University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener Program

Master Gardener Project Mini-Grant Instructions

What is the purpose of this program?
This mini grants program is supported by the Master Gardener Silent Auction held at the annual state conference. These funds will help local Master Gardener programs receive start-up or continuation funds for their community projects.

What can be funded?
These grants are to be used for gardening/horticulture programs which benefit communities and meet the goals of the University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener program. Projects must have an educational focus and should be based on one of the six Extension priorities. These priorities include energy and environmental stewardship; food safety and security; economic development and workforce preparedness; family health, financial security and wellness; and youth development. Preference will be given to programs which make multiple contacts with their audiences – rather than single day events.

Existing projects or new projects will both be considered for grant funds. Grant money is not intended to fund an entire project but may provide a jump-start to a project in need of money. Consider these funds as a starting point and then seek other sources of funding such as community partners or fundraising activities.

How much money will be available?
The amount of grant money distributed each year will depend on the previous year’s silent auction profits and will be at the discretion of the judging committee. Maximum award is $1200. Grants will be awarded annually. One grant awarded per county per year. Counties may submit more than 1 project.
Who should write the mini-grant proposal?
The proposal should be written in collaboration with Extension staff and Master Gardener volunteers.

How should the application be submitted?
Please send applications by email to Monica David using the mini-grant application form. No handwritten applications. Applications must be emailed by a staff person. The submission must follow the instructions given. Applications over the page limit or which do not follow instructions will not be considered.

Attachments may be included with the application. Counties are encouraged to include drawings/and or pictures. Limit attachments to 3. The total application should be no more than 5 pages and fewer than 10 MB.

How will the money be awarded?
The state Master Gardener office will reimburse unit offices for expenses up to the amount of the mini-grant. Unit offices should provide documentation to the state office of expenses incurred.

What is the expectation for reporting back to the state office?
Grant winners will not be expected to write extensive reports. However project leaders will be asked to write a brief summary of the project to be used for the Imagine newsletter, administrative reports or an MG blog. Evaluation and impact are important parts of this mini-grant program and this information will be used for state and national reporting.

What is the time-line for the mini-grants?
Applications are due on January 31 of each year to the state office. Winners will be announced on March 1. Winners will submit a brief summary by January 31 of the year after the grant was awarded.

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