

Email.

**NEW ENGLAND GRASSROOTS
ENVIRONMENT FUND**
Small Grants Program Application

Please email the application to your program officer or mail a hard copy to:
P.O. Box 1057 / Montpelier, VT 05601

We copy all applications for our grantmaking committee members. Please print the application single-sided, please don't staple materials together, and please don't use any folders or binders.

DATE: September 2, 2010

CONTACT PERSON: George Vella

(please list one person who will be available to answer questions)

NAME OF APPLICANT ORGANIZATION: Medway Community Farm Inc.

ADDRESS: P.O. Box 239 Medway MA., 02053

PRIMARY PHONE #: 508-533-1337

ALTERNATIVE PHONE #: 508-533- 1243

EMAIL: gjvella@comcast.net; hks130@hotmail.com

FAX #: 508-533-1243

WEBSITE: medwaycommunityfarm.org

AMOUNT OF THIS REQUEST: \$2447.00

TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET: \$52,564

TOTAL CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL BUDGET: \$58,586

TOTAL AMOUNT YOUR ORGANIZATION SPENT LAST YEAR: \$50,338.50

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES, FULL AND/OR PART-TIME: One part time farm manager

PROJECT PROPOSAL SUMMARY *(No more than 3 sentences – please start with, "To..."):*

To increase operational efficiency by expanding usable farm land from ¼ of an acre to 2 acres; hiring a full time farm manager; executing the CSA share program and continuing to raise awareness of healthy eating, land conservation; and community involvement by offering programs to Medway students, seniors, boy/girl scouts, volunteers and the whole community in general that will allow them in touch with the land.

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT NEGEF? Internet search;

CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING THAT BEST APPLIES TO YOUR ORGANIZATION:

Ad Hoc group

Ad Hoc group with fiscal agent *(name of agent):* _____

Incorporated as a nonprofit in your state

X 501(c)(3) status with the IRS

If you are an ad hoc group and do not have a checking account or fiscal agent, you will need to set up an account or agent upon receipt of a grant. You do NOT need to have an account or agent when you apply.

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PROJECT NARRATIVE & BUDGET *(no more than 2 pages please)*

I. Give a brief description of your proposed project. Be sure to include background of the issue.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

The Town of Medway is 33 miles from Boston and historians believe the name originated from its location "mid way" between Providence and Boston. Primarily white middle-class, 97.7% of the 4,182 households have children under the age of 18. It is a relatively affordable, family-oriented suburb of the Boston area. Historically a farming community, the town has been subjected to suburban sprawl in the past 20 years due to its proximity to Worcester, Providence and Boston. With increasing property values, almost all the farms have been transformed into housing developments. Sadly, Medway has only 2% of its 11.5 square miles in protected Open Space, with the State average being 10%.

With this in mind, a few members of the community mobilized to encourage the town to pass the Community Preservation Act, whereby we taxed ourselves 3% of the property value to set aside funds to preserve land and historic properties. It is with these funds that the Town purchased the property on 50 Winthrop Street for almost \$975,000. The property currently consists of 15 acres of hayfields, wetlands and forested land with an unoccupied farmhouse, a garage and a dangerously dilapidated barn. The barn must be deconstructed before the public can visit the land, and the house is not yet inhabitable.

In 2007, Heather Scott, the founder of The Medway Community Farm, first shared the community farm concept with the Medway Community Preservation Committee. Having studied the Natick Community Organic Farm and Newton Community Farm, she believed that this model would work and led the effort to launch the not-for-profit Medway Community Farm.

In September 2008, at a Special Town Meeting the community voted almost unanimously (one nay vote) to support the Community Farm at 50 Winthrop Street. Members of the High School National Honor Society spoke about the enthusiasm for the project, and many others in the community demonstrated their support.

By November 2008, The Community Farm Initiative officially established the non-profit, Medway Community Farm, Inc. and received State non-profit status and by January a Board of Directors was established. From January until March we worked on the RFP to lease the land from the town for the purpose of establishing a Community Farm. Our plan was accepted. However, the major hurdle remains that the Selectmen have clearly indicated there will be no financial support from the Town, ever.

In the summer of 2009, we signed a lease for 7 of the 15 acres of land with the Town, completed a favorable Phase One Environmental Hazard Report, and launched our website (<http://www.medwaycommunityfarm.org/>). We also received notice that our IRS non-profit status was granted.

In October, Wellesley College students visited the land to sample the soil. Many were enthusiastic about the prospect of volunteering at the farm or creating educational modules for younger students in the spring. In November we partnered with the Medway Middle School "Green Team" to develop a program for students to grow seedling in February/March at the school and plant them in a plot dedicated for their use. They will also build bluebird houses and place them around the farm to encourage the viability of the bluebird population.

