



# **Lawn to Garden Grants for Non-Profits**

Application Packet  
Fiscal Year 2015-2016

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# Non-Profits Lawn to Garden Grant Application Packet 2015-16

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## Background

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StopWaste is a public agency responsible for reducing waste in Alameda County. The Agency is jointly governed by three boards, the Alameda County Waste Management Authority, the Alameda County Source Reduction and Recycling Board, and the Energy Council.

The Agency's waste prevention and recycling programs are integral to a society that is environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable over the long-term. In achieving waste prevention and recycling goals, StopWaste also helps to:

- Create and aware an educated public that has adopted the values and behaviors associated with conservation and sustainability with respect to the consumption and disposal of materials and natural resources;
- Establish durable, economically sustainable markets for discarded materials that are recovered; and
- Create jobs and other forms of social betterment for the residents of Alameda County.

StopWaste has created a Lawn to Garden program to help reduce the amount of yard waste, water usage and chemicals needed to maintain lawns. Implementing sheet mulching methods to convert lawns to sustainable Bay Friendly Gardens helps close the recycling loop by utilizing compost and mulch products made from local sources (including food scraps collected curbside that is made into compost)!

Sheet mulching can be used to convert turf areas of any size to water-saving, environmentally sound landscaping. Compared to conventional methods of turf removal, every acre of turf that is sheet mulched keeps 85 tons of sod out of the landfill, or prevents the use of 10 pounds of herbicides. Benefits of sheet mulch include weed suppression without chemicals, reduced labor and maintenance costs and improvement in soil nutrient and water retention.

Lawn to Garden Conversion Mini Grants for Nonprofits provides funding and incentives to convert small lawns (1,000 to 2,500 square feet) into sustainable landscapes at nonprofit facilities located in Alameda County. As people often regularly congregate at community based facilities, projects in these public settings will provide excellent opportunities to promote lawn conversion programs. The grant goal is to lose a lawn, gain a garden and have community members participate in the conversion. Technical assistance, material discounts and grant funding provides support to organization to convert lawn to a sustainable garden.

As part of the grant activities, community members will participate in converting the lawn so that they would then be able to do the same with their own lawn, creating a ripple effect to promote lawn conversion. Visit StopWaste's [Lawn Conversion webpage](#) to see a lawn conversion event in action!

The Agency recognizes the value that nonprofit organizations bring to their communities; local nonprofits provide a channel of communication that can help StopWaste expand its outreach efforts to promote the use of compost, mulch and recycled content cardboard. These products are all used when sheet mulching over an existing lawn to establish a new planting area. Local organizations have the ability to best train and educate their members; tapping into organizational knowledge of what motivates their membership, helping StopWaste promote sheet mulching and composting while

involving and educating community members on how to implement their own lawn conversion. This grant is structured to utilize that potential.

Priority will be given to nonprofit organizations who provide services to, or whose members are comprised of, low income, disadvantaged and/or non-English speakers residing in Alameda County, in order to assist StopWaste in reaching these communities. The Agency is soliciting applications from nonprofit organizations that have the capacity and desire to work with their local community, membership or congregation to build awareness and engagement in positive environmental change.

Organization leader(s) will enter into an agreement with StopWaste to agree to convert facility lawn using sheet mulching techniques utilizing community members with the assistance of the StopWaste Team Sheet Mulch (Team). Grant funding shall not exceed \$5,000 per organization.

\$3,000 will be distributed when the grant contract is executed. \$1,000 will be distributed after the required sheet mulch presentation to members, verification of promotional materials and commitment of 2 members to be crew leaders on day of party. Final \$1,000 will be distributed between 6 months to 1 year post sheet mulching after the Bay-Friendly Designer conducts a maintenance checkup and recommended changes are completed.

The Funding is to be used to support lawn conversion and can cover irrigation equipment, plants and maintenance tools. (Refer to StopWaste commitments on page 5 for lawn conversion items covered by StopWaste).

## **Applicant Eligibility Requirements**

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- Organization must be a nonprofit (IRS 501 (c) status) located in Alameda County.
- Operates/located in a facility with a lawn ranging in size from 1,000 – 2,500 square feet. (If organization rents facility, must have a signed letter from Landlord approving lawn conversion).
- Organization has a membership or constituent base of at least 50 persons. (Preference will be given to entities reaching low income/non English speaking communities located in the Eastern and Southern portions of Alameda County).
- Organization has a dedicated, trained staff and/or third party maintenance staff to maintain the converted garden.

