

2027 Garden Grants Proposal Guidelines



Apply online at bit.ly/gardengrants2027
Questions? growapp@berea.edu / 859-985-3195

Program Overview & Requirements

We partner with organizations, communities, and families in Appalachia to create healthy, resilient, and economically viable food systems.

Grow Appalachia seeks to impact food insecurity in central Appalachia by helping as many Appalachian families grow as much of their own food as possible through grant-making to non-profits throughout central Appalachia, including Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina. These organizations administer an organic gardening program at the local level, delivering organic production resources & technical assistance through a hired partner site coordinator so that families truly have all they need to grow their own food.

Partners must meet the following requirements:

1) 501(c)3 Status or Fiscal Sponsorship: We can only award funds to organizations with 501(c)3 status or organizations receiving fiscal sponsorship from a 501(c)3 organization. Organizations hosting the program should be embedded in the community with a history of food security work & outreach. We need to see evidence of fiscal management policies in place to responsibly deliver the program.

2) Prioritize Backyard Gardeners: Our priority is to fund education and resources for backyard gardeners. We also encourage you to provide information & resources to gardeners if they wish to scale up production and sell at local markets. However, this isn't required.

3) Garden Visits: Each participant garden should be visited at least once per program cycle.

4) Funding Restrictions: Funds from a Grow Appalachia grant can only go towards organic gardening practices, education & resources. Non-organic (conventional) materials & education cannot be covered through this grant. A detailed list of items we cannot fund is found on the budget page.

5) Organic Gardening Curriculum: Grow Appalachia requires every site to host six organic gardening classes throughout the growing season: (1) garden planning, (2) garden planting, (3) organic garden maintenance, (4) food preservation, (5) heart-healthy cooking, and (6) season extension. Program participants are expected to attend all six classes. We are happy to support your development and delivery of this curriculum. Check out sample curricula on our Garden Grants webpage. Please keep in mind that these classes must be taught at appropriate times throughout the year.

6) Bi-Monthly Reporting: We require 4 reports due the first weeks of April, June, August and November. Reports are robust Excel documents that are reviewed at the annual All Hands Gathering in February, and on-going assistance is provided throughout the year. Reports will require you to track purchasing, harvest data, participation information, workshops, employment, produce sales, and external resources. The report template is available on our Garden Grants webpage.

7) Bi-Monthly Blogging: All sites must submit a blog on individually assigned deadlines in March, May, July, and September. Blog and report deadlines alternate.

8) All Hands Gathering: All sites must send at least one representative (no more than two) to attend the annual All Hands Gathering on February 11-12th, 2027 at Berea College.

PROPOSAL, Part 1: Application Questions

Please address the following questions. Your application must be submitted at bit.ly/gardengrants2027. You may use this offline version to plan your responses before submitting the online version.

NEW SITES ONLY:

- **Introduction:** Tell us about your community, your organization, and your role in that organization. (300 words or less)
- **Rationale:** Why does your community need a Garden Grants program? (200 words or less)

RETURNING SITES ONLY:

- **Reflection:** Please provide a reflection of your 2026 season so far using the following prompts: What challenges and successes did you experience? What do you want to celebrate, and how did your program grow? Has your organization faced any staffing or leadership transitions in 2026? If so, please elaborate. (300 words or less)

REQUIRED FOR ALL SITES:

- **Fiscal Sponsorship:** Please provide the name and federal EIN of your fiscal sponsor for 2027, if your organization is not a 501(c)3. This organization must have a 501(c)3 status. Describe how you plan to manage grant funds and ensure they are only spent on the program.
- **Context:** Has your community faced any major disruptions over the past two years that have impacted food and/or land access? (100 words or less)
- **Geographic Area:** Please list all counties, zip codes, and states where you plan to work.
- **Participants:** How many households / participants / backyard gardens do you plan to work with in 2027? What percentage of first-time gardeners (who have never gardened before) do you plan to include in the cohort?
- **Goals & Objectives:** What are your goals for this program, and how will it impact your community? (300 words or less)
- **Advertisement, Recruitment & Retention:** How do you plan to recruit participants into the program & engage them throughout the program year? How will you retain participants and require their participation through class attendance and harvest reporting?
- **Partners:** Who/which organizations will you collaborate with to deliver this program?
- **Organic Education:** What is your experience delivering organic gardening education in your community? Who will you lean on for technical support? Have you faced any resistance to adopting these practices? If so, how are you working to overcome these barriers?
- **Curriculum:** How will you administer the 6 required classes to your participants? Please provide a tentative schedule.
- **Capacity:** How will program responsibilities be delegated across your team?
- **Program Sustainability:** Which aspects of your program could continue without funding from Grow Appalachia?

PROPOSAL, Part 2: Budget Request

Budget requests must be divided into the six categories described below. You must upload your most recent organizational budget and your specific program budget for 2027. Use the budget template found on our Garden Grant webpage or at our online application at bit.ly/gardengrants2027

LABOR

Labor requests may not exceed more than 50% of the total grant request. Please estimate hours worked each month and the hourly rate. You may hire more than one person to administer the program. We will not consider proposals where temporary Americorps VISTA volunteers are the supervisors.

TRAVEL

Please estimate how many miles you will travel to visit your gardeners, pick up supplies and attend the All Hands Gathering in Berea, KY in February. This section does not include any fuel for farm equipment such as tractors.

INSTRUCTIONAL COSTS

Include costs for your 6 required classes here, including workshop supplies, instructor fees, classroom rental fees, demonstration supplies, etc.

CONSUMABLES

Consumables are anything that will likely not be around the second year, including seeds, plants, organic pest control items, organic fertilizers, fuel for farm equipment, etc.

EQUIPMENT

These are durable investments which are expected to last beyond the first year they're distributed, such as hand tools, walk-behind tractors, drip irrigation supplies, pressure canners, etc.

ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

Administrative costs cannot exceed more than 5% of the budget subtotal. These costs include fiscal management, office supplies, phone & internet costs directly related to your Grow Appalachia program, etc.

WHAT WE CANNOT FUND

Non-organic sprays, fertilizers or treated seeds; animals raised for meat production; conference travel or registration; workshop honoraria; consultant positions; general facility maintenance; program vehicles; computers (Berea College offers free refurbished laptops to our partner sites every year); decorative garden infrastructure; flowers & decorative plants

GRANT TIMELINE

Proposal submissions open:
August 1

Deadline for draft submission:
September 1

Deadline for final proposals:
October 1

2027 partners announced by
mid-November

SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL

Submit your application & upload the required documents using this link: bit.ly/gardengrants2027
Questions? Email us: growapp@berea.edu
or call us: (859) 985-3195