



Historical Harvest: Revitalizing Boston's Heritage with Urban Agriculture Microgrant

Micro-Grant Narrative

1. Advertising and Competition

MentorScope Community Outreach, in collaboration with T.I.M.E. Inc. and USDA FSA, will ensure a competitive grant process by widely advertising the microgrant funding opportunities through multiple channels. This will include:

- Website & social media: Announcements on MentorScope's website and partner organizations' digital channels.
- Community Outreach: Engagement with urban agriculture networks, nonprofit organizations, and municipal agencies to disseminate funding information.
- Workshops & Webinars: Informational sessions for potential applicants, ensuring they understand application procedures and requirements.
- Public Notices & Press Releases: Published through local media outlets and urban farming associations.

2. Application Forms

Applicants must complete a standardized application form available on MentorScope Community Outreach's website. Required documentation includes:

- Project Proposal (scope, goals, expected outcomes)
- Budget Breakdown (detailed cost estimates)
- Proof of Urban Agriculture Activity (photos, business registration, lease agreements)
- Community Support Letters (if applicable)
- Completed W-9 form for financial processing

3. Eligibility Criteria & Procedures

To ensure fairness and compliance, eligibility is based on:

- Applicants must be an urban farmer, nonprofit, community garden, or tribal entity operating in Boston, MA.
- Projects must align with urban agriculture, food security, and sustainability initiatives.
- Grant requests must not exceed \$8,000.
- Funds must be used exclusively for eligible expenses, with no allocations for land purchases or loan repayments.

4. Eligible Cost Projects

Approved funding will cover:

- Infrastructure improvements (greenhouses, irrigation, raised beds, composting systems)
- Soil and crop enhancements (organic amendments, hydroponics, heirloom seeds)
- Community education and engagement (workshops, farm-to-school initiatives)
- Technological investments (AgTech, mobile farm markets, precision agriculture tools)

5. Application Review Instructions

Applications will undergo a two-tier review process:

1. Initial Screening: Verification of completeness and adherence to eligibility requirements.
2. Scoring Committee Evaluation: A diverse review panel will assess applications based on:
 - Alignment with funding priorities
 - Feasibility and sustainability of the project
 - Community impact and scalability
 - Efficient budget allocation
 - Innovation in urban farming techniques

6. Selection Procedures

A competitive scoring rubric will rank applications. The highest-scoring proposals will receive funding, ensuring an equitable and transparent selection process. Funding decisions will be announced via formal notification.

7. Plan to Verify Funds Are Appropriately Spent

To maintain accountability and compliance, all grant recipients must:

- Submit mid-project progress reports detailing expenditures and milestones.
- Provide final impact reports, including financial reconciliation and photographic documentation.
- Participate in site visits and financial audits, if requested by USDA FSA.
- Receive funds in two disbursements: 50% upon approval and 50% upon successful project completion and reporting.

By implementing these competitive, transparent, and structured grant procedures, the Historical Harvest Microgrant will effectively support urban agriculture in Boston while ensuring proper stewardship of federal funds.



Historical Harvest: Revitalizing Boston's Heritage with Urban Agriculture Microgrant

MICROGRANT APPLICATION FORM

MentorScope Community Outreach | In Partnership with T.I.M.E. Inc. and Funded by USDA FSA

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of Applicant/Organization:

Primary Contact Name (if different from applicant):

Mailing Address:

City, State, ZIP Code:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Website (if applicable):

Are you applying as:

- ☐ Individual Producer
- ☐ Community Garden
- ☐ Nonprofit Organization

- ☐ Urban Farming Cooperative
☐ Other (please specify): _____

Have you previously received funding from MentorScope, T.I.M.E. Inc., or USDA FSA?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please specify the program of funding and year received:

Do you currently have a Farm Number with USDA FSA?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please specify the Farm Number and year received:



***" Historical Harvest: Revitalizing Boston's Heritage
with Urban Agriculture Microgrant" Initiative***

Micro-Grant RFP

The "Historical Harvest: Revitalizing Boston's Heritage with Urban Agriculture" initiative is led by MentorScope Community Outreach as a subrecipient of T.I.M.E. Inc. with funding provided by USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Urban and Innovative Agriculture Community-Based Organization Funds.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Background

Urban agriculture is a critical component of local food systems, providing fresh, healthy produce while fostering economic opportunities and environmental sustainability. The **Historical Harvest: Revitalizing Boston's Heritage with Urban Agriculture Microgrant** aims to support Boston-based urban farmers, community gardens, and nonprofit organizations by funding innovative, sustainable urban agriculture projects. This initiative is designed to strengthen local food systems, promote food equity, and preserve Boston's agricultural heritage.