*Please note:* Organizations utilizing **Fiscal Sponsors** are not eligible for Lawn Conversion grants.

## Organization Commitments

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IF awarded grant funding, selected organization will commit to the following:

1. Meet with StopWaste team 8 weeks prior to lawn conversion event to discuss site prep, logistics, and promotion of lawn conversion event. Dedicated maintenance staff shall attend and agree to sheet mulch prep and process requirements.
2. Host a Sheet Mulch Talk for at least 20 attendees for an interactive presentation by the StopWaste Team Sheet Mulch (Team) prior to lawn conversion event
3. Working with StopWaste Team:
  - a. Plan and prepare site for lawn conversion; complete activities identified in attached Lawn Conversion Event Checklist (**Appendix A**)
  - b. **NOTE: grading of the site and irrigation retrofit must be completed at least 1 week prior to the lawn conversion event.** StopWaste staff will do a walk-through one week before the event to confirm that grading meets the Bay-Friendly specification for sheet mulch site preparation. If the grading is not complete or does not meet specification, StopWaste will request that Grantee complete the work. If grading is not satisfactory 48 hours before the event, StopWaste may postpone the event.
4. Secure a minimum of 20 community member volunteers (more for larger lawns) to assist in lawn conversion activities on day of Lawn Conversion Event.
5. Convert lawn via sheet mulching on pre-selected day using community volunteers and StopWaste Team.
6. Purchase plants – if choosing to plant at lawn conversion event.
7. Place educational signage (provided by StopWaste) promoting sheet mulching up to 6 months in the newly converted garden area.
8. Provide maintenance plan for newly converted garden.
9. Complete Post Lawn Conversion Evaluation (**Appendix C**)
10. Have assigned maintenance staff attend a 2-hour maintenance training by StopWaste (fall 2016).
11. Optional attendance at the Bay-Friendly Maintenance Qualification Training. Scholarship available pending StopWaste staff approval.

## **StopWaste Commitments**

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Grantees awarded funding will receive the following:

- \$5,000 grant funding to be utilized to offset costs of lawn conversion not covered by StopWaste commitments, which can include irrigation equipment, plants and maintenance tools.
- StopWaste Team Sheet Mulch will identify and pay for a Bay-Friendly Qualified Designer to design the common area lawn.
- On-site consultation to review site preparation requirements, provide technical assistance.
- Lead lawn conversion event and provide all necessary sheet mulch supplies (cardboard, recycled compost, mulch) tools, crew leaders/staff.
- Provide technical assistance and resources on sheet mulching prep (grading and irrigation retrofit) to landscape maintenance staff if necessary.
- Two-hour free training of maintenance staff on Bay-Friendly practices for ongoing maintenance of the new garden, fall 2016.
- Scholarship for Bay-Friendly Maintenance Qualification training for designated member of maintenance staff, pending approval by StopWaste staff.

In addition, lawn conversion event volunteers will receive 40% discounts on lawn conversion materials (mulch, compost, cardboard, plants) to convert their own residential lawn (up to 2,500 square feet).

## **General Conditions**

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All materials submitted become the property of StopWaste, and will not be returned. Funds awarded are public funds and any information submitted or generated is subject to public disclosure requirements.

The Agency reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive minor irregularities in submittal requirements, to request modifications of the proposal, to accept or reject any or all proposals received, to grant full or partial funding of any request, and/or to cancel all or part of this grant solicitation at any time prior to awards.

Please refer to FAQs (**Appendix B**) for more details on grant activities and requirements.

Ineligible uses of grant funds:

- Repayment of existing debt or pre-existing tax liens or obligations;
- Payment of organizational overhead;
- Legal fees; or
- Loan or bank fees.

## **Evaluation Process**

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Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by StopWaste staff members. During the review process, program staff will conduct a site visit prior to making a funding recommendation and may contact the applicant for additional information or to clarify proposal content. However, an expression of interest by staff should not be construed as an indication of forthcoming grant approval.

Staff recommendations will be presented to the Executive Director for funding approval.