In February 2010, a part time farm manager was brought on board to develop a crop plan and this summer the plan was executed to provide the Medway community with fresh vegetables for sale from our road side farm stand and Town Farmers' Market. This was done solely with the help of volunteers recruited from the community and surrounding areas and by utilizing $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre of land. In addition we have rented several plots to grade 4 students and to the senior center to increase revenue. To date we have 30 dedicated volunteers who take direction from our part time farm manager, have networked with local farmers who help with heavy equipment and are now poised to use the remaining land to increase our crop production in 2011.

As a start-up year we were not comfortable selling CSA shares since we did not have time to adequately prepare the land. With the help of the part time farm manager we were able to optimize the nutritional content of the soil by planting the appropriate cover crops so we can be ready for next spring planting. There is a for-profit farm in the neighboring town of Millis but all CSA shares are sold-out each year, further emphasizing the fact that demand exceeds supply in this region.

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Our farm differs from the for-profit model in that it is a multi-pronged effort that will incorporate education, community involvement and organic farming. Our start-up year has been a resounding success in building community spirit and participation ranging from hosting a 5K road race fund raiser, conducting tours of the farm and generating enormous support from our community volunteers and town officials.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

Our project proposes to establish a working, educational, community organic farm. Our grassroots effort is requesting funds to cover the cost of tools required for day to day operations to plant and harvest our crops with the help of community volunteers who will help us achieve our long term objectives to:

Grow Food

We propose to extend an offer for full time employment to our part time farm manager so she can dedicate herself to growing herbicide- and pesticide-free food on 2 acres in 2011 and beyond. Although food will continue to be sold at the onsite farm stand and Town Farmers' Market, next year we propose to generate funds through the sale of Community Supported Agriculture shares.

Educate

The education committee will continue to build on the relationship with the Medway Public School K-12 system, Boy/Girl Scouts and Community Service Learning program and Medway Senior Center to provide an opportunity of actively growing food on their designated plots. We are also planning afterschool programs at the farm for fall and spring. Tours of the farm, which now include an apiary, will describe the benefits of organic farming practices and non-pesticide insect control, to name a few activities we have in mind. Volunteers have also suggested they would offer courses relating to food from the farm in continuing education programs. We will continue to have our close affiliation with the biology students at Wellesley College.

Sense of Community

The project will continue to provide unique volunteer opportunities for the general public to become involved with the farm that could include, farm chores, teaching or joining one of the farm's committees to map out nature trails and plan social and educational events at the farm. We have had an incredible response from the community which reinforced the need for such a community farm. Over 30 volunteers were signed up to help prepare beds, plant harvest and sell crops. Public events include dinners on the land and festivals. Our first community 5K run fund raiser on Earth Day was a resounding success with over 200 registered runners/walkers that supported the farm.

Property Stewardship

The project is responsible for the stewardship of the leased 7 acres and buildings. With the help of professional volunteers under the direction of one of our board members, the dilapidated barn was torn down. Now the public can visit the farm safely. Our efforts will now focus on rehabilitating the farm house and garage on the property, provided we can raise sufficient funds. The house will become a Community Center with the living quarters for the farm manager and/or aides in the future.

2. If your project is successful, what changes will occur in your community and its environment? Please include a timeline/steps for its completion.

The changes that will occur if our project is successful include the following:

- Our community will be able to contribute to its farming tradition by selling locally grown, herbicide- and pesticide-free food.
- Our farm will "create a sense of community" by having volunteer opportunities on the Farm, hosting farm functions such as, potluck dinners on the land and harvest festivals.
- Our farm will be able to provide unique "learning from the land" education opportunities for the Medway Public School system, Boys /Girls Scouts, Seniors and for the community in general. An afterschool program on the farm is being planned together with the Community Service Learning committee from the school system.
- Our community will be able to "experience" the importance of protecting open spaces and general conservation in their community.

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TIMELINE:

November 2010: -In our second year we will engage a full time farm manager to manage the crop plan to fulfill the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) share program. To be successful careful crop planning and land preparation are paramount. Begin to sell shares to the community

February/March 2011: - Develop a farm management plan; purchase seeds, farm equipment and tools; begin to start seedlings

March /April 2011: - Farm manager will prepare land for planting in April through to the rest of the growing season. Hold the first planting event with volunteers in April

May-October 2011: - Farm manager and volunteers will to plant crops, harvest and sell food.

