



## Unity Gardens Grant Guidelines

About Unity Gardens: Unity Gardens supports the building of community partnerships through its grassroots grants program. We fund volunteer-led native gardening projects in Anne Arundel County such as rain gardens, erosion control projects, and pollinator gardens, which use the power of plants to address issues like stormwater runoff and pollution. Unity Gardens envisions a world where common citizens are the first step toward environmental change.

**Small Grants** of up to \$500 or **Large Grants** up to \$1000 are available. \$500 grants are ideal for small projects or projects that have matching funds (which we look highly upon). \$1000 grants are better for groups that need all funds to come from their Unity Gardens grant. Unfortunately, due to limited funds, not all projects will receive funding.

Our Spring Grant deadline is March 1 (applications available January 15) and our Fall Grant Cycle deadline is August 1 (applications available June 15). Funds may be used for native trees, shrubs, and plants and limited materials that support the life of these plants, such as mulch, soil amendments, tree protection, etc).

### Eligibility

- Projects must be located in Anne Arundel County, Maryland.
- Projects must be organized by a community-based association, HOA, PTA, faith-based congregation, scout or other volunteer or non-profit organization and have a strong volunteer component.
- Projects must be located on organization-owned property, public property (i.e school or library grounds, stormwater management areas, parks) with documented permission from the public owner of the property, or on property owned by the nonprofit.
- *80% of the funding must be used for plant material.* Up to 20% may be used for plant survivorship materials such as mulch, soil amendments, tree protection, etc. or educational signage, considered on a case by case basis.
- Projects with 100% of funding going toward native plants are preferred.
- Unity Gardens will only provide funding for native plants. No annuals or non-native species will be funded. Visit <http://unitygardens.org/grant-information/native-plants/> for more information on native plants.
- Grantees should have a bank account in the name of the grantee or grantee organization.

## Requirements Following Approval

- Each grantee will be required to:
  - Confirm a start date of the project
  - Notify Unity Gardens of any changes to the original proposal (i.e. plants, dates, remaining funds, etc)
  - Inform Unity Gardens of any press releases, events, or publicity around the planting.
  - Acknowledge Unity Gardens in all promotional material, on social media, and post Unity Gardens sign (to be provided to grantee).
  - If permits are required, the permit must be obtained before the project begins. The applicant is responsible for checking with the appropriate local jurisdiction to determine if any permits are required.
  - Projects are to be completed within the grant cycle for which the grant is awarded (Spring or Fall) unless an extension has been granted.
- A final report will be due by December 1 for Fall grants and August 1 for Spring grants. It must include:
  - A summary of the project as implemented.
  - A complete and accurate spreadsheet of the funds received and expenses incurred under the grant, plus all receipts.
  - Remaining funds or those that cannot be accounted for with receipts must be returned to Unity Gardens.
  - Copies of news releases and photos, including before and after photos.
  - The project lead is responsible for both informing participants that photos may be utilized by Unity Gardens on our website and in promotional materials, and ensuring verbal or written permission from individuals depicted in submitted photos as described in the grant agreement.
  - Outline of a plan on project site maintenance after installation, including designation of a maintenance supervisor. After project completion, the Grantee agrees to maintain the project in good condition and repair or replace damaged or dead plants for a minimum of 2 years.
- Upon approval of the Final Report, Grantee will provide recognition to Unity Gardens installing a Unity Gardens sign (provided to grantee at a minimal co-pay cost) or including the Unity Gardens logo on educational signage at the project site.
- The proposal funded by Unity Gardens belongs to the organization requesting the grant and not any individual member or volunteer of the organization.

## Selection Criteria

Selection will be based on the following criteria:

- Level of volunteer participation and development of community leadership.
- Potential benefit to the community and the environment. Projects that address environmental issues such as erosion, stormwater management, or habitat protection.
- Feasibility of project plan, including goals, timeline, budget, and breakdown of plant and other materials.
- Detailed budget, proof of fiscal responsibility, and financial need.

- Soundness of long term plan for maintenance and sustainability.
- Projects with a financial match by the requesting organization will be looked upon favorably.
- First priority is given to first-time grantees meeting or exceeding all eligibility requirements.
- Second priority is given to repeat grantees in good standing, as funds allow.
- An organization may not receive a Unity Gardens grant more than once in a 12 month period.
- Projects with 100% of funding going toward native plants are preferred.

### **Funding Restrictions**

- Only native trees, shrubs, and perennials will be funded. No annuals or invasive species will receive funding.
- Unity Gardens grant funds may not be used for hardscape, equipment, snacks, or delivery fees.
- Grant funds may not be used on private property (other than private property owned by a nonprofit or community association).
- Unity Gardens will require a refund for the cost of materials not funded in our guidelines or for items without an invoice/receipts.

### **Award Notification**

All applicants will receive an email notice of Unity Gardens' decision. An application may be declined, partially awarded, or fully awarded. If approved, Unity Gardens will email a grant agreement with grant conditions. Have it signed by the head of the organization, then scan, and return the signed agreement. Unity Gardens will mail the check to the Grantee following Unity Gardens' receipt of the signed agreement.

Applications are accepted in good faith. Unity Gardens Inc shall be held harmless in the event of changes in leadership or structure of organizations receiving grant funds.

Unity Gardens, Inc is a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization.

*Updated January 2021*