



Improve Your Odds: Tips to Strengthen Your Grant Proposal

Presented By:

Kaitlyn Vollmer, Grants Program Coordinator

Overview

- Sustainable Jersey Grants Program
- General Tips
- Selection Process for 2k Grants
- 2k Proposal Evaluation Criteria
- Selection Process for 10k Grants
- 10k/20k Proposal Evaluation Criteria
 - Example Proposal Sections
 - How to Utilize the “Actions”
- Available Grant Writing Resources
- Q&A



Bellmawr Borough created a sign honoring the sponsors of their community garden.

Sustainable Jersey Grants Program

- Funded over **400** municipal projects and distributed over **\$4.9 million** in grants since 2009
- Is an important resource benefit for communities participating in the certification program
- Offers **coaching** on how to submit a successful grant application
 - Debrief calls for non-recipients following every cycle
 - Webinars preceding every cycle
 - Sessions and workshops at conferences
 - grants@ all year round



Waterford Township is awarded a \$10,000 Sustainable Jersey grant funded through the PSEG Foundation in 2018.

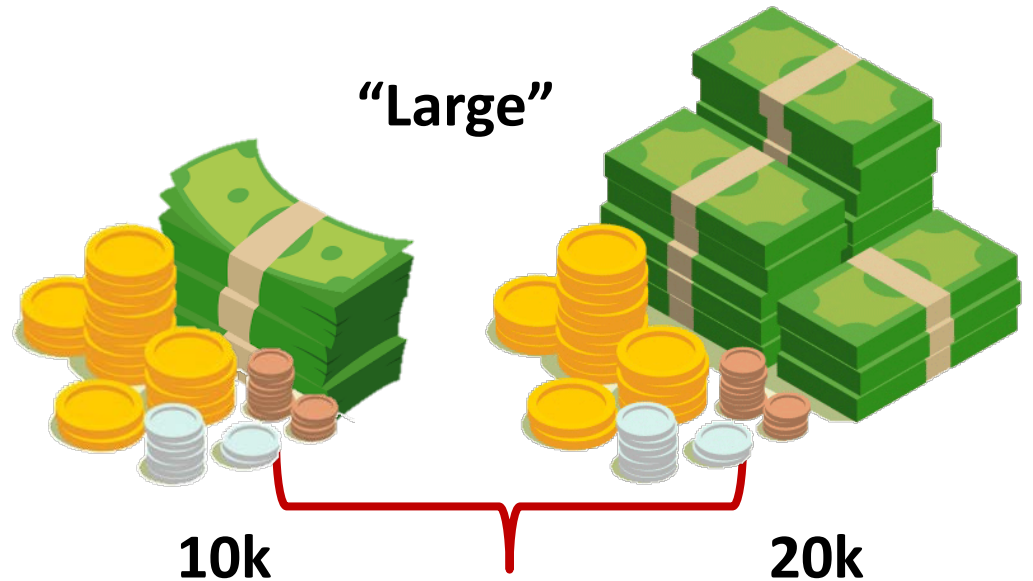
Sustainable Jersey Grants Program

Grant Levels



2k

- Easier application form
- **Can** be used to fund a project that can be used in an action submission to gain points toward your municipality's certification efforts
- Can be used to support general green team efforts and build capacity



- Same application form
- **Must** be used to fund a project that can be used in an action submission to gain points toward your municipality's certification efforts
- More rigorous selection process and evaluation criteria

Selection Process for 2k Applications

- **MAIN GOAL:** To support green teams in participating towns
- **50%** of grant funding reserved for certified communities
- Main considerations
 - Certification efforts
 - Total amount of grant funding received (in past cycles)
 - Regional distribution of funding
 - Evaluation Criteria



2k Proposal Evaluation Criteria

- Grant proposals will be screened using the following criteria:
 - The clarity of the project description
 - Strength of the action plan that will guide green team's activities
 - Budget includes only eligible and reasonable expenses
 - **The demonstrated commitment of the green team and municipality to move forward with sustainability efforts**



Delanco Township's Green Team tabling at Delanco Community Day

Selection Process for 10k/20k Applications

- **MAIN GOAL:** To support a well thought out project that directly relates to one of our program actions that a municipality does not have the resources to complete on their own
- **50%** of grant funding reserved for certified communities
- Decided by a **Blue Ribbon Selection Committee** composed of colleagues from partner organizations
- Main considerations
 - **Evaluation Criteria**
 - More rigorous than that of the 2k grant proposals