## **Evaluation Criteria**

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All submitted proposals will be evaluated and rated, according to the following criteria:

1. **Organizational Capacity** - Management and staff qualified to implement project and achieve stated objectives. The organization has the ability to reach both the audience type as well as the target numbers identified in grant objectives.
2. **Impact** - Extent of contribution to promotion of sheet mulching and lawn conversion to a wide geographic area in Alameda County. Assessment of proposals may also include consideration of such issues as geographic distribution of services, demographic diversity, extent of collaborative and community support and public education potential.
3. **Application Responsiveness** – Quality of responses

## **Grant Awards**

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Grants are available on a first come first served basis until the pool of funds dedicated to grant program is exhausted.

All applicants will be notified of the results of the grant review process and the Agency decisions after the receipt of their proposals. For successful applicants, funds will be available for expenditure only after a funding agreement/contract between the Agency and the grantee is signed and fully executed, and required insurance coverage and W-9 forms are provided. The Agency will not be liable for any project costs incurred prior to the legal execution of the contract, unless mutually agreed upon in writing.

Should the grant recipient fail to sign the agreement, provide proof of insurance coverage, sign and provide W-9 forms, and implement the program within 60 days, unless previously stated in the grant application, funds will be de-obligated and revert back to StopWaste.

## **Contract Specifications**

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A standard contract or funding agreement will be entered into following the grant award. Following are excerpts from a standard contract used by StopWaste:

### **Insurance Requirements**

It is a requirement of StopWaste that any individual or firm selected to receive a mini grant maintain the following minimum insurance during the term of the grant contract.

- **REQUIRED:** Comprehensive general liability insurance, including personal injury liability, blanket contractual liability, and broad-form property damage liability coverage. The combined single limit for bodily injury and property damage shall be not less than \$2,000,000.
- **REQUIRED:** Automobile bodily injury and property damage liability insurance covering owned, non-owned, rented, and hired cars. The combined single limit for bodily injury and property damage shall be not less than \$1,000,000.
- **REQUIRED:** Statutory workers' compensation and employer's liability insurance as required by state law.

**As part of grant application, applicant shall submit to StopWaste certificates of insurance for the policies listed above.** The certificates shall provide that the Contractor give written notice to StopWaste at least 10 days prior to cancellation of or any material change in the policy.

*(Under special circumstances, exceptions may be made to the minimum insurance requirements, but only upon prior agreement by StopWaste).*

### **Statement of Economic Interest**

The individual or firm's project manager may be required to submit a Statement of Economic Interest Form (Form 700) as required by the State Fair Political Practices Commission. For a copy of a Form 700, please see the California Fair Political Practices Commission website at <http://www.fppc.ca.gov>

### **Acknowledgment**

"All publicity or promotional materials concerning the Project, including press releases, feature stories, public service announcements, brochures and product literature produced during the term of this Agreement must be submitted to the StopWaste representative(s) for review and approval prior to distribution. StopWaste shall be acknowledged as a supporter in all aforementioned materials for the duration of this Agreement."

## Submittal Requirements

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A complete grant proposal must include all of the following forms and supporting documents to be eligible for consideration. The application should include the following:

- Form A: Application Cover Page
- Form B: Organizational Overview
- Form C: Contract Insurance and Statement of Economic Interest
- Governing Board roster, indicating officers, addresses and affiliations
- List of key project personnel involved in the project
- Proof of federal nonprofit status (501C)
- Proof of insurance (as identified in Contract Specifications section)
- If renting facility, letter from landlord consenting to conversion

The following Appendixes should be reviewed prior to submittal of application but are for reference only. The forms below **do not need to be completed as part of the grant application**. If awarded funding, then applicant will need to complete additional materials.

- Appendix A: Lawn Conversion Event Checklist
- Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions
- Appendix C: Lawn Conversion Evaluation

We prefer applications to be submitted electronically as a single PDF file and sent directly via email to:

[jnader@stopwaste.org](mailto:jnader@stopwaste.org) with the Subject line: *Lawn to Garden Grant Application*

You may also mail hard copy of application and supporting documentation to:

Jeanne Nader  
StopWaste  
1537 Webster Street  
Oakland, CA 94612

Note: All costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal are the responsibility of the applicant. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

**FORM A - Application Cover Page**

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***Applicant Information***

Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Year Established: \_\_\_\_\_ Federal ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

State and Date of Incorporation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Organization (faith based, community service oriented, etc) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Members in your organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of individuals receiving services from your organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Geographic area of operations: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about this grant program?

