

**Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
2016 Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Project Title:

ENRTF ID: 103-C

Building Environmental Stewardship Through Sustainable Farm Ecosystem Exploration

Category: C. Environmental Education

Total Project Budget: \$ 824,900

Proposed Project Time Period for the Funding Requested: 3 years, July 2016 to June 2019

Summary:

A collaboration between Youth Farm and Minneapolis Public Schools centered around a farm education campus that provides experiential education about sustainable ecosystems, teaching environmental literacy, conservation, and sustainable lifestyle skills.

Name: Amanda Stoelb

Sponsoring Organization: Youth Farm

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Location

Region: Metro

County Name: Hennepin

City / Township: Minneapolis

Alternate Text for Visual:

Aerial view of Nellie Stone Johnson school property, with existing 1/3 acre garden and proposed expansion site for environmental education and sustainable farm campus.

_____ Funding Priorities	_____ Multiple Benefits	_____ Outcomes	_____ Knowledge Base
_____ Extent of Impact	_____ Innovation	_____ Scientific/Tech Basis	_____ Urgency
_____ Capacity Readiness	_____ Leverage	_____ TOTAL	_____ %



PROJECT TITLE: Building Environmental Stewardship Through Sustainable Farm Ecosystem Exploration

I. PROJECT STATEMENT

The Project engages students, teachers and the community in experiential outdoor education to develop lifelong skills and values around environmental stewardship. This collaboration between Minneapolis Public Schools and Youth Farm will be centered around a two-acre educational campus and sustainable farm ecosystem. The Project will be a hub for connecting classrooms and outdoor environmental education spaces in schools throughout the school district. Core elements will include:

- 2-acre sustainable farm ecosystem supporting hands-on environmental education in the classroom & outdoors
- Water/ecosystem conservation and soil health demonstrations: rainwater collection, native pollinator habitats, drip irrigation, compost, integrated pest management, crop rotation, companion planting, cover crops
- Field trips to the educational farm campus to engage students in hands-on outdoor education
- High school internship program focused on green job skills, leadership skills, environmental stewardship
- Support for MPS schools to create and expand their own place-based outdoor education and school gardens
- Food distribution system to assure sustainably-grown produce in school meals
- Teacher support and professional development to integrate environmental education into existing curriculum
- Opportunities for community engagement, instilling sustainable living values through events and workshops

Today’s youth are increasingly disconnected from the natural world and lack knowledge and appreciation of the environment. Few urban youth have the chance to engage with a living and growing ecosystem. Many schools have existing school gardens or outdoor education spaces, but they are underutilized and teachers lack the time, funding, and support to integrate them into their classrooms. The time is right to train a new generation about the natural environment, teach sustainable living habits, and instill a conservation ethic. To this end, The Project aims to provide hands-on outdoor educational opportunities for underserved youth, tools and support for teachers, and sustainable living resources and engagement opportunities for the community while improving the soil quality, ecosystem dynamics, and water conservation levels of a currently empty 4-acre lot.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

Activity 1: Engage youth and community members in experiential environmental education at a sustainable farm ecosystem **Budget: \$602,900**

Expand youth involvement in hands-on, experiential environmental learning by building an outdoor education campus and sustainable farm ecosystem. Programming will build on the strong foundation of Youth Farm’s current model working with students ages 9-24, which includes progressive leadership and hands-on sustainable growing and lifestyle skills-building through in-school, after school, and summer programming. Provide experiential education opportunities for Northside community members.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. 4,000 students increase understanding of environmental stewardship through field trips, after-school and summer programming at educational farm and other school gardens	Fall 2019
2. 20 high school students increase green employment, environmental stewardship, and leadership skills through year round internship and training program	Summer 2019
3. 500 Northside community members gain knowledge and skills about sustainable farm ecosystems and environmental stewardship through educational events, tours, workshops	Fall 2018
4. Increased rainwater infiltration, reduced stormwater overflows, decreased erosion, improved air quality, and reduced waste through reuse of food/garden waste as compost	Summer 2019
5. Increased access to and consumption of 20,000 pounds of sustainably grown food	Fall 2019

Activity 2: Train and support teachers to integrate experiential environmental education into existing classroom curriculum **Budget: \$192,000**

Deepen and expand strategic partnerships with schools. Provide teacher support and professional development opportunities to support existing but underutilized environmental resources in school gardens and integrate classroom lessons with hands-on outdoor learning opportunities. Partner with schools to create outdoor education spaces at their schools that integrate outdoor environmental education into existing curriculum.



Outcome	Completion Date
1. 60 teachers increased environmental literacy and knowledge of outdoor education topics/best practices after skill & resource workshops and ongoing support	Fall 2018
2. Environmental, ecosystem and sustainable farm/food education integrated into existing curriculum in 10 partner school throughout district for grades 3-8	Spring 2019

Activity 3: Evaluate success, measure impact and disseminate results **Budget: \$30,000**

The Project’s core staff will work with University of Minnesota Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives Institute to develop and implement outcome and process evaluations to measure the impact of environmental education programming and integration of outdoor education into classroom education and teacher professional development.