10k/20k Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Project
Description

20 Points

Project Team
Members

10 Points

Action Plan
& Timeline

20 Points

Community
Engagement

10 Points

Project
Impact

20 Points

Budget

20 Points

TOTAL = 100 Points

Project Description

The description **concisely** summarizes the **specific project** to be funded by the grant award and explains how it will address a **need** within the town. The proposed project will contribute toward the successful **completion of a Sustainable Jersey action**

Common Oversights

- Too much detail on other initiatives
 - Background info is good but actual project should not get lost
 - Should be 500 words or less
- Does not name a SJ action
- Does not identify a clear need

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SJ Actions

Back to Top	Expand All	Collapse All
<input type="radio"/> Animals in the Community		
<input type="radio"/> Arts & Creative Culture		
<input type="radio"/> Brownfields		
<input type="radio"/> Community Partnership & Outreach		
<input type="radio"/> Diversity & Equity		
<input type="radio"/> Emergency Management & Resiliency		
<input type="radio"/> Energy		
<input type="radio"/> Food		
<input type="radio"/> Green Design		
<input type="radio"/> Health & Wellness		
<input type="radio"/> Innovation & Demonstration Projects		
<input type="radio"/> Land Use & Transportation		
<input type="radio"/> Local Economies		
<input type="radio"/> Natural Resources		
<input type="radio"/> Operations & Maintenance		
<input type="radio"/> Public Information & Engagement		
<input type="radio"/> Sustainability & Climate Planning		
<input type="radio"/> Waste Management		

EXAMPLE

Project Description for Community Garden

- **Project Title:** Grants Town's Community Garden
- **Brief Project Description:** Grants Town Green Team is working on the Food actions as part of our certification efforts. We already have a successful farmers market with local vendors, but the community has expressed interest in increasing access to fresh, healthy food by creating a community garden (see attached survey). This grant will allow us to create a community garden utilizing the guidelines from the Community Gardens action. We will reserve a few plots to be maintained by the Green Team and used to grow produce for our local food pantry.

Project Team Members

The designated project team appears **qualified** to undertake the proposed project. The project team includes **representation from community stakeholder groups** that will be involved in or impacted by the implementation of the proposed project

Common Oversights

- No evidence of qualifications
- Too many resumes that are not necessary
- Missing representation from important stakeholders
- Project team does not include titles or responsibilities



Highland Park Borough's project team for their Plastic Bag Reduction Campaign.

Community Gardens 10 Points

Why is it important?

Who should lead and be involved with this action?

Timeframe

Project costs and resource needs


What to do, and how to do it ("How to")

What to submit to earn points for this action

Spotlight: What NJ municipalities are doing

Resources

 Print Action Description

 Download PDF Version

Who should lead and be involved with this action?

To carry out this action, it is important that a municipal representative is committed to supporting the implementation of local food production and gardens in the community. Leadership can come from the Green Team, Municipal Agricultural Advisory Committee, Open Space and Environmental Commissions, Public Works Department, Parks and Recreation Commission, Community Health Educators, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment members, and community nonprofit organizations. See the **Resources section** for a list of organizations that can help support the development of a community garden.

Tips

- Consider holding a public meeting or a survey to garner community interest and volunteers
- Think of community resources specific to your town (such as a local Boy Scouts troops)
- Resumes are mostly necessary for consultants **(upload in optional information section)**

EXAMPLE

Project Team for Community Garden

DPW Members

(List of names and titles)

Responsible for leading the volunteer effort of building the raised beds for the garden. Will instruct volunteers such as green team members and local Boy Scouts on how to build the beds. Will also assist with additional site prep such as setting up a water line and installing a shed.

Rutgers Master Gardener

(Name and title)

Responsible for training green team members in horticulture and organic gardening practices so that they are able to maintain the garden plots for the food pantry. Will ensure best practices are used when creating and maintaining the garden. Also will provide gardening workshops to interested residents. Completing this volunteer service in order to receive certified status.

Action Plan & Timeline

The proposed project action plan addresses the **steps needed to successfully complete** the project. Target completion dates are **realistic** and will enable the project to be completed within the 18-month performance period (**starting April 2019**)

Common Oversights

- Missing steps
- Lacks details
- Unrealistic completion dates
- Starts before grant is awarded



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Timeframe

Starting a new community can take 6-9 months for planning and implementation.

What to do, and how to do it (“How to”)

This section provides guidance and recommendations for implementing the action. A municipality does not need to follow this guidance exactly as long as it meets the requirements for earning points for this action.

To earn points for this action, the garden must be on municipal-owned property, open to members of the community, and provide substantial support for the construction and ongoing operations of the garden.