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**3. Project Budget
EXPENSES**

Seeds \$1,200
Seedlings \$1,200
Farm Manger salary + benefits \$36,000
Marketing (Signs) \$200
Soil amendment \$2000
Plowing equipment lease \$1000
Insurance \$753
Water expense \$7600
Fundraising costs \$1,064

***Tools: \$2447**

Knives:

Serrated: $5.95 \times 6 = 35.70$
Lettuce: $10.95 \times 3 = 32.85$
Blade: $12.55 \times 2 = 25.10$

Shears:

Needle Nose: $29.95 \times 3 = 89.85$
Pruner: $24.00 \times 3 = 72.00$

Carts:

Vermont Carts: $299.00 \times 2 = 598.00$

Crates:

Bulb Trays: $1.00 \times 50 = 50.00$

Binding:

Rubber Bands: $3.10 \times 6 = 18.50$

Total: 856.45

Hand Cultivation Tools:

Wheel hoe: $349.00 \times 2 = 698.00$
Stirrup Hoe: $48.00 \times 4 = 192.00$
Small Stirrup Hoe: $46.00 \times 1 = 46.00$
Co-linear Hoe: $39.00 \times 4 = 156.00$
Flame Weeder: $199.00 \times 1 = 199.00$

Total: 1291.00

Shipping costs: \$300

INCOME

Grant \$2500
Donations \$3,400
Stand Sales \$1659
Tours \$200
Fund raising \$8000
CSA shares \$40,000
Plot rentals \$1,250

IN-KIND SERVICES

Volunteers' time
Sprinklers \$150
Rota-tiller \$300

Plowing \$2500

(total expenses) = \$53,464

(total income) \$57,009 + (total in-kind services) \$2950

- **Principal sources of support (E.g. Membership dues, individual donations, grants, special events, etc.) Please list any grants that your group has received.**

Nickelodeon Big Help (\$2500) to educate students about organic farming practices and building and erecting bluebird houses on the farm to make them aware of the dwindling bluebird population in New England.

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Please include the following attachments with your application form:

- **A list of key volunteers, board of directors and current staff with affiliations, brief biosketches, and email addresses**
Selected names of volunteers: The Board of Directors, Allyson Ayube, Nick Cutone, Jamie Brown, Nancy Ross, James Davock, Cathy Hall, Josh Stephen, Jeena Stephen, Elizabeth Sieber.....and many more!

Please visit our website at www.medwaycommunityfarm.org for the Board of Directors' biosketches and contact information and newsletters.

- **Financial statement for most recent completed year and budget for current year, if available - Attached**
- **List of local media with contact names and emails to whom we can send a press release**
- **Selected copies of group's newsletter, brochure, and/or press clippings, if appropriate**

Newsletter can be found at:

http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?llr=b6ykeydab&v=001Xb0L0r5qCg2mE-DYXfQCTxjRnFcM0fKvA9rw1hnywY_LsoojXF_-AnvcjwRRBEJGW11-BRO7AKjYKWAKOTEzmRiOhd4E1PZIKtmGTZiEk_532_ft1b3iNZy_-wb70OtTq_qbpw7w8w%3D

Press Releases:

<http://www.milforddailynews.com/search?q=Sept+3+2010&submit=Search>

New manager hired for Medway Community Farm The Medway Community Farm will begin growing food this season with the help of new manager Brittany Sidway. <http://www.milforddailynews.com/archive/x1669540262/New-manager-hired-for-Medway-Community-Farm> *Mon Mar 8 00:00:00 EST 2010*

March 17, 2010 (Milford Daily News & Country Gazette)

Community Farm has growing fan base in Medway To eager listeners, Medway Community Farm Manager Brittany Sidway last night presented this year's farm plan, which includes growing a variety of vegetables, planting cover crop and encouraging volunteers. <http://www.milforddailynews.com/archive/x1514354262/Community-Farm-has-growing-fan-base-in-Medway> *Wed Mar 17 00:00:00 EDT 2010*

June 14, 2010

PHOTOS: Farm stand at Medway Community Farms opens for season The farm stand at Medway Community Farms opened for the season on Sunday. <http://www.milforddailynews.com/archive/x767634841/PHOTOS-Farm-stand-at-Medway-Community-Farms-opens-for-season> *Mon Jun 14 00:00:00 EDT 2010*

August 30, 2010 (Milford Daily News and Country Gazette)

Medway Community Farm produces learning, growth The Medway Community Farm not only provides fresh produce to the town - it also serves as a venue for hands-on learning for its younger residents.

<http://www.milforddailynews.com/archive/x2038124892/Medway-Community-Farm-produces-learning-growth> *Mon Aug 30 06:08:54 EDT 2010*

September 3, 2010 (Country Gazette)

It's All Hands-On At Medway Farm Medway Community Farm Produces Learning Growth

Julie Balise; Staff Writer

<http://nl.newsbank.com/nl->

[search/we/Archives?p_action=doc&p_docid=13203998526D8B68&p_docnum=3&p_theme=gatehouse&s_site=ZBAW&p_product=ZBAW](http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?p_action=doc&p_docid=13203998526D8B68&p_docnum=3&p_theme=gatehouse&s_site=ZBAW&p_product=ZBAW)

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APPLICANT PROFILE

1. What is the mission or the goals of your group?

To grow herbicide- and pesticide-free food using organic farming practices, preserve open space, educate students and the general public about the importance of healthy food and environmental conservation, create a sense of community and property stewardship by engaging volunteers to work the land under a farm manager's direction.

