



# Liberty Prairie Foundation

## **Lake County Community Food Systems Micro-grant Program • Request for Proposals**

Date Issued: May 29, 2015

Deadline: July 1, 2015

Contact: Emily Weber

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The Liberty Prairie Foundation is committed to supporting innovative local food community projects in Lake County. Across the county, nonprofit organizations, schools, churches, civic groups, and others are engaged in dynamic work to improve their communities through food. Organizations are not only addressing hunger relief, but are using food and agriculture as a job skills training opportunity and a way to engage communities in health and wellness initiatives. The Foundation's Lake County Community Food Systems Micro-grant Program supports projects that are using food as a catalyst for change, whether by relief efforts, entrepreneurial opportunities, education, and more.

This program provides grants ranging from \$500-\$2,500 to support projects that will make local, fresh food more accessible and affordable. Funds may be used broadly for staff costs, equipment, infrastructure and other related activities. A total of \$10,000 in funding is available through this initiative. Examples of projects include, but are not limited to: growth or distribution of produce in an underserved community, community gardens, season extension, mobile pantries, agriculture-related job training programs, entrepreneurship, and nutrition education initiatives. Eligible groups must be a 501(c)(3) organization located within Lake County, Illinois.

### **About the Liberty Prairie Foundation**

The Liberty Prairie Foundation (LPF) is a 501(c)(3) private operating foundation located in Grayslake, Illinois. We are nationally recognized as a leader in developing and supporting enterprises that build and strengthen our local food system while enhancing the natural landscape. We promote the integration of healthy ecosystems and the vibrant human communities they support.

Since 1993, the Liberty Prairie Foundation has provided leadership and financial support for sustainable local food system development, social entrepreneurship, conservation, and environmental education. We envision a world where people of all ages are deeply connected to their food, land and community, and therefore make choices toward sustainable systems in nature and society. We have built many innovative partnerships locally, regionally, and nationally and have leveraged these efforts to advance our work in Lake County, Illinois.

The Foundation is headquartered at the Prairie Crossing Farm, our working organic farm nestled inside Prairie Crossing, the nationally recognized conservation community. Programs support natural area restoration and land health, local food production, and environmental and food related education.

Since 2005, LPF has launched nearly 20 farm businesses through its Farm Business Development Center—an incubator program for beginning farmers. This program provides affordable access to land, infrastructure, equipment, and a positive learning environment that helps beginning farmers develop the entrepreneurial skills, farming knowledge, and market networks needed to become successful professional farmers.

LPF's Prairie Farm Corps is a paid summer agriculture-based youth development program for diverse teens in central Lake County. This job skills training program immerses youth in sustainable agriculture, provides mentoring, and encourages reflection on the collaboration between land and living systems. Participants gain job skills applicable to any career, capacity to grow and cook fresh vegetables, and a hands-on introduction to sustainable agriculture. LPF is committed to environmental education and outreach to underserved communities and also provides a fee-waiver process for free and discounted tours to nonprofit organizations, schools, and civic groups who meet certain criteria.

## **Background**

In 2012, the Liberty Prairie Foundation launched the Waukegan Local Food Project to assess what is happening on the ground in communities throughout Lake County. Staff provided technical assistance targeted to Waukegan organizations pursuing local food projects and gained insight into the opportunities, challenges, and needs of community groups.

LPF continues to explore and pilot fresh food distribution programs to increase the amount of healthy food available to communities with low access. The Foundation is increasingly engaged in supporting grassroots projects across Lake County and will provide resources through this initiative to help organizations build community through food. Read more about our support of local food initiatives at [www.libertyprairie.org](http://www.libertyprairie.org).



## **Eligibility and use of funds**

Eligible applicants must be:

- 1) A nonprofit 501 c(3) organization located within Lake County, IL.
- 2) Pursuing a local food project, including, but not limited to: growth or distribution of produce in an underserved community, community gardens, season extension, mobile pantries, agriculture-related job training programs/entrepreneurship, and nutrition education initiatives.

This program will provide grants ranging from \$500-\$2,500 to support community projects. Funds may be used broadly for staff costs, equipment, infrastructure and other related activities. A total of \$10,000 in funding is available through this initiative.

## **Selection criteria**

Applications will be assessed based on several factors, including:

- A thorough description of the need the project seeks to address.
- Clearly articulated project goals and outcomes.
- Whether projects have the potential to make a measureable impact on local food availability in Lake County, or on specific communities and neighborhoods.

## **Submission**

Applications are due by midnight on Wednesday, July 1. Please send materials to Emily Weber at [Emily@libertyprairie.org](mailto:Emily@libertyprairie.org). Grants will be awarded by mid-July.

### **Right to reject**

The Liberty Prairie Foundation reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted; reject a proposal that does not include all required materials; adjust deadlines; and request additional information from applicants. Submission of a proposal does not guarantee funding from the Liberty Prairie Foundation.



### **Grant application**

In a separate document, please answer the following questions in no more than three typed pages:

Organization name:  
Contact person:  
Address:  
Email:  
Phone number:

### **Grant request**

Provide the amount of funds requested (\$500-\$2,500) and the expected dates that the funds will be used (start date and end date).

### **Project narrative**

- 1) Please provide a brief description of the project and include how the funds will be used.
- 2) Explain how this project will contribute to Lake County's local food system and specifically how it will impact your local community.
- 3) What are the short-term and long-term goals of the project?
- 4) What strategies will be used to achieve each goal?
- 5) Please describe the project's target population.

- 6) What assumption are you making that is most critical to successfully carry out the project?  
What is your contingency plan if the assumption is not actualized?
- 7) What is the timetable for the project?
- 8) Describe community partnerships in place that will help the project succeed.
- 9) Explain the sustainability of the project both in fiscal and personnel terms.

### **Project budget**

List project revenue and expenses in a line item budget. For expenses, list categories for: personnel, equipment, supplies, travel related expenses, facilities, and other (please specify expenses listed under “other”). Also, include an organizational budget.

### **Project evaluation and reporting**

How will you conduct project evaluation?

Applicants selected for funding must provide a brief final report at the conclusion of the project. Details will be provided upon selection.