



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 28, 2022

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ISSUES REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TO ENCOURAGE  
URBAN AGRICULTURE IN THE CITY**

*City takes steps to increase food access through urban agriculture sites*

**CHICAGO** — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Food Equity: Community Growers Program. This program is a \$2 million investment in urban agriculture that seeks to increase food equity in communities with a history of disinvestment by encouraging the development of urban agriculture sites by local growers. Through this RFP, the City will provide funding from the Chicago Recovery Plan to one nonprofit organization to serve as a lead delegate agency for the Community Growers Program. This lead delegate agency will provide grants and ongoing technical assistance to awarded growers to ensure project success by understanding the specific needs of each individual project site and provide the appropriate supports.

“Centering community driven solutions is key to advancing food equity in Chicago,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “The Community Growers Program is an example of our commitment to reimaging Chicago’s food system, one that leverages vacant land for urban farming and catalyzes wealth building through support for food businesses.”

“Urban agriculture is a tool to help fight food insecurity in communities,” said BACP Commissioner Kenneth J. Meyer. “The Community Growers Program is paramount to making nutritious food more accessible for families. Additionally, the program provides an opportunity for local growers to become business owners, create jobs, and beautify neighborhoods.”

In the first quarter of 2023, grants will be open for individual growers and small organizations to provide funding for permanent water instillation, capacity building projects, and the support to activate new urban agricultural sites on City-owned vacant lots. Eligible projects must be located in, have a demonstrated connection to, and intend to distribute food in parts of the city qualifying as impacted by lack of access to healthy food, defined in this case as low-income communities or qualified census tracts (QCT).



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In February 2022, Mayor Lightfoot signed an executive order codifying Chicago's first-ever Food Equity Council, a private-public partnership dedicated to transforming Chicago's food system into one that is just and equitable. The Community Growers Program was co-created with the Urban Agriculture workgroup of the Food Equity Council and works toward the priorities of the Food Equity Agenda.

To learn more about the City's commitment to food equity and the Food Equity Council please visit <https://chi.gov/foodequity>.

The RFP can be viewed [here](#) and all submissions must be completed by Friday, October 21, 2022. Those interested in learning more about this opportunity can register for the pre-submittal conference on September 30<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. [here](#). The pre-submittal conference is optional but highly encouraged.

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