



Growing Lunch

A School Garden Grant Program

2022-2023 School Year

What is Growing Lunch?

Growing Lunch is a school garden grant program administered through the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce with the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. *Growing Lunch* is an educational tool to enhance the knowledge of daycare and school-aged children on agriculture, healthy eating and how food arrives on their plate three times a day. As society becomes increasingly removed from agricultural practices and the farm, it remains pertinent to educate students on the origin of their food.

Who is Eligible?

All schools, K-12, and daycares/pre-schools in the State of Mississippi are eligible to apply for funds up to \$500. Schools that already have a school garden may apply to further expand their garden. It is encouraged that schools applying have local support, for example, a local extension office or Master Gardeners. This program is on a first come, first serve basis. Only one grant can be awarded per school. Schools must fill out the application and have a dedicated coordinator.

Pre-schools must be registered/licensed by the Mississippi Department of Health.

Schools that have received a *Growing Lunch* grant from MDAC in the past are not eligible to apply for additional funds at this time.

Criteria/Reporting Requirements

Schools interested in applying should note that there will be necessary activities in order to achieve results required by MDAC.

The following criteria must be met:

- Garden must be located on school grounds.
- Teacher involvement is mandatory.
- Parents, Extension Service, Master Gardeners, and /or Farm Bureau involvement is strongly encouraged.
- A minimum student interaction of one class, however, more than one class is encouraged.
- The garden grant can only reimburse expenses for specialty crops, see "Allowable Purchases" below.

Produce from gardens may be consumed or used as a teaching tool.

Schools that receive funds will be required to track the number of participants involved and track those that increased knowledge of specialty crops by a survey conducted prior to and after garden grant activities.

At the end of the grant, MDAC will require the following:

- Number of students involved: _____
- Number of teachers involved: _____
- Number of volunteers involved: _____
- Take appropriate surveys pre- and post- garden activities to be able to provide this information:
 - Of the _____ (number) total number of children and youth reached, _____ (number) that gained knowledge about eating more specialty crops.

Example: Of the 200 total number of children and youth reached, 175 gained knowledge about eating more specialty crops.

Allowable Purchases/Awarded Grants

Only specialty crops can be planted in gardens that are utilizing these funds. Specialty crops are defined in law as “fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture.” Below is a list of allowable purchases through this grant program; supplies not listed below should obtain approval from MDAC before purchasing.

Grant funds may be used to purchase materials such as:

- Seeds or plants for fruit, vegetable, herb, and/or flower production
- Mulch/Soil
- Materials for stakes, raised bed gardens, etc.
- Planting tools-rakes, shovels, etc.
- Watering hoses
- Harvesting containers, buckets, etc.
- Gloves
- Fertilizers

MDAC will disperse grant funds on a reimbursement basis to the school (funds cannot be reimbursed to an individual). Reimbursements will be made on an as-needed basis, but requests for reimbursements should be made regularly and as soon as possible. A request for reimbursement should include: an invoice to MDAC with the amount requested; list of expenditures; and documentation of the expenditures (paid invoices, receipts, canceled checks, etc.).

Schools awarded garden grants will have until April 30, 2023, to expend their grant funds, if needed.

Program Contact

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MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
**AGRICULTURE
& COMMERCE**

Andy Gipson, Commissioner

Growing Lunch

Garden Grant Application

School Information

Note: Only one grant can be awarded per school.

Name of school	
Physical Address	
City, ST, ZIP Code	
Grade(s) Participating	
Projected number of students participating	
Where will garden be located in relation to the school? (brief description)	

School Garden Coordinator(s) Contact Information

Main Contact (Name)	
Mailing Address	
City, ST, ZIP Code	
Phone	
Best Time to Call	
Email	

Additional Volunteer(s)

Please provide us with names and contact information of those that will also be helping with the school garden grant and if they are a teacher, parent, extension agent, farmer, etc.

Name 1	
Email/Phone 1	
Name 2	
Email/Phone 2	
Name 3	
Email/Phone 3	
Name 4	
Email/Phone 4	

Example Budget Template:

Please provide a detailed list of supplies that will be purchased and a price estimate of each item. It is important that we understand how the budget will be utilized. (Add more rows as needed)

Budget Item	School Year(s)	Total
Supplies:		
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
Total	\$	\$

Justification of supplies requested:

List of specialty crops that will be planted:

Educational aspect:

Please provide an explanation how this will enhance the education of the students and what activities will be conducted:

I confirm that the location of school garden is on school grounds:

- Yes
- No

Agreement and Signature

By submitting this application, I affirm that I am willing to care and maintain the garden throughout the school year, should caretaker duties transfer to someone else; I will notify MDAC of the changes.

Name (printed)	
Signature	
Date	

***Daycares/Early Childhood Care Centers must submit a copy of Mississippi Department of Health License with application.**

Return Completed Applications to:

Susan Head Lawrence
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