**Landscaping Information**

1. How large is the facility lawn?

- Less than 500 sq ft
- Between 500-1500 sq ft
- Between 1500-2500 sq ft

2. Is the lawn area currently irrigated?

- No
- Yes – Drip irrigation
- Yes – Sprinkler irrigation

3. Does the organization own the property to be converted?

- Yes
- No (If no, please attach letter from the landlord consenting to the lawn conversion)

4. How is the lawn currently maintained?

- Landscaping/Gardening Company
- On Site Staff
- Other

5. Describe the new garden you would like to plant after sheet mulching the lawn.

6. Describe how you will use funds to complete the lawn conversion.

7. Describe how you will recruit volunteers to attend the lawn conversion party

8. Please include a photo of the lawn. (electronic or hard copy)

(To be completed by Executive Director or equivalent )

*I certify that the information contained in this proposal is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief. I further certify that this grant application is submitted with the full knowledge and endorsement of the governing board of this organization, which is empowered to enforce compliance with all contract conditions.*

Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**FORM B - Organizational Overview**

1. Briefly describe the history, purpose and primary activities of your organization.

2. Describe the membership/clientele base of your organization, including number of members and geographic location of members served.

3. Does the organization provide activities and/or services the organization provides to low income/disadvantaged and/or non-English speaking communities? If so, please describe.

**FORM C - Insurance Requirements and Statement of Economic Interest**

Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign and return the statement below to indicate that you and your firm understands and will comply with StopWaste’s policy to submit a Statement of Economic Interest Form if requested by StopWaste staff.

- I have reviewed the Contract Elements information and certify that my firm has the ability to obtain and submit the Statement of Economic Interest Form.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to provide current and appropriate insurance certificates to StopWaste as part of application submittals. I also understand that failure to provide insurance certificates will result in cancellation of funding by StopWaste.
- I understand that failure to comply with any of these requirements will result in StopWaste’s refusal to enter into a mini grant contract with my organization.

Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The following Appendixes should be reviewed prior to submittal of application but are for reference only. The forms below **do not need to be completed as part of the grant application**. If awarded funding, then applicant will need to complete these forms.

- Appendix A: Lawn Conversion Event Checklist
- Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions
- Appendix C: Lawn Conversion Evaluation

## **Appendix A - Lawn Conversion Checklist**

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### **1. Site preparation -- To be completed at least one week before the lawn conversion event:**

- Shut off irrigation and cap off existing sprinkler heads. If future access is needed, mark with irrigation flags.
- Remove 12-inch wide strip of lawn adjacent to all curbs, hardscapes, drains, and other elements such as valve boxes and vaults.
- Flip turf roots side up toward center of the lawn to be sheet mulched. Pile excavated sod to create a mound or keep as a single layer. (Excavated sod will break down rapidly; a single layer will not make noticeable grade changes.)
- Grade soil surface to a depth of 4-6 inches below top of hardscape, drain, vault or other element to allow adequate room for sheet mulch profile. Taper the cut back at a shallow angle (less than 45 degrees) to meet existing grade at existing turf to remain in place.
- Install 5-gallon and larger plant material so that top of root ball will be even with top of sheet mulch (3 to 4 inches above existing grade).

### **2. Sheet mulch installation – Day of lawn conversion event**

- Install a minimum of two layers of 100% recycled B-flute cardboard to the entire planting area, completely covering all existing soil and remaining herbaceous vegetation, if any.
- Overlap cardboard a minimum of 12 inches.
- Wet cardboard while applying to prevent it from blowing away.
- Cardboard shall abut directly against edge of pavement, curbs, boulders or other site features. Keep tree and shrub root crowns clear of cardboard.
- Fold excess cardboard under itself when at hardscape or root crowns. (Folding is easier when cardboard is wet.)
- Retain any small cardboard scraps to patch holes created during sheet mulch process.
- Apply 1-2 inches of quality OMRI- or CDFA- listed recycled organic compost on top of the cardboard layer. Taper compost application to ½ inch when 6 inches or less from hardscape.
- Apply 2-3 inches of mulch on top of the compost to obtain a minimum 3 to 4-inch total thickness of compost and mulch above the cardboard.
- Keep stems and trunks of all plants clear of compost, mulch and debris.