B. Purpose

The purpose of the Historical Harvests: Revitalizing Boston's Heritage with Urban Ag initiative, spearheaded by MentorScope Community Outreach, is to provide a systematic and targeted solution to the barriers hindering urban agriculture's growth and the disparities in resource distribution within Boston, Massachusetts. Our overarching goals are multi-faceted, aiming to:

- Enhance equity within the urban food system by facilitating better access and

- understanding of USDA programs among urban agricultural producers.
- Strengthening local food supply chains by boosting sustainability and long-term viability of urban farming operations.
- Promote systemic change by integrating urban producers into broader agricultural networks and resources, thereby contributing to comprehensive food system

C. Micro-Grants

A fundamental component of this Initiative is to provide support for urban farmers and growers to strengthen urban agriculture across Boston. This support includes the dissemination of micro-grants to eligible non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, Tribal entities, and urban agricultural farmers to enhance and build the capacity of their current urban agriculture activities. Successful micro-grant projects should fill a perceived need of the applicant and their communities of interest. All successful proposals should also focus on supporting urban agricultural issues and needs that align with the goals of the " Historical Harvest: Revitalizing Boston's Heritage with Urban Agriculture " Initiative. Priority will be given to proposals that give attention to farmers with urban agriculture projects that aim to:

- Enhance and increase access to locally grown, nutritious food in the communities of Boston, Massachusetts.
- Strengthen community partnerships and collaborative urban farming efforts.
- Support innovative farming practices, such as hydroponics, aquaponics, and vertical farming.
- Promote environmental stewardship through sustainable agriculture techniques.
- Provide training and resources to urban farmers and community organizations.
- Support farmers, including BIPOC, veteran, and beginning farmers.

D. Deliverables

- A 2-page Progress Report is due 6 months from the start of the project. This will include a budget update. A template will be provided. A scheduled meeting may be an alternative option for the Progress Report if requested, inclusive of a budget update.
- The Final Report, not to exceed 2 single-spaced pages, is due 10 days after the completion of the project. The Final Report should provide a complete overview of highlights of successes, progress towards each objective, and a final budget update. Images and stories are strongly encouraged. A template will be provided.
- Potential project presentations to be delivered at " Historical Harvest: Revitalizing Boston's Heritage with Urban Agriculture" project related meetings.
- Scheduled site visits will be conducted by members of the Project Team to meet stakeholders and build capacity. Additionally, unscheduled site visits will be conducted to monitor the project.
- An FSA Farm Number will be expected by the end of the project if it is not already established by the awardee.
- All awardees will be expected to sign a Funding Agreement that stipulates these deliverables and funding expectations.

II. ELIGIBILITY

- Only one proposal can be submitted by an entity.
- Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, Tribal entities, and urban agricultural farmers (for-profit or not-for-profit).
- Proposals are allowed to include multiple sites of project activity under one application.
- Funding may only be used for projects within Boston, Massachusetts.

A. Eligible Applicants

Applicants **MUST** be:

- An urban farmer, nonprofit organization, community garden, or tribal entity operating within Boston, Massachusetts.
- Actively engaged in urban agriculture, food security, and local food production.
- Able to complete the proposed project within 12 months of receiving funding.
- Participate in required reporting and evaluation activities.

B. Eligible Activities & Use of Funds

Grant funds may be used for:

- **Infrastructure improvements** (greenhouses, irrigation systems, composting, raised beds).
- **Soil and crop enhancements** (organic amendments, hydroponics, soil remediation).
- **Community engagement and education** (farm-to-school programs, urban farming workshops).
- **Technology and innovation** (AgTech tools, mobile farm markets, precision agriculture).
- **Sustainable practices** (water conservation, organic transition, regenerative agriculture).

C. Restrictions on Use of Funds

- Funds **cannot** be used for **land purchases, loan repayments, or equipment exceeding \$5,000** per item.
- Applicants **cannot** request more than **\$8,000** in funding.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals that are selected to be recommended for an award by the Project Team will submit proposal materials to USDA for a required review process. This includes:

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act

(NEPA), and the implementing regulations in 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508, and FSA's NEPA implementing Regulations in 7 CFR Part 799 for cooperative agreements entered under the FSA Urban and Innovative Agriculture Community-Based Organization Fund. After reviewing at the programmatic level, USDA determined that, in general, cooperative agreements entered under Section 1001 of the Build Back Better Act, Food Systems Transformation Effort do not have the potential for significant impacts to the human environment. FSA has determined that the following

categories of activities are categorically excluded from further review under the National Environmental Policy Act, per 7 CFR § 799 .31:

- Educational or informational (i.e., outreach) activities; and
- Procurement actions for goods and services conducted in accordance with Executive Orders.