NOTE: This action is specifically for a community garden. A school garden will only be eligible for points if the municipality demonstrates meaningful support as outlined above. A school garden simply residing within the town, that was built and maintained by the school, will not be eligible for points. More detailed information on what to submit for a school garden can be found in the “What to Submit” section. If a school is participating in the Sustainable Jersey for Schools program, it may be eligible to earn points for its school garden in that program.

The garden must be operational during the year in which you are applying for certification.

EXAMPLE

AP&T For Community Garden

Steps/Tasks that the Project Team will take to Complete the Proposed Grant Project	Team Member Responsible	Target Completion Date
Planning Steps		
1. Survey residents for interest in community garden	Green Team	CAN BEGIN
2. Schedule a time for Master Gardener to provide training	Green Team	BEFORE
3. Prep website page/administration for plot purchasing	Green Team	GRANT IS
		AWARDED
Implementation Steps		
1. Master Gardener trains green team	Master Gardener	DURING
2. Construct raised beds and other site prep	DPW	THE
3. Establish a working relationship with local food pantry	Green Team	GRANT
		PERIOD
Community Outreach Activities		
1. Master Gardener offers workshops to residents	Master Gardener	DURING/
2. Ribbon Cutting Ceremony (plots now available for purchase)	Green Team	AFTER
3. Produce donation to food pantry	Green Team	GRANT
		PERIOD
Evaluation and Reporting Steps		
1. Collect documentation for certification submission	Green Team	DURING/AFTER
2. Keep website up to date with statistics	Green Team	GRANT
3. Survey residents that participated in workshops	Green Team	PERIOD

Community Engagement

The proposed project will capitalize on **collaborations** between community-based organizations. The Action Plan includes efforts to **share the success** of the project with the wider community.

Common Oversights

- Does not make a clear effort to include community in all steps of project
- Does not make a clear effort to share success with the community
- Does not make use of resources available from community organizations



Millburn Township and South Orange Village Green Team members celebrate the success of their Take-Out Transitions to Green project with elected officials and restaurant owners/staff.

Tips

Community Gardens

10 Points

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- Letters of support go a long way (**upload in optional information section**)

Resources

The following resources may be helpful in completing this action.

America's Grow-A-Row Program

Thanks to the efforts of over 7,000 dedicated volunteers in New Jersey, Grow-a-Row has donated over 6 million pounds of fresh, healthy produce to feed the hungry since 2002. The combination of increased obesity, the housing crises, and increased living expenses highlights the importance of the program's efforts at decreasing hunger. Grow-A-Row programs use volunteers for planting, picking, and delivering fresh produce, via a unique model that heightens awareness of socio-economic issues, highlights the importance of local farms, and inspires volunteers across many generations and skill sets.

<http://americasgrowarow.org/>

American Community Gardening Association (ACGA)

The ACGA is a bi-national nonprofit membership organization of professionals, volunteers and supporters of community greening in urban and rural communities. The Association recognizes that community gardening improves people's quality of life by providing a catalyst for neighborhood and community development, stimulating social interaction, encouraging self-reliance, beautifying neighborhoods, producing nutritious food, reducing family food budgets, conserving resources and creating opportunities for recreation, exercise, therapy and education. This site offers training, free webinars, tools

EXAMPLE

Comm. Engagement For Community Garden

- Residents expressed interest in a community garden to the Green Team at our booth during our annual Green Fair. We collected their information and emailed them a link to an online survey that we also mailed out to residents to gauge interest in the project. It became clear that this was a project the community would get behind, and we emailed those who were interested and held a public meeting at the municipal building to attract potential volunteers and partnerships. A local Boy Scout troop offered to assist with the project as part of one of their scout's Eagle Project. One of our Green Team members is working on the Master Gardener program at Rutgers and will be using this project as a way to complete her service hours. She will provide training not only for the Green Team but for interested residents through workshops as well. Once the garden is complete, we will celebrate our efforts with a ribbon cutting ceremony led by the Mayor that should attract press coverage and interested residents. Following the event, the garden will be open for use and the workshops will take place. The community garden will have a permanent page on our municipal website. The green team will maintain plots to grow food for the local food pantry. Signage crediting the project sponsors and funders will be created in thanks and permanently displayed at the garden.

Impact on the Community

The project will **augment existing green team efforts** and/or be a **catalyst to advance sustainability efforts** in the community. **Who will benefit** from the proposed project and **how** is clearly articulated.

Common Oversights

- Does not connect to current efforts or future planned efforts of the green team
- Who will benefit and how is not clearly described
- Missing detailed information and statistics



Hopewell Township's Green Team used a 2k grant to expand on their non-mandated recycling collection days.