## **Appendix A - Lawn Conversion Checklist (continued)**

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### **3. Planting into completed sheet mulch – Day of lawn conversion event**

#### **a. One-gallon plants**

- Push back compost and mulch to expose a circle of cardboard.
- Cut an X into cardboard and pull back flaps
- Dig a shallow hole
- Place plant in hole so that top of rootball is even with top of mulch after planting
- Replace compost and mulch

#### **b. Small plant material (4-inch pots, plugs, etc.)**

- Push back compost and mulch to expose a circle of cardboard.
- Place plant on cardboard
- Replace compost and mulch
- Keep stems and trunks of all plants clear of compost, mulch and debris.

### **4. Post-sheet mulch activities—To be completed within one week after the event**

- Install 1/2-inch inline emitter tubing. After testing each zone, bury dripline in sheet mulch. Hand water plants until irrigation is installed.
- Conduct a site walk through to identify bare or low areas and exposed cardboard.
- Add mulch to cover bare or low areas to a depth of 3 inches minimum.
- Fold exposed cardboard under at curb, trees, valve boxes and other edges.

## **Appendix B - Frequently Asked Questions**

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**1. Do we have to use the entire grant funds for the lawn conversion?**

Yes, the funds should be used for your organization's lawn conversion. The most common uses are for irrigation equipment and plants. If you are an HOA non-profit, you can also use the funds towards model designs for your members.

**2. How do we get a design for the new garden?**

StopWaste will identify a Bay-Friendly Qualified Designer to work with you on your lawn conversion design. These designers use sheet mulching in their work and have extensive experience working with grantees and common lawn area designs.

**3. Do we have to purchase any sheet mulch materials?**

StopWaste provides the cardboard, compost and mulch for the lawn conversion event, as well as the design to be complete by a Bay-Friendly Qualified Designer. Your organization is responsible for covering the cost of irrigation equipment, plants, and if you choose, hardscape materials.

**4. How much will the irrigation retrofit cost?**

It depends on how many heads need to be capped and the zones for the drip irrigation. It's best to consult with your water agency on the preferred equipment. Urban Farmer in Richmond is an excellent source for mapping out your irrigation and sourcing equipment.

**5. Why do you require grading of the lawn 12 inches across and 4-6 inches deep?**

The grading of the lawn anywhere it touches concrete will ensure that you don't have mulch spilling into walkways or the street. You can also use the flipped lawn to create mounds in the new garden which adds interest and benefits native plants which require added drainage.

**6. Why does the grading need to be done 1 week prior to the event?**

StopWaste needs to ensure that the site is ready for the event participants. Grading takes time and labor. If it doesn't meet StopWaste's specifications on the pre-event walk through, there's time to fix it. If the grading is not complete 48 hours prior to the lawn conversion event, it may be cancelled.

**7. Is there a reason you recommend 4 inch plants?**

Yes, they are usually healthier, cheaper and easier to plant. You can put these smaller plants right into sheet mulch. For trees and largeshrubs, you will have to purchase 5 gallon plants (often larger for trees). They don't typically come in smaller sizes.

**8. You recommend fall planting. Is it okay to plant other times of year?**

Fall is ideal because of the rains, but you can plant in winter and spring, especially if you're installing a drip irrigation system. We don't recommend summer planting, because even with drip, you'll need more water.

## Appendix C - Lawn Conversion Evaluation

### ***Planning process:***

1. Was the initial site visit by the StopWaste Team helpful? If not, how could it be improved?

2. Was the Lawn Conversion Checklist//Bay-Friendly Specifications helpful in prepping the site and preparing for the event?

3. Did the design process meet your expectations? If not, why?

4. Did you rely on any other resources for your sheet mulching project? If so, what were the resources?

## **Appendix C - Lawn Conversion Evaluation (continued)**

### ***Lawn Conversion Event:***

5. Did the lawn conversion with sheet mulching meet your expectations? If not, why?

6. Do you have any feedback on the actual lawn conversion event?

7. Did you receive adequate support from StopWaste for your lawn conversion event?

8. Would you recommend this program to others?

9. Any other comments?