However, a site-specific review will be needed for activities funded through the cooperative agreement, or subsequent micro-grant programs, if any of the following conditions are true:

1. Disturb ground to a level that has not been previously disturbed, remove any trees, remove any tree roots, or use mechanical means to remove damaged fencing or debris that will impact below the level of previous disturbance.
2. Place a farm storage or other facility on a farm eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places and would have a visual impact on the historic character of the farm.
3. Modify, renovate, or remove a structure or building that is 50 years old or older.
4. Involve an activity including new land clearing, impacts to any water body, wetland, floodplain, riparian buffer, threatened or endangered species, their critical habitat, or cultural resources that would otherwise require consultation.
5. Result in any extraordinary circumstances in accordance with Handbook 1-EQ (Rev. 3) Par. 25.
6. Change the existing land use or remove the land from agricultural use.
7. Involve FSA actions or programs not specified in this P-850, not approved in that municipality, or for which an individual site-specific FSA-850 or environmental assessment is required.

For micro-grants, the grantee must satisfy any site-specific NEPA requirements identified by FSA prior to drawing down funds or incurring expenses related to the micro-grant. Once these conditions have been successfully completed, FSA will notify the grantee that the review is complete. At that time, the distribution and expenditure of micro-grant funds will be authorized. Before the NEPA process is completed, Federal regulations specify acceptable actions in 40 CFR § 1506.1.

How to Apply?

- Applicants should submit the completed proposal by email to amilson@mentorscope.com no later than 5 PM on June 30, 2025.
- Email submissions should be compiled and saved as one PDF file.
- For accessibility and language assistance, please contact amilson@mentorscope.com at least thirty days prior to the deadline.

Late and incomplete submissions will not be accepted.

Notification of Awards

Within the limit of funds available for this RFP, MentorScope Community Outreach management team will make awards to those eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFP.

Applicants will be notified by July 30, 2025. The timeline is contingent on the USDA review process.

Address questions about this Request for Proposals to:

MentorScope Community Outreach
Phone: 866.936.3686 (o)

III. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Required Documents

Applicants must submit:

1. **Completed Application Form** (available online at www.mentorscope.com).
2. **Project Proposal** (summary of project, goals, expected outcomes, and timeline).
3. **Budget Breakdown** (detailed explanation of fund usage with cost estimates).
4. **Proof of Urban Agriculture Activity** (photos, land use agreements, business registration).
5. **Community Support Letters** (if applicable).

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name:

Project Location (if different from mailing address):

Brief Project Description (250 words max):

Provide a summary of your proposed project, including goals and expected impact.

Project Objectives:

List the key objectives your project will accomplish.

- ---

- _____

- _____

Implementation Plan & Timeline:

Project Timeline:

Provide estimated start and completion dates.

Start Date: _____

Completion Date: _____

Project Category (Check all that apply):

- ☐ Infrastructure Improvements (e.g., greenhouses, irrigation systems)
- ☐ Soil & Crop Enhancement (e.g., soil remediation, raised beds, hydroponics)
- ☐ Sustainable Practices (e.g., organic transition, regenerative agriculture)
- ☐ Technology & Innovation (e.g., precision AgTech, mobile farm markets)
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Requested Grant Amount (up to \$8,000):

\$ _____

Budget Breakdown:

Provide a summary of how the grant funds will be used.

Budget Breakdown:

Provide a detailed summary of how the grant funds will be used.

Expense Category	Description	Cost (\$)
Equipment & Tools	_____	_____
Infrastructure	_____	_____
Soil & Crop Enhancements	_____	_____
Training & Education	_____	_____
Technology & Innovation	_____	_____
Other Expenses	_____	_____
Total		_____

Budget Breakdown:

Provide a detailed summary of how the grant funds will be used.

IMPACT & COMMUNITY BENEFIT

How will this project contribute to Boston's urban agriculture and food security efforts? (250 words max)

Who will benefit from this project? (Check all that apply):

- ☐ Low-income communities
- ☐ Schools & youth programs
- ☐ Veteran farmers
- ☐ Beginning farmers
- ☐ BIPOC farmers & producers
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Do you have any partnerships or collaborations for this project? If so, please list them.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

- ☐ Completed Application Form
- ☐ Proof of Urban Agriculture Activity (e.g., photos, land use agreements, business registration)
- ☐ Project Proposal (if applicable)
- ☐ Budget Outline
- ☐ Community Support Letters (if applicable)

CERTIFICATION & SIGNATURE


I certify that the information provided in this application is accurate and that grant funds, if awarded, will be used solely for the purposes outlined in this application. I understand that I may be required to provide additional documentation and participate in a final project impact report.


Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

SUBMISSION DETAILS

Completed applications must be submitted by **JUNE 30, 2025** via:

 **Email:** amilson@mentorscope.com

 **Apply Online:** www.mentorscope.com

For questions or assistance, please contact **MentorScope Community Outreach@866-936-3686**

Grow with us and help revitalize Boston's agricultural heritage!