Outcome	Completion Date
1. Improved program quality and impact, learnings published from results of evaluation	Fall 2019
2. Financial and community support leveraged through dissemination of evaluation report	Summer 2019

III. PROJECT STRATEGY

A. Project Team/Partners

The Project combines Youth Farm’s expertise in youth development, community organizing, and sustainable growing with MPS Nutrition Services’ ambitions to assure that all students have access to sustainably grown produce and develop sustainable lifestyles, environmental literacy and stewardship values for a healthy future.

- Project Partners Receiving Funds: Youth Farm will house staff positions (human resources) and project accounting with shared personnel and project management from Minneapolis Public Schools.
- Project Partners Not Receiving Funds: MPS will support the project with in-kind space at Nellie Stone Johnson School, Farm to School Coordinator staff time, and funding 50% of 3 project staff positions.

B. Project Impact and Long-Term Strategy

A small school garden project grew into a farm on 1/3 acre that is the current location of in-school and after-school environmental education for 3rd-6th graders at Nellie Stone Johnson School. In 2013, MPS Nutrition Services approached Youth Farm about partnering to expand this site into a district-wide educational farm. From June 2014-2015, the two organizations co-managed an AmeriCorps VISTA member to further develop this partnership and identify the outdoor environmental and school garden education needs for all MPS schools. Youth Farm coordinated a 14-month planning process to develop the project idea. Youth Farm and MPS applied for a USDA Community Food Partnership Grant (\$400,000) in April 2015 to fund a portion of the project over three years and developed a funding plan for strategic outreach to potential foundation, corporate, and national funders.

At the end of 5 years, The Project will have a strong and lasting impact on the environmental literacy levels, conservation ethic, and sustainable living knowledge of students, teachers and community members. It will engage 4,000 MPS students in holistic experiential environmental education; 20 high school interns in building environmental stewardship, leadership and sustainable life skills; 500+ community members in building awareness about sustainable living and environmental stewardship; 60 teachers in outdoor environmental education integrated with existing classroom curriculum; and distribute 20,000 of produce from a sustainable demonstration farm site each year. The Project will ensure long-term sustainability by building a network of robust school partnerships, integrating environmental education into existing classroom curriculum, and funding shared staff between the MPS school district and Youth Farm to provide ongoing support. The dissemination of evaluation results will demonstrate the positive impacts of The Project to leverage ongoing support.

C. Timeline Requirements

The Project will develop over the course of 5 years through gradual expansion and increased engagement: Year 1: Hire core staff, develop outdoor educational campus; expand programming at Nellie Stone Johnson School; begin school partnerships. Year 2: Expand staff, sustainable food distribution systems, and student engagement with field trips and outreach to additional schools. Year 3: Expand teacher support and professional development; increase student engagement through hands-on environmental education integrated with classroom learning and field trips Year 4-5: Build sustainability in programming, outreach, food distribution; deepen community and school partnerships.

2016 Detailed Project Budget

Project Title: Building Environmental Stewardship Through Sustainable Farm Ecosystem Exploration

IV. TOTAL ENRTF REQUEST BUDGET - 3 years	
BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
Personnel: (Salary 75%, Benefits 25% for 3 years) 1 Project Manager at 33% FTE = \$16,500*3= \$49,500 1 School Partnerships Coordinator at 33% FTE = \$13,200*3= \$39,600 1 Farm Manager at 40% FTE = \$16,000*3= \$48,000 1 Education Coordinator at 33% FTE = \$13,200*3= \$39,600 25% Benefits for 4 staff positions above = \$44,175 10 High school student interns at \$8,400 for 3 years = \$252,000 (10-15 hours/week (400 hours) in school year and 30 hours/week in summer (300 hours), 700 hours*\$12/hour = \$8,400 per intern) 4 - 0.5 FTE Outreach Educators funded 75% = \$45,000*3= \$135,000 Total Salaries and Benefits: \$607,875	\$607,875
Professional/Technical/Service Contracts: Evaluation consultant, University of Minnesota Healthy Food Healthy Lives for 3 years = \$30,000	\$30,000
Equipment/Tools/Supplies: 1) Program materials (seeds, starts, mulch, compost, fertilizer - \$4,000 * 3 years - \$12,000; gloves - \$200; magnifying glasses - \$100; microscopes - \$1000; soil/water testing kits - \$500*3=\$1500; Tools: rakes - \$300, hoes - \$300, trowels - \$300, shovels - \$300) = \$20,000 2) Printing: Workshop/lesson materials, dissemination materials and handouts = \$10,000 3) Field Trips (staff support, supplies for 95 field trips over 3 years) = \$51,775 4) Educational Farm Campus supplies (tractor - \$50,000; beekeeping equipment- \$1000, tiller - \$1000, raingarden - \$500, native prairie - \$500, pollinator plants - \$500, rainbarrels - \$1000, drip irrigation system - \$1000) = \$55,000 Total = \$136,775	\$136,775
Acquisition (Fee Title or Permanent Easements)	N/A
Travel: 1) Mileage for staff travel between schools = \$2500*3 years = \$7500 2) School bus cost for 30 farm field trips (all MPS 3rd graders for 3 years, \$225/bus) = \$20,250	\$27,750
Additional Budget Items: Liability Insurance = \$20,000 (in addition to Minneapolis Public School current liability insurance) 2) Portable toilet and handwashing station for seasonal rental over 3 years = \$2500	\$22,500
TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES TRUST FUND \$ REQUEST =	\$824,900

