



CITY OF NEW HAVEN

Food System Policy Division

May 9, 2023

The Honorable Tyisha Walker-Myers
President, Board of Alders
City of New Haven
165 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510

Dear Alder President Walker-Myers,

In accordance with the Order of the Board of Aldermen authorizing the Mayor to apply for and accept all grants on behalf of the City of New Haven, passed on October 17, 1994, I am writing to respectfully advise the Honorable Board of an application by the City of New Haven's Food System Policy Division (FSPD) to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act grants program. The FSPD is applying for *up to* \$6,000,000 over a five-year period.

While New Haven has a vibrant urban agriculture community, like many other cities, current zoning and municipal policy have been slow to accommodate its growth. The FSPD would like to better use zoning to support local food systems in each neighborhood. For example, land use policies can assist in securing access to and ensuring the preservation of land for agricultural uses and climate resilience; zoning regulations can ensure that agriculture occurs in suitable locations and under the proper conditions. But there is no one-size-fits-all urban agricultural land use policy. Urban areas vary in availability of land for agriculture, population density, soil suitability, and resident interest. The FSPD envisions and has been supporting residents in creating an environment where urban agriculture and all of its related activities are proactively encouraged by City policy and zoning, with guidance from the communities that would have the most to gain from its environmental, health, and socioeconomic benefits.

To this end, over the last three years, the FSPD has co-led the development of New Haven's first Urban Agriculture Master Plan. Potential funding from the USDA's Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act Grants Program would provide the FSPD with the unique opportunity to support our Division's own capacity while continuing to partner with residents and organizations to implement a series of plans and activities that will create an enabling environment for urban agriculture (green and growing spaces), reduce barriers to entry and sustainability, and in which all residents will equitably benefit from the positive environmental, health, and socioeconomic outcomes.

It is important to note that this grant opportunity just came across the FSPD's desk. The FSPD only submits well thought-out, careful grant proposals (lending to our 100% grant success rate thus far). Additionally, given that we are an entirely new department within municipal government structures (there are only 20 similar departments in the entire country), we do not have cookie-cutter budget asks from which to draw, since we are literally at the forefront of this type of municipal work in the country. Therefore, as we develop our budget over the next weeks for this grant proposal, I have included the maximum award amount as the estimated ask as a placeholder until we are able to provide a more detailed budget. Broadly, funding from this opportunity would go towards supporting staff and programmatic capacity of the FSPD, and more specifically to implement the plans and activities set forth in New Haven's first Urban Agriculture Master Plan.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Latha Swamy
Director of Food System Policy
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