



Whole Kids Foundation Garden Grant In Partnership with FoodCorps: Eligibility Criteria and FAQs

The School Garden Grant Program is a collaboration between Whole Kids Foundation and FoodCorps. A school garden is a vital educational tool—every seed planted sprouts a new opportunity for kids to cultivate healthy eating habits! Teaching kids to garden helps them learn about complex topics like sustainability and conservation, food systems, and community awareness.

To be eligible for the \$2,000 (US\$) School Garden Grant, an applicant must be a nonprofit K-12 school (public, private or charter - elementary, middle, or secondary) and/or a 501(c)(3) organization that is developing or currently maintaining a garden project on school grounds that will engage children with fresh fruits and vegetables.

Garden projects may be at any stage of development (planning, construction or operation). In selecting grant recipients, priority will be given to both limited-resource communities and to projects that demonstrate strong buy-in from stakeholders, as well as demonstrating ability to financially sustain the garden.

There is a limit of one garden grant per school. We will only consider applications in the U.S. (including territories) and Canada. We are not able to fund projects in other countries at this time.

To be considered, applications must be completed online by October 31, 2013. Applications must be complete and submitted in order to be considered. Initial grantees will be announced March 2014. Grant funds will only be disbursed after a Grant Agreement has been signed and returned by grantee. Final funding decisions will be made and grants will be awarded by the Whole Kids Foundation. Funds will be disbursed to recipients as a one-time, one-year award. Completion of an end-of-grant survey will be required for all recipients.

For any questions related to the application process, first review the FAQ and preview the Application, then contact gardens@wholekidsfoundation.org if you need assistance.

Thank you for your commitment to gardening and helping to grow healthy kids!

With deep appreciation,
Whole Kids Foundation and FoodCorps

TIMELINE:

Application opens: September 1, 2013

Application deadline: **October 31, 2013 at 5pm CT (3pm PT, 4pm MT, 6pm ET)**

Review Period: Winter 2014

Notification of all applicants: March 2014

ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA:

- Applicant must be a nonprofit K-12 school (public, private or charter, elementary, middle or secondary) or a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working in partnership with a K-12 school
- Applicant must not have received a Whole Kids Foundation Garden Grant previously
- Applicant must have the capacity to receive and manage grant funds responsibly and the skills and experience necessary to undertake a project involving school gardens
- Applicant must demonstrate that the garden project has strong participation from stakeholders, including the school principal, volunteers and a community partner
- Applicant must demonstrate that thoughtful consideration is being given to the technical challenges of school garden construction and maintenance: soil testing, water availability, tool storage and municipal regulations
- Applicant must articulate a compelling plan for integrating the garden into the life of the school and community and must have plans to put the garden's produce to good use
- Applicant must provide a comprehensive budget and plan for financial sustainability

APPLICATION PROCESS:

The application is conducted online and is a two-phase process:

1. **Phase I:** Applicants submit school and/or organization information and a discreet set of questions to determine eligibility. (see below)
2. **Phase II:** Within a couple of weeks, applicants will be notified of their eligibility to move onto Phase II and submit a full application.

All Applicants will be notified by email when decisions have been made, beginning March 2014.

Applicants will be required to provide the following in their applications:

1. **Principal's signed Letter of Support:** Please provide a letter committing support for your garden project, signed by the principal, and presented on school letterhead.
2. **Garden photos:** Please upload at least one digital photo of your garden space, however, the more photos you share, the better sense our reviewers can have of your garden (up to three photos). You may also scan a diagram of your garden's dimensions and layout. Please note the following requirements and directions:
 - **Save images as a PNG, JPG, or GIF.**

- Maximum size for each photo: 5M MB
- For new garden projects, please provide existing space photos as well as a proposed layout.
- If selected, the 1st photo will be used to represent your school garden on our website.
- We hope you can provide pictures with your students! If you do, only upload photos with students for whom you have a photo release form signed by their parent or guardian.

3. Tax Verification Form:

- **US Private school or a non-profit organization:** upload your organization's Federal IRS Tax- Exempt Determination letter.
- **US Public school:** upload a document with your school's name and NCES #.
- **Canadian school:** upload a document that verifies your non-profit or charity status.

REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE:

- Grantee holds full legal and financial responsibility for its garden project
- Grant funds are subject to audit; receipts must be kept by grantee for 6 years
- Grant awardees will be required to complete one or more post-grant award surveys. These reports help the Whole Kids Foundation and FoodCorps determine the overall impact of the grant program, assess the need that exists in schools across the country, garner additional support for school gardens, and highlight your school's successes. Recipients who do not complete will not be eligible to apply for future awards, and may have funds rescinded.

NEED HELP?

Please see our FAQs below for more details.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Because each school garden is unique, we know that questions may arise about how to describe a garden project in the grant application. We hope that these FAQs are helpful, and we will do our best to keep them updated as we receive more common questions.

Relevant dates:

- **September 1st:** Application opens
- **October 31st:** Application closes
- **March 2014:** Notifications sent to all applicants

Who can apply for School Garden Grants?

- Public schools
- Public charter schools
- Private schools with 501(c)(3) status
- Private charter schools with 501(c)(3) status
- 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations supporting a garden at a public or a non-profit private school
- All must be within the United States or Canada

If my school received a School Garden Grant last year, are we able to apply again this year?