V. OTHER FUNDS		
SOURCE OF FUNDS	AMOUNT	Status
Other Non-State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period: USDA Community Food Project Grant - \$400,000 (Pending, applied April 2015)	\$400,000	Pending
Other State \$ To Be Applied To Project During Project Period	N/A	N/A
In-kind Services To Be Applied To Project During Project Period 1) Youth Farm Associate Director, Project supervision, 0.25 FTE for 3 years (\$37,500) 2) MPS Nutrition Services Farm to School Coordinator, Project supervision, 0.2 FTE for 3 years (\$33,000) 3) 50% FTE for 3 staff positions over 3 years paid for by MPS Nutrition Services (\$234,000)	\$304,500	Pending
Funding History Planning Grant from General Mills in 2014 (\$10,000)	\$10,000	Secured
Remaining \$ From Current ENRTF Appropriation	N/A	N/A

27th Ave N

27th Ave N

27th Ave N

Nellie Stone Johnson Community School Site Map

rain garden

rain garden

rain garden

Existing Garden

2-Acre Expansion site



26th Ave N

26th Ave N

Lyndale Ave N

Lyndale Ave N

Lyndale Ave N

Project Manager Qualifications & Organization Description

Project Manager

Amanda Stoelb, Youth Farm Associate Director

Amanda started working at Youth Farm in 2004 as an AmeriCorps member and continued that work for two years. She was the West Side Program Director from 2007–2011. During her time as Program Director, Amanda became an accomplished organizer with youth, developed Youth Farm’s in-school and after-school greenhouse programming, and was the driving force behind the development of Youth Farm’s progressive programming model. She was hired as Youth Farm’s first Associate Director in 2011 and has been a key element in Youth Farm’s expansion into new neighborhoods in 2011-2012, developing Youth Farm’s apprenticeship program and integrating expansion efforts into Youth Farm’s existing model.

As Project Manager, Amanda will be responsible for the hiring and supervision of project staff. Additionally, she will oversee the integration of The Project’s activities with current MPS curriculum and Youth Farm’s youth development model.

Youth Farm

At Youth Farm, our mission is simple. We farm to grow.

- **We grow leaders** - We provide free year-round programs for over 500 youth ages 9 to 24. We farm to educate and train through gardens and greenhouses. We cultivate leadership through planting, growing, preparing and selling the food we grow.
- **We grow food** - From raspberries to radishes we seed, plant, grow and harvest our food and bring it to our communities’ forks. We feed families through our CSA, community dinners and other neighborhood events.
- **We grow community** - We live in and work in vibrant and diverse Minneapolis neighborhoods of Lyndale, Powderhorn and Hawthorne as well as Frogtown and the West Side neighborhoods of St. Paul.
- **We grow progress** - Since 1995 we’ve created and implemented a development model that grows with our youth to challenge them where they’re at with projects and leadership opportunities tailored to a variety of ages and abilities.

Minneapolis Public Schools Nutrition Services

Mission: Nurturing ALL students through access to quality food.

MPS is making great strides to improve the quality of school meals. Under the leadership of a new director, Bertrand Weber, MPS has been gearing up over the last three years to serve restaurant-quality food to children across the city. In a district that was entirely “heat and serve” microwave-style meals, one-third of the district’s schools have been converted into cooking kitchens. Real, whole ingredients are emphasized over processed or convenience foods. Salad bars have been installed in two-thirds of Minneapolis school sites. Local food from small, sustainable growers is on the menu. Partnerships with nonprofit organizations, local businesses and chefs ensure that our work is rooted in the community. MPS serves approximately 40,000 meals each day to our students at 62 school sites, 24,000 of which are lunches. The students we serve represent the diversity of cultures in our city, and 66% of students qualify for free or reduced price meals. While great strides have been made to improve the quality of and access to food for MPS students, MPS recognizes that we need to provide more than just access to good food. We count on collaborations with Youth Farm and other great partners to ensure that our students have access to hands-on environmental education that helps them gain a deeper understanding of this important part of the sustainable food system.