

# **Request for Proposals in Organic & Sustainability Systems Research, Teaching & Outreach**

*Proposal Submission Deadline: December 6, 2023*

The Horticulture Section in the School of Integrative Plant Science at Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) requests proposals for innovative research, teaching and extension/outreach projects involving organics and sustainability in farm and food systems, and managed landscapes including gardens and green spaces. A gift from the Toward Sustainability Foundation (TSF) will provide support for successful proposals during 2024. Short proposals are requested with a **6-page** maximum (single spaced including an itemized budget, extra pages are allowed for the literature cited section). We invite grant proposals from Cornell University faculty and associates as well as county and regional based Cornell Cooperative Extension educators. Cornell student-led proposals are welcome for state, national or international research, but a Cornell faculty member must indicate his or her commitment to help guide and serve as an advisor for the proposal.

Project proposals will be reviewed and considered for funding up to a maximum \$11,000 level, but PIs are encouraged to leverage and combine TSF funds with other sources of financial support to foster more ambitious projects. The project term is Feb. 1, 2024, to Jan. 31, 2025. Multiyear projects may be eligible for continued TSF funding, but a renewal proposal and progress report will be required for each year of TSF support, and the entire cohort of proposals will be reviewed collectively each year, so there is no guarantee of continued funding for multi-year projects. Use of TSF grant funds is restricted to student or staff wages and salaries, materials and supplies, essential travel related directly to the project, and other essential expenses of the proposed activities. Each funded project is required to contribute 1) a 20-minute oral presentation at an October 2024 review day and 2) a comprehensive final report including project outcomes and impacts due by March 31, 2025. Final project reports will be made available to stakeholders via the Internet and in printed form, and should include figures, tables, photographs, written in a style and form accessible to non-scientists.

## **Goals of the TSF Organics & Sustainability Grants Program for 2024:**

- Develop, evaluate, strengthen, and disseminate knowledge about organic and sustainable farming (including plant- and animal-based production), food systems, gardening and landscapes.
- Encourage and support systems-level studies on environmental and economic impacts, climate change, social equality, and local or regional sustainability of agriculture and food systems.
- Improve and expand organic and sustainability systems knowledge and information through educator enrichment within the Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) and Master Gardener Volunteer and youth development networks, within Cornell's teaching programs, and at farms or demonstration sites, agricultural and food processing facilities, schools, and public educational settings throughout New York State and the Northeast.
- Promote novel and transformative approaches for research, extension, and teaching programs that enhance integrated learning and the knowledge foundation for organic and sustainable farming, gardening, and landscaping.

## **Priorities for Funding in 2024:**

- Projects that address diversity and equity of food systems and sustainable landscapes.
- Projects that address climate smart practices in agri-food systems and managed landscapes.
- Projects that substantially involve undergraduate or graduate student researchers.
- Projects that substantially involve county or region based CCE educators.
- Projects that promote understanding of ecosystem services and environmental impacts of organic and alternative farms, gardens, natural areas, and managed landscapes.

- Projects that use novel approaches to address sustainable local food systems within a national or international context including urban agriculture.
- Projects that include clear outreach to translate findings to communities of practice.

**Format for Proposals** (6 pages maximum, plus literature cited)

**Project/Program Title:** Brief, clear, specific description of the proposed work.

**Principal Investigators and Cooperators:** Names, titles, contact addresses and email addresses for those who will lead and collaborate in the proposed work and their primary roles.

**Category:** For review purposes, please indicate which one of these categories you would like your project to be reviewed under: 1) Farm and Food Systems, 2) Managed Landscapes, 3) Community Sustainability, or 4) International Project.

**Background/Justification:** Describe the importance of the proposed research to stated goals and priorities of this grants program. Include reasons for doing the work, important problems or opportunities your proposal will address, needs your project will fulfill, and its intended beneficiaries.

**Specific Objectives:** Provide clear, complete, logically arranged statements of the specific objectives and testable hypotheses for your project, and its measurable outcomes relating to sustainability.

**Approach/Methods:** Briefly describe the overall strategy and methods proposed to achieve your objectives, the site(s) where research will be located, and innovative features of your approach relative to previous efforts and demonstrable needs.

**Intended Outcomes and Impacts:** Describe expected outcomes and ways in which your project could enhance knowledge or improve energy efficiency, environmental or economic impacts, and other important attributes in organic farming and food systems sustainability.

**Budget:** Funding is allowed for direct costs and staff or student labor. Budgets must itemize Direct Costs including wages and fringe benefits (the Cornell fringe rate for staff is Contract College (72.25%) and Endowed (37%), 0% fringe for students; if off-campus use your organization’s own justifiable fringe rate), materials and supplies, analytical costs, and essential travel, etc. For undergraduate or graduate student salary, fringe should not be requested. Total funding requests are limited to \$11,000 per year including indirect costs of 10% (Cornell’s indirect) on the total of all direct costs. County/regional CCE requests can add their own justifiable indirect before the 10% Cornell indirect. Project funds remaining unspent on Feb. 1, 2024 will be reclaimed for use by other TSF-funded projects in future years.

| <b><u>Sample Budget</u></b>  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| Salary   | \$4,000         |
| 68.8% Fringes  | 2,890           |
| <b>Total Salary &amp; Fringes</b>  | <b>6,890</b>    |
| Supplies & Materials   | 2,000           |
| Travel   | 1,050           |
| <b>Total Direct Costs</b>  | <b>\$9,940</b>  |
| Indirect Costs Cornell (10%)   | <u>994</u>      |
| <b>Total Direct &amp; IDC</b>  | <b>\$10,934</b> |
| *Briefly describe major expense items (who will conduct the work & their hours/FTE, summarize main supply / travel expenses) |                 |

**Completed proposals must be received on or before December 6, 2023 to be eligible for funding.**

(PDF format is preferable). Please submit proposals by email to: Catalina Enright ([cle46@cornell.edu](mailto:cle46@cornell.edu)) School of Integrative Plant Science, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853. Proposals will be evaluated and prioritized for funding by a review panel of Cornell faculty, staff, students, organic farmers and other qualified experts. Project leaders of all successful proposals will be notified about January 31, 2024. Questions? Please contact Catalina Enright ([cle46@cornell.edu](mailto:cle46@cornell.edu)) or Neil Mattson ([nsm47@cornell.edu](mailto:nsm47@cornell.edu)).