planting season following utilization of the funding.
- At least 5% of all produce grown must be donated to a local food bank or pantry.
- The garden should strictly prohibit tobacco use/smoking on garden grounds.
- The garden must remain free of illegal substances or prohibited plants.
- Gardens are encouraged to use environmentally friendly products in the maintenance of the garden.
- A detailed expenditure report, along with photographs of the garden and a signed photorelease form, must be submitted with the invoice for reimbursement. A clear color photograph showing the entire planting or proposed garden area must be included with the application. *Handwritten sketches will not be accepted.*
- Approved gardens must designate a minimum of two Garden Stewards to oversee garden operations. Both Stewards are required to complete an approved gardening training, such as *Edible Gardening for All* or an equivalent program if they have not already done so. Documentation verifying training completion may be requested by Program Staff.
- Gardens without a trained gardening professional on staff must agree to accept technical assistance from an assigned Texas Master Gardener as a program requirement.
- Grant funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis on invoices using the DCHHS-provided invoicing form (see attachment), along with all required supporting documentation including receipts.

Evaluation Criteria

Once applications are received, the following five factors will be taken into consideration when ranking each application:

- **Mission and Purpose of the Garden (20 points):** Clarity and alignment of the garden's goals with grant objectives and community needs.
- **Gardeners and Volunteer Resources (20 points):** The number of current or planned gardeners and availability of volunteer support.
- **Community Involvement (20 points):** Engagement with the surrounding community and collaboration with local partners.
- **Budget and Use of Funds (20 points):** Appropriateness and feasibility of the proposed budget and planned expenses.
- **Sustainability (20 points):** Operational stability, and plans for continued maintenance and growth.

How to submit your application

Applications for the Community Garden Mini-Grant must be submitted online through the official application form available on the DCHHS Chronic Disease Prevention Division webpage at the link below:

<https://forms.office.com/g/iCwJ8Asvkv>

Please note: The online application does not offer a "Save and Continue Later" option. Applicants must complete and submit the application in a single session. It is strongly recommended that all required information and supporting documentation be gathered and prepared in advance before starting the application. The application process may take approximately 30 minutes to one hour to complete.

Applications requesting funding in excess of the maximum allowable amount will be administratively withdrawn and will not proceed to be reviewed.

If you have any questions, contact DCHHS Chronic Disease Prevention Division Urban Agriculture Program at DCHHS.UrbanAg@dallascounty.org or (214) 819-5115.

The deadline for the DCHHS Community Garden mini-grant application is **September 30, 2026**. Once you have submitted your application, we will contact you to confirm receipt. Selection of applicants will be completed by **November 30, 2026**. Following the notice of selection, selected applicants will be contacted by CDPD staff to facilitate establishment of the MOU. Please note that final approval of the grant award is executed by the Dallas County Commissioners Court, and recipients can only be reimbursed for funds that are expended on and after the effective date of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) following the Court's approval. Here are the steps in the application and approval process:

All grant funds must be expended on or before **May 31, 2027**. Any expenses incurred after this date will not be eligible for reimbursement. In addition, all reimbursement requests must be submitted no later than **June 15, 2027**.

Steps in the Application and Approval Process:

Steps	Action	Party	Remark
STEP -1	Applicants submit applications through on-line form	Applicant garden	Applicants may contact CDPD for assistance
STEP -2	Application Review	CDPD staff	CDPD may request additional information and/or a site visit
STEP -3	Selection by DCHHS	CDPD staff and DCHHS management	Approval by DCHHS management
STEP -4	MOU	DCHHS & Applicant Garden	Applicant garden has the opportunity to review final draft
STEP -5	Final decision and approval	Dallas County Commissioners Court	MOU Execution date is effective date of award
STEP -6	Reimbursement request/invoice	Recipient garden	Invoice form and back up documents
STEP -7	Impact assessment <i>(Required)</i>	Recipient garden & DCHHS	Impact assessment form, pictures, and media release