



# Gogebic Conservation District Community Garden Grant 2026 Overview

The Gogebic Conservation District(GCD) is offering four grant tracks for community organizations based in Gogebic County.

Track 1. Up to \$5000 will be awarded for the purpose of funding the establishment of a new community garden.

Track 2. Up to \$2000 will be awarded or for the ongoing maintenance/improvement of existing community gardens in any municipality of Gogebic County.

Track 3. Up to \$1250 will be awarded for the establishment of a pollinator garden.

Track 4. Up to \$5000 will be awarded for the establishment of a community orchard.

**Eligibility:** Applicants must represent or be affiliated with a local school district, nonprofit organization, Native American tribes and tribal departments, libraries, school groups, lake associations, or other community group. The proposed site location must be a public space in Gogebic County. The applicant must be able to demonstrate ownership or permission in perpetuity at the proposed location. Proposed location must not violate any zoning requirements of the municipality it is located and follow any liability insurance requirements particular to the municipality where the project is located. **Groups cannot have any political affiliations.**

**Ineligible applicants include**, but not necessarily limited to, federal government agencies, groups/organizations who reside outside of Gogebic County, GCD employees and Board members.

**Application Submission & Deadlines:** All grant applications must be submitted by the deadline and requirements outlined in the application.

Grant Timeline:

March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026: Grant application period opens.

April 29<sup>th</sup> 2026: Grant application period closes.

May 18<sup>th</sup> 2026: Grant Recipients selected & notified.

May 18<sup>th</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup> 2026: Recipients work on grant, schedule site visits.

November 2026: Schedule site visit with GCD board and grant closeout.

## Grant Application Criteria:

The following list outlines the requirements of an application to be considered by the selection committee (see “Evaluation Criteria Rubric” attached):

Complete application submitted by deadline.

Site location: project must be contained within land owned by the applicant’s organization, or applicant must demonstrate a written contract of agreement with the landowner. The proposed area for the project must be clearly defined and dedicated for the project. The site should have adequate protection from (or resilience to) potential damage (vandalism, deer browse, etc.).

Accessibility: The site and project should be accessible to the general public and provide reasonable accommodation for those with limited mobility.

Project must have a long-term plan for support to maintain the site. Project must include a plan for a governance structure, such as a board of directors or similar, to coordinate and ensure maintenance.

**Publicity Notice:** All publicity generated for and received by the project must acknowledge GCD as the funder or partial funder. All signs/published materials associated with the project are required to include the GCD logo and acknowledgment of GCD as a funder of the project. All projects are required to include a permanent project sign about the project and acknowledging GCD as the funder with the GCD logo. All permanent signage needs approval by GCD before printing. Suggested funding acknowledgement: “This project was funded by the Gogebic Conservation District.”

## Grant Award

Grant funds can be used for supplies and materials directly related to the construction of new community garden or improvement of existing community garden infrastructure. Grant funds are not intended to pay wages or contractors expenses. Only expenses incurred after the start date of the grant agreement may be submitted for reimbursement.

Grantees will need to supply documentation of expenses/matching funds and a final project report detailing how the purchased supplies and materials were used with pictures included. A site visit for GCD board members will be scheduled at the end of the grant period.

Up to \$5000.00 for the community garden startup grant track, up to \$2000.00 for the community garden maintenance track, up to \$1250 for the pollinator garden track, up to \$5000 for the community orchard track will be paid to recipients on a reimbursement basis. Grantees can only receive reimbursement for actual documented expenses directly related to the project. A 1:1 match is required with sources of match to be volunteer labor (valued at \$20.00 per hour), direct labor, or in-kind cash contribution to the project.

### **Grant Awardee Responsibilities:**

Follow the Grant timeline to meet recipient's requirements and complete the installation.

Submit to GCD all necessary financial documentation for the project (receipts, invoices, statements, volunteer documentation)

Schedule the project installation date according to the Grant Timeline.

Document project (including photos) and submit a Final Project Report. See "Reporting" below.

Schedule a site visit for GCD board members at the end of the project.

Ongoing: Follow the final maintenance plan for the site and update GCD if board members or coordinating entity changes or if contact information changes.

### Reporting & Documentation

#### Completed Project Report – Post installation.

Grantees will need to supply documentation of expenses/matching funds and a final project report detailing how the purchased supplies and materials were used with pictures included.

**This report should be submitted within one month of the project install date.** The report should have at least 3 high quality photos that GCD may use on our website and in publications to display and share the grant projects. Photos can be a before and after, members of the community doing the installation etc. This is an opportunity to showcase your project as it comes to life! The report and photos should be submitted digitally to the GCD Program Contact.

#### GCD Program Contact

Please email or mail the application form and all other supporting documents or questions to:

Maxwell Ramsay, District Manager, 500 N Moore St. Bessemer, MI 49911

Title all "Garden Grant 2026" followed by your organizations name.

# Evaluation Criteria Rubric

Applicants will need to submit a complete grant application that includes a detailed project narrative and budget showing what grant funds will be used for and the sources of matching funds. Applications will be evaluated based on the relevance of the proposal to the goals of the grant, level of detail provided in the grant proposal, and probability of success of the proposed project.

The table below lists some evaluation criteria considered by the selection committee. Additional criteria may be added, and the weight of each criterion is determined by the individual committee member. Members then discuss the projects and come to a consensus on grant awardees.

	<p><b>Criteria:</b>  <i>For each criterion below, rank the importance by choosing a weight ranging from 1 to 5. Leave Blank = if you think a criterion is unnecessary, do not assign weight</i>  <i>1 = least important 5 = most important</i>  <i>* If desired, add your own criterion row(s), so we can evolve the process!</i></p>	<p><b>Step 1: Weight</b>  <b>Criteria</b>  <i>(See Instructions in the cell to the left)</i></p>
<b>Project Site Location</b>	Site must be contained within land owned by the applicant's organization, or applicant must demonstrate a written <b>contract of agreement with the landowner.</b>	
	The <b>proposed area for the project must be clearly defined and dedicated for the project.</b> The site should have adequate protection from (or resilience to) potential damage (human traffic, deer, etc.).	
	Consideration of site location in a high use and visibility area <b>accessible by the public or community</b> including reasonable accommodation for those with limited mobility. Projects with some or all of the garden space including raised beds are encouraged.	
	Project must demonstrate ongoing plan and <b>leadership to coordinate and maintain the site.</b> Plan includes a governance structure, such as a board of directors or similar, to coordinate and ensure maintenance.	
	Scale of the proposed <b>project is realistic for the group to implement and maintain.</b> Community skills and resources are adequate for project to be successful long-term	
<b>Project Plan</b>	Coordinators / Applications demonstrate <b>long term continued community involvement</b> and support in the project. Multiple community members showing support as well permanency in space and plan demonstrates group commitment through transitions / leadership turnover with a governing structure such as a board of directors.	
	Plans must demonstrate detail on how the project will <b>benefit the community.</b> A mission and vision statement for the organization should be included.	
	Plan must have name for the project, demonstrate plan for signage, and promotion of the project in the community.	