2. How long has your group been in existence?

This grassroots effort was established in December 2007. The non-profit was organized in September 2008. The non-profit received State status in November 2008 and Federal status in Nov 2009. This will be our second year of operation.

3. What issue/issues got your group going?

The need to create community spirit and to teach the importance of protecting Open Spaces and eating healthy food was lacking in our community

4. How many people started the group?

The solo effort grew to 7 Board Members and 600 + email supporters within two years. We have a stable of 30+ volunteers who help prepare bed, plant, weed, harvest and tend the farm stand sales.

5. Is this the first time that the group's "founders" had been "activated"?

Yes. The group consists of 7 Board Members and 5 Advisory Board Members

If not the first time, with what other issues had they been involved?

6. How many people are currently involved as the core group of leaders/workers?

The group consists of 7 Board Members and 5 Advisory Board Members and a part time farm Manager

7. Is this a membership organization? If so, how many members do you have?

We are launching our CSA campaign in 2011. We currently have 600+ supporters and 30+ volunteers

8. Do you have any paid staff?

We have one paid part time farm manager.

If yes, how many full-time equivalents?

0.20 FTE

9. Approximately how many people in your community can be "activated" to support your issue – i.e., go to a meeting, sign a petition, call a selectperson, etc.?

The word has spread that Medway has a community farm. We sent our eNewsletter to 600+ people and we anticipate at least 40 volunteers will be activated for this effort next year.

10. Has the focus of your group broadened or changed at all since it first started?

If so, in what ways?

We remain focused on the goals outlined above to ensure we will deliver on our promise.

11. Have any members of your group run for or been appointed to public office since they started working on your issue/issues?

None. But we do have the support from Massachusetts State Representative Carolyn Dykema, who is assisting with funding opportunities, and the open space and conservation committees. The Board of Selectmen is also very enthusiastic about the community farm.

If so, for what office?

Elected or appointed?

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12. Describe the size and make-up of your community.

The Town of Medway consists of about 13,000 people on 11.5 square miles.

13. Have you networked or shared information/resources with other groups? Yes

If so, with whom and how did you find out about them? We networked with two existing community farm projects, Natick Community Organic Farm and Newton Community Farm. Lynda Simkins, Director of Natick Community Organic Farm is a past Board Member to our project and now sits on our Advisory Board. Newton Community Farm has shared their business plan and Farm Manager, Greg Maslowe is on our Advisory Board. Chris Yoder is a great friend, supporter and mentor.

Heather Scott was invited to speak at the 2009 NOFA-Mass Winter Conference and the 2009 NOFA-Mass Summer Conference sharing the details of the Medway Community Farm project to Community Farm Track participants. Presentations included: Organizing the Medway Community Farm and Tools used for starting a Community Farm. Long time Medway resident Mr. Bobby Briggs runs an adjacent farm called Shady Oaks and has welcomed us to the neighborhood. He has helped us by plowing and tilling last year.

14. How have you gained knowledge about your issue? Due to the tremendous response from the community in support for this project it is clear that many people are concerned about what they eat and how to best conserve and preserve open spaces in this rural community. The validation came from the resounding number of volunteers who were willing and able to contribute their time to bring this to fruition.

15. If your organization is more than a year old, can you quantify any of your "successes"? Examples might be number of acres preserved, miles of trails, increase in recycling rates in town, toxic sites cleaned up, greenspaces/community gardens created, amount of money raised, legislation passed, etc.

In our start-up year, our organization has raised \$24,713 to date in donations, in-kind contributions, farm stand sales and educational programs using only ¼ of an acre of farm land. Our goal is to grow food on 2 full acres out of the 15 acre parcel of land the Town purchased in 2008. We hope to rehabilitate a house on the property to build a Community Center with living quarters for the farm manager. Our partnership with the Medway Public School K-12 Community Service Learning Program and joint projects with the Medway Middle School "Green Team", an after school club, Senior Center, and Boy/Girl Scouts have allowed us to educate the community about growing healthy food and preserving greenspaces.

16. What are the biggest challenges your community faces?

Losing acres of Open Space due to development threats and ensuring we have sufficient funds to make this grassroots effort a success.

17. What skills do you feel you and/or members of your group could use to help move your issue forward?

We are in close contact with our farm mentors who serve on our Advisory Board. They advise us on the best practices for operating a community farm they have learned over the years. Getting the word out about the community farm is always a challenge so we have engaged volunteers to leverage the social network capabilities so we can reach more people.

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