



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Franklin County Commissioners and City of Columbus Announce Community Gardens Grant Opportunity

Today, Franklin County Commissioners Marilyn Brown, Paula Brooks and John O'Grady, Columbus Mayor Michael B. Coleman and Councilmember Priscilla Tyson, in cooperation with the Foundation for Active Living at The Columbus Foundation, announced the creation of a Community Gardens Grant fund. Recognizing the many benefits of community gardens, the grant fund will support existing gardens in the City of Columbus and throughout Franklin County and encourage the creation of new ones.

Community gardening is a growing movement in Central Ohio and according to the American Community Gardening Association there are over 18,000 community gardens in the United States and Canada. Not only do community gardens improve nutritional offerings and reduce family food expenses but they improve the quality of life for neighborhood residents, provide vocational training and educational opportunities to school children and provide a catalyst for neighborhood and community development.

"This grant fund will support and encourage community gardens in our local neighborhoods and foster an environment of healthy living for area children," said Commissioner Marilyn Brown. "We know that if families have access to grow their own fruits and vegetables at a low cost, they are more likely to put them on their dinner table."

"By partnering with the County, we have leveraged our respective resources to create new gardens and strengthen existing ones," Mayor Coleman said. "Community gardens benefit our health, our community and our environment, and they give neighbors a reason and a place to come together."

"Franklin County is filled with individuals and organizations that are putting their shovels in the ground and producing nutritious food. The Community Gardens Grant program will support these existing gardens and support the creation of new gardens to serve more residents," said Commissioner Paula Brooks.

“Community gardens help create strong communities and connect people to their food supply. With rates of obesity on the rise, these gardens can serve to help people understand how food choices effect their lifestyles,” said Commissioner John O’Grady.

“Community gardens promote healthy lifestyles by providing fresh food for families, encourage engagement among residents of all ages, create green jobs in an improving economy and increase the overall pride in a neighborhood,” said Columbus City Councilmember Priscilla R. Tyson, chair of the Finance Committee.

Community gardens can be dedicated to growing fruits, vegetables and herbs or simply flowers and other greenery, as long as the land is gardened by a group of people for the betterment of the community. They can be found in urban, suburban, or rural settings.

To qualify for the grant, the applicant must meet requirements such as a registered 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and be located within the City of Columbus or qualifying areas of Franklin County. Grant awards will be made up to \$4,000 per project for supplies and/or services. Scott’s Miracle-Gro will supplement grant awards with product donations.

Grant applicants must access the grant application on the Columbus Foundation website at www.columbusfoundation.org. The application can be found under Columbus Foundation Grants, Fund for Targeted Needs, in the Neighborhood Grants and Community Gardens section and is due by Friday, April 1, 2011. Winners will be announced at the Earth Day celebration at Franklin Park Conservatory on April 23, 2011.