No; this year we are only accepting applications on behalf of schools who have not previously received a School Garden Grant from Whole Kids Foundation. We would like to support as many schools across the nation as we can!

My organization would like to build a garden space that will not be located on the grounds of a school, but will be used by school children. Can we apply?

The School Garden Grant Program is currently focused on supporting school gardens---i.e., gardens that are located on school grounds and part of a school community. Therefore, our focus is on school applicants, or nonprofit organizations wishing to support the creation or expansion of a garden at a school. While we value the benefit of all educational gardens, if the school garden you wish to support is near a school rather than on school grounds, we are not able to accept an application for your school garden.

Can pre-K schools apply for School Garden Grants?

While we believe pre-K school garden projects are incredibly worthwhile, the focus of this year's School Garden Grant Program is on K-12 garden projects. Therefore, we are not accepting applications from programs that are solely pre-K. If your school includes both pre-k and older grades, then you are eligible to apply.

Can home schools apply for School Garden Grants?

Applicants for School Garden Grants must be public schools or 501(c)(3) nonprofits, including private and charter schools that are nonprofits. Therefore, in order for a home school to apply for and be eligible for a School Garden Grant, the home school would need to have either an IRS 501(c)(3) tax-exemption letter or a NCES school ID#. School garden grants will not be made to individuals, families, and community groups that do not meet those general requirements.

If my organization applied on behalf of multiple schools last year and one school received a grant but the others did not, are we able to apply for those other schools?

Yes; you are able to apply for the other schools who did not receive a school garden grant last year even though you will be the same applicant on behalf of the schools. You will not be able to apply for the school who did receive a School Garden Grant from Whole Kids Foundation.

If my school garden has received funds or a grant from another organization or company, are we eligible to apply for this grant?

Absolutely! We love to support school gardens that will continue to be sustainable after our contributions. We will accept and highly encourage outside support for your school garden. In fact, please share this with us on your application.

My school or organization is located outside of the US or Canada. Can we apply?

Applicants must be located in the US (and territories) or Canada in order to be eligible to receive School Garden Grants. Schools, organizations, and garden projects based in other countries are not eligible at this time.

What is a community partner?

Schools are the perfect place to create garden learning spaces because so many children, parents, teachers, and others make up the school community each year. At the same time, the particular names and faces of those involved in a school and its garden spaces may change over time. For that reason, each grant applicant is required to partner with an organization or business from the community that will help to bring long-term sustainability to the initiative—a “community partner.” A community partner can be any organization that intends to support the garden for years to come, including a nonprofit, a local farm, a hardware or garden store, a restaurant, a Whole Foods store, or a garden club. If the grant applicant is a nonprofit that will be working with a school on a garden, then the nonprofit applicant may also serve as garden project’s community partner.

Who are the people important for the realization and growth of the garden?

The Garden Coordinator is the individual who is spearheading the Garden Project, i.e. parent, teacher, student, community member, etc. Recruiting and engaging volunteers - for anything from weeding and planting to providing marketing or organizational support - is a key way to grow and sustain your school garden and to connect with the community. And person or persons working with the school garden who has gardening experience (e.g., a master gardener or experienced volunteer).

Do we need to be located within a certain radius of a Whole Foods Market to apply?

No, you do not need to be located in a community with a Whole Foods Market in order apply for a School Garden Grant. While some of the schools chosen to receive grants may be near a Whole Foods Market, proximity to a Whole Foods store is not an eligibility requirement and it will not be a determinant in the grant selection process.

United States school related questions***What is a NCES ID #?***

The National Center for Education Statistics (“NCES”) is an arm of the U.S. Department of Education that collects and makes available data about schools in the United States. You may search for U.S. public schools and school districts and their NCES ID #s [here](http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/) (<http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/>). If your school or school district has a NCES ID #, that number must be provided in the application.

What if my school is a private school and does not have an NCES #?

If your school is a private school or a private charter school, please provide your EIN#. You will not be required to enter your NCES#.

What is an IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter?

An IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter is a letter from the IRS affirming a nonprofit’s tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. With very few exceptions, all nonprofits that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) have received a determination letter at some point in time, and all nonprofit grant applicants must provide a copy of that letter. To find out whether your nonprofit is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3), or to order a new letter affirming your nonprofit’s tax-exempt status, you may contact the IRS Exempt Organizations

Division. More information may be found [here \(http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Charitable-Organizations\)](http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Charitable-Organizations).

Am I required to provide a Federal IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter? What about a State IRS letter?

All private school applicants, including private charter schools must provide a copy of their **Federal** IRS determination letter in order to verify their 501(c)(3) non-profit status. A State IRS determination letter will not be accepted. Public schools do not need to provide this and can simply provide their NCES # to verify their public status.

If our school does not offer free or reduced-price lunches, will we still be considered for a grant?

Yes, your application will still be considered even if your school does not offer free or reduced-price lunches. Because priority for grants will be given to projects connected with schools in limited-resource communities, lack of a free or reduced-price lunch program may impact the overall competitiveness of your application.

Canadian School related question

Does our school need to supply a NCES ID #?

No, this requirement applies to United States schools only. Please provide your charity number and a copy of this documentaiton to satisfy the tax ID and tax exempt documentation requirement.