Natural Areas
2020 K-12 Pollinator Schools Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Definitions

The Grant period is 18 months. All spending and all grant requirements must be completed within the grant period. This includes installing the habitat and hosting a community planting day or pollinator celebration.

High Value pollinator plants are identified by the NRCS to be of high importance to several pollinator species. A list of plants that meet this criterion for dry, moist, and wet sites can be found here:

General Questions

1. Who is eligible for this grant? ANSWER: Schools, nonprofit organizations, nature centers, and local government entities that provide K-12 environmental education programming.

2. Can my organization apply for a grant to install a pollinator habitat on land owned by another organization? ANSWER: Yes, with proper documentation. If an organization plans to install a pollinator habitat on land owned by another entity, the Foundation will require a letter from the landowner allowing for that land use and committing to allow the habitat to be maintained onsite for 5 years.

3. Is my project eligible for payments during the grant period? Can we get our payments in installments? ANSWER: This is a reimbursement grant, and a payment can only be requested one time after all spending has been completed on the project. If you complete your spending and host your planting day or pollinator celebration during the grant period and wish to request payment early you may. There is only one payment issued to each grantee for this grant program. You cannot get your payment in installments.

4. What is an eligible expense under this grant program? ANSWER: Eligible expenses are outlined below. Any expense that falls outside of what is listed below should be considered an ineligible expense for this grant program.
a. Professional assistance or contract work to design, install, and/or maintain the habitat
b. Plants, seeds, soil amendments, mulch
c. Curriculum and curriculum related materials and supplies
d. Staff oversight for management of the project (not to exceed $1,000)
e. Interpretive signage (not to exceed $1,000)
f. Hand tools and/or irrigation equipment (not to exceed $1000)

Please note that while small individual purchases are allowed under the grant, the program is designed to support larger purchases. For example, under the seeds category it is expected that grantees make an effort to purchase the full amount of seed from one company as opposed to several smaller purchases from 5 companies.

5. My project is large and will cost more than $10,000 or small and will cost less than $10,000. Am I eligible for this grant program? ANSWER: Yes. While this program provides reimbursement for up to $10,000 of eligible expenses, we will consider smaller projects as long as they meet the habitat requirements listed below. The Foundation has a preferred minimum payment of $3,000 ($2,000 in reimbursement and $1,000 for maintenance). Larger projects can be considered for the program, as long as applicants can show that they can fund any expenses beyond the reimbursed $10,000.

6. How much money should I apply for? ANSWER: Apply for the money you need to successfully complete your project. All grants will be awarded at $11,000. The amount of money you apply for will not be a deciding factor in the consideration of your application. Additionally, any changes to your proposed budget that total more than $100 will need to be approved by the Foundation.

7. What are the requirements for the pollinator habitat install? ANSWER: In order to be eligible for reimbursement under this grant program, the installed habitat must meet the following minimum requirements.
   a. Must be at least 1,000 square feet in size.
   b. Provide at least 3 high value nectar sources for butterflies and other pollinators in each of the three bloom periods: early, mid, and late.
   c. Provide host plants for a minimum of three butterfly species.
   d. Be comprised of native plants with some exceptions made for high value plants that are not native to Illinois. Please reach out to staff for additional details.
   e. Provide a water source for butterflies, a basking site, and some shelter from weather.
f. Use only natural fertilizers, soil amendments, and compost if needed.
g. Habitat installation may include forbs, shrubs, trees, and seeds. Additionally, some native cultivars may be considered. Please reach out to Foundation staff for additional details.

8. **Do I need a plant list now?** ANSWER: No, you do not. But beginning to work with a contractor or nursery during the application stage may be an important step in building out your proposed budget. The Foundation encourages potential grantees to begin work with any professionals well before they apply for the grant.

9. **What are the education and curriculum requirements for this grant?** ANSWER: For schools, the pollinator habitat must be integrated into education curriculum. An action plan for how this will be accomplished should be included with any application. Non-school applicants must demonstrate a connection with teachers or other educators who commit to using the habitat for instruction by offering letters that state how the educators plan to use the habitat.