Community Gardens 10 Points

Tips

- Be specific to **YOUR** community
- Use numbers, statistics, and facts

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Why is it important?

Food in the United States travels an average of 13,000 miles from farm to fork, and much of this food spoils during transit. Eating locally produced foods reduces fuel consumption, carbon dioxide emissions, and other negative environmental consequences associated with the transportation of food.¹

Not only do community gardens help combat fossil fuel production, but they also provide a wide range of benefits.

- **Environmental Benefits** Green vegetation can reflect as much as 20%-25% of radiation from the sun, thereby reducing the heat island effect; garden soil absorbs water which reduces runoff from the rain and helps minimize surface erosion; and small open spaces in urban areas provide crucial corridors for retaining native wildlife and supporting migratory species.²
- **Municipal Benefits** Community gardens can serve as an economic benefit to local governments by increasing property values in the immediate vicinity where they are located. They can also serve as a retreat from the hustle and bustle of urban environments, and may possibly attract small businesses looking to relocate.
- **Food Production** Community gardens allow individuals without their own land to produce food and provide a place for gardeners to share knowledge and skills. It can also help gardeners save significant amounts of money on produce that would

EXAMPLE

Impact on the Comm. For Community Garden

- This project will impact many members of our community. Interested residents will now have a place to grow fresh produce that they can keep for themselves, donate, or sell at the Farmers Market. The Master Gardener in our town will share her knowledge with the Green Team and the rest of the community, and gain her certification in the process. Her skills will benefit the community for years to come. The boy scout helping to complete this project will not only benefit the town but will also graduate to Eagle Scout, a great achievement. The Green Team will be donating all the produce grown in their plots to the local food pantry, whose patrons will benefit from gaining access to fresh, local, organic produce. The money generated from selling the plots will be used to sustain the garden. This income will be put towards additional improvements, supplies, and educational experiences such as workshops. Finally, successfully implementing this project will help us to gain points toward Sustainable Jersey certification.

Budget

The Budget Narrative clearly summarizes project expenses and identifies **all the sources of funding** needed to complete the proposed project, including **in-kind contributions** such as volunteer hours and **no or low cost resources**. The Budget Narrative is **consistent** with the detailed project budget and clearly identifies the **eligible project expenses** that will be billed to the grant. The detailed project budget is **realistic**, costs are **justified** and resource contributions, including in-kind, have a reasonable value. **Promotional items including “giveaways”, incentives or awards do not exceed \$1,000.**

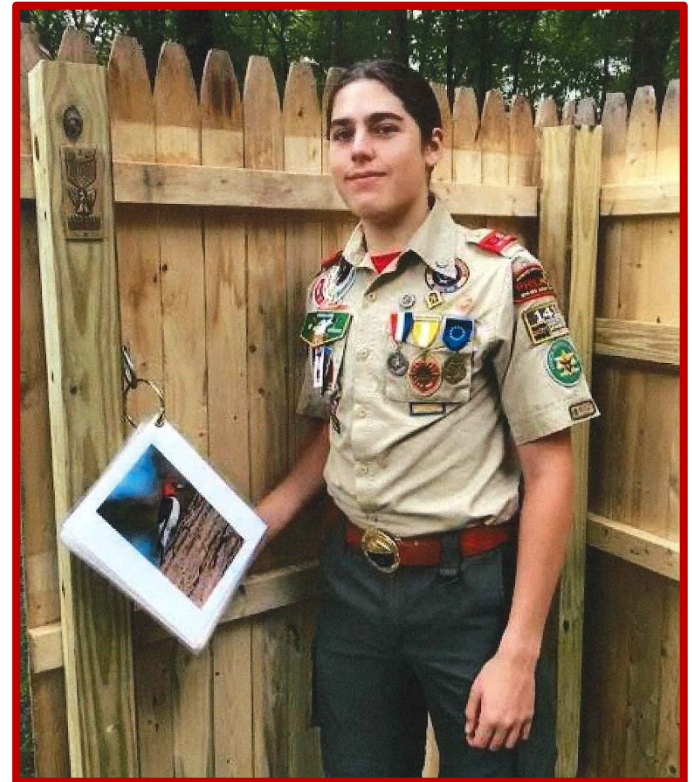
One of the most important components of the application is the budget section

Budget

Common Oversights

- Budget Narrative does not match budget
- In-kind is missing from the budget
- Other available resources are not being utilized
- Includes ineligible expenses
 - Promotional materials, incentives, and awards limit is surpassed
- Funding amounts are not realistic
- Budget is hard to read or understand
 - Missing the total
 - Does not add up to grant amount
 - Important expenses are not listed

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Chatham Borough had help from their local Boy Scout troop to complete their habitat conservation project. Local businesses donated the supplies needed to construct bird blinds.

EXAMPLE

Budget Narrative For Community Garden

- Volunteer labor required to create the garden will be provided by Green Team members, Boy Scouts, and DPW staff. Raised beds will be built, a shed installed, and a water line will be added.
- The Master Gardener will donate her time for workshops and for acting as a point person for questions on the garden.
- Equipment such as hammers, shovels, rakes, etc. were borrowed from project team members and the town.
- \$1,100 in grant funds for supplies for the garden that include nails, wood, soil, a water spigot, a hose, and garden gloves.
- \$200 in grant funds for a permanent sign thanking the sponsors.
- \$300 in grant funds for a shed. The town is donating \$200.
- \$200 in grant funds for advertising costs for the workshops, community garden plot availability, and supplies for the ribbon cutting ceremony
- \$200 in grant funds for supplies for the workshops such as seeds. Other supplies provided by Rutgers. Leftover seeds will be used for the Green Team plot.



Project Budget For Community Garden

A. SALARIES, WAGES, AND FRINGE BENEFITS

Name	Title	Hours	Sustainable Jersey Grant Funded	Other Funding Sources (cash, incentives or in-kind)	Total Cost
DPW staff		20		\$1,000	\$ 1,000 -
Green Team		60		\$1,525.80	\$ 1,525.80
Total Municipal Salaries			\$ -	\$ 2,525.80	\$ 2,525.80

B. SUBCONTRACTORS/CONSULTANT COSTS

Subcontractor/ Consultant	Role in Project	Period of Performance	Sustainable Jersey Grant Funded	Other Funding Sources (cash, incentives or in-kind)	Total Cost
Master Gardener	Gardening expert	StF (60 hours)		\$1,525.80	\$ 1,525.80
Boy Scout	Volunteer labor	April - May		\$508.60	\$ 508.60
Total Subcontractor/Consultant Cost			\$ -	\$ 2,034.40	\$ 2,034.40

C. ITEMIZED EQUIPMENT

Item	Unit Cost	Quantity	Sustainable Jersey Grant Funded	Other Funding Sources (cash, incentives or in-kind)	Total Cost
Shovels, hammers, etc.				Borrowed	\$ Borrowed
					\$ -
Total Equipment Cost			\$ -	\$ Borrowed -	\$ Borrowed

Calculate in-kind for volunteers using the Estimated National Value (2019 it is \$25.43)



Budget For Community Garden Example

D. ITEMIZED SUPPLIES

Item	Unit Cost	Quantity	Sustainable Jersey Grant Funded	Other Funding Sources (cash, incentives or in-kind)	Total Cost
					\$ -
					\$ -
					\$ -
Total Cost of Supplies			\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

E. OTHER ITEMIZED EXPENSES

Item	Justification	Quantity	Sustainable Jersey Grant Funded	Other Funding Sources (cash, incentives or in-kind)	Total Cost
Sponsor Sign	Grant Requirement	1	\$200		\$ 200 -
Communications	Outreach		\$200		\$ 200 -
Total Other Expenses			\$ \$400	\$ -	\$ 400 -

TOTAL PROPOSED BUDGET	\$ 2,000-	\$ 4,760.20 -	\$ 6,760.20
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If you do not know the monetary equivalent of donated items, just list them as donated

It is okay to use funding for sponsor signage. This is a very important requirement for a grant (whether it be the installation of a permanent sign or adding sponsor logos to communications)

General Tips

- If a **consultant** is writing your grant application, make sure that the proposal is customized to fit your municipality
- If permitting, site evaluation, state approval, or any other “task” is required to be completed **BEFORE** a project can begin, it is best to have that finished before submitting an application
- A proposal should tell the whole “**story**”
- Use **uploads** to provide more details on the project
- Take advantage of the **coaching** opportunities



Available Grant Writing Resources

GRANTS & RESOURCES

Sustainable Jersey Grants Program

Resource Opportunities

Grants Portal

Green Team Resources

TCNJ Center for Community Engaged Learning & Research

Publications

Regional Hubs

Conference, Training & Webinar Presentations

Conference Presentations

Training & Workshop Presentations

Webinar Recordings & Presentations

- 2018 NJLM Presentation: Examples of Successful Grantee's Projects
 - <http://bit.ly/2018NJLMGrantsPresentation>
- 2018 Sustainability Summit Presentation: How to Write a Successful Grant Proposal Workshop
 - <http://bit.ly/2018SummitGrantsPresentation>



Kaitlyn Vollmer

Grants Program Coordinator

grants@sustainablejersey.com

609-771-3189