

GroMoreGood Garden Grant

Five Year Impact Report





Our mission is to coalesce, inspire, and support the Head Start field as a leader in early childhood development and education.

GroMoreGood Garden Grant

In partnership with the Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation, the National Head Start Association (NHSA) has brought the life-enhancing benefits of gardens to more children and families in the Head Start community through the GroMoreGood Garden Grant. Our desire is for this garden grant program to foster exciting, hands-on experiences for Head Start children and families, connecting them with their natural world, increasing their appreciation and understanding of fresh healthy foods and nutrition, and inspiring a lifelong love of gardening.

By The Numbers...

5 years of
awarding grants

9,151 youth reached

5,462 adults
benefitted

58 grant winners in **26**
States and
Washington, D.C.

For the past five years, NHSA has awarded the GroMoreGood Garden Grant to 58 NHSA Head Start programs from 26 states across all regions of the country. And as a result, 9,151 youth and 5,462 adults benefitted from the healthy food, green spaces, and the hands-on lessons gained from their gardens.

Overview

Background Information on the Grant and Award

NHSA awarded a total of \$150,000 in grants in variable amounts depending on demonstrated need and proposal in the application. Grant awards were \$5,000 per grantee, with the first COVID year awards ranging between \$2,500 and \$5,000, in an effort to supplement needs of existing garden projects, to help launch new garden projects, or to supplement and launch outdoor green space projects (land that is partly or completely covered with grass, trees, shrubs, or other vegetation and an option for children and the community to learn).

As part of the grant award, Head Start programs hosted a Community Build Day, bringing together Head Start students and families, community partners, and ScottsMiracle-Gro associates (if available) in a day of community service to build and celebrate the garden. Community Build Days generally took place during the March through June timeframe and grantees were allowed maximum flexibility given the pandemic evolving into an endemic.

The Application and Selection Process

Application

1. Contact information
2. Program background and experience with gardening
3. Garden project plans and implementation into learning objectives
4. Plans with funds
5. Existing garden information
6. Projected beneficiaries
7. Community engagement plans
8. Post-grant garden maintenance
9. Social media information



Eligibility

- Any Head Start program that is a current NHTSA member.
- Applicants must have the plot of land in their possession at the time of the application with at least a two-year commitment for the garden to be on that property.
- 501(c)(3) designation



Selection

- The project's positive influence and impact on young children, their families, and also the broader community.
- The organization's commitment to incorporate the garden as an important component in its educational programming with children and families.
- The organization's commitment to the maintenance and sustainability of the garden, including its plans for growth, community involvement, and additional funding opportunities.
- The organization's plans to engage students, families, community partners, and volunteers in a Community Build Day, a day set apart to create and celebrate the garden.

Past Grant Recipients

58 grant winners and recipients:

2019

- [Arkansas Early Learning](#)
- [Ashtabula County Community Action Agency Head Start](#)
- [Blue Water Community Action](#)
- [Cankdeska Cikana Community College Head Start](#)
- [Family Building Blocks](#)
- [Glen Cove Child Day Care Center](#)
- [Greater Erie Community Action Committee](#)
- [Parent Child Incorporated](#)
- [PEACE Head Start Program](#)
- [Southeast Kansas Community Action Program](#)

2020

- BRAD Child Development Programs
- [Chicago Commons Association](#)
- [Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc.](#)
- [Child, Inc.](#)
- [Community Action Partnership of North Alabama, Inc.](#)
- [Community Action Program of Evansville](#)
- [Douglass Community Services](#)
- [NCBC Human Services Corporation—Kids Care Academy](#)
- Nueces County Community Action Agency
- [St. Mary Community Action Agency](#)

2021

- [Bi-County Community Action Program](#)
- Bolivar County Community Action Agency
- [Branch Independent School District](#)
- [Brazoria County Head Start Early Learning Schools, Inc.](#)
- [Catholic Charities Neighborhood Services/Msgr. Andrew Landi Early Childhood Development Center](#)
- [Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Denver at Mariposa](#)
- [CCS Early Learning](#)
- [El Grito Head Start](#)
- [Murray Independent School District Head Start](#)

- [Northern Arizona Council of Governments](#)
- [Portland Public Schools Head Start](#)
- [Scioto Community Action Organization](#)
- [Southern Kennebec Child Development Corporation](#)
- Sunbeam Family Services
- [The Enola Group](#)
- [Trabajamos Community Head Start, Inc.](#)
- Western Idaho Community Action Partnerships – Marsing Head Start
- [Youth and Family Services Inc](#)

2022

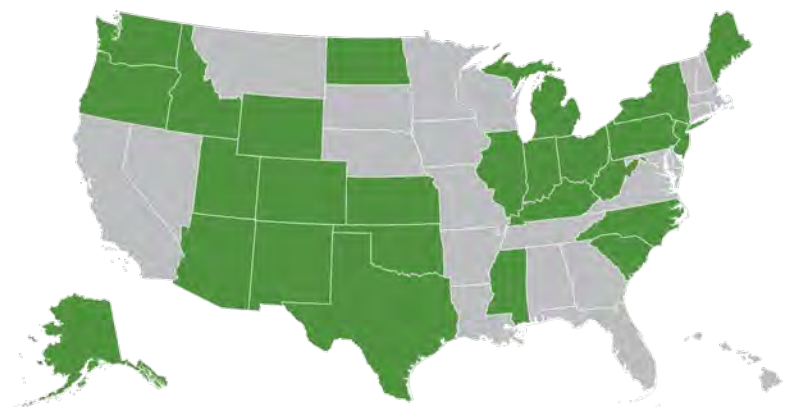
- [Acelero Learning](#)
- [Association to Benefit Children](#)
- [East Coast Migrant Head Start Project-Manning](#)
- [Futures Unlimited, Inc.](#)
- [Henry Booth House](#)
- [Jackson County Civic Action Committee](#)
- [Maternity Care Coalition](#)
- [Pocono Services for Families and Children](#)
- [Raleigh County Community Action Association](#)
- [Verner Center for Early Learning](#)

2023

- [Agency for Community EmPOWERment of NEPA](#)
- [Benton Franklin Head Start](#)
- [Bright Beginnings, Inc.](#)
- [Centro De La Familia De Utah](#)
- [Community Action Program, Inc.](#)
- [Cook Inlet Native Head Start](#)
- [Deer Lodge County Head Start](#)
- [Denver Public Schools](#)
- [HCDE Area Head Start](#)
- [Plano ISD Head Start](#)

WLocated in 27 states and districts:

- Alaska
- New York
- Arizona
- North Carolina
- Colorado
- Ohio
- Idaho
- Oklahoma
- Illinois
- Oregon
- Indiana
- Pennsylvania
- Kansas
- South Carolina
- Kentucky
- South Dakota
- Maine
- Texas
- Michigan
- Utah
- Mississippi
- Washington, D.C.
- Montana
- Washington
- New Jersey
- West Virginia
- New Mexico



The Stats

Reach:

- 9,151 youth impacted
 - 8,298 Head Start and Early Head Start children
 - 853 children ages 6-17
- 5,462 adults benefitted



Type of gardens:

- Enhanced 31 existing gardens
- Started 32 new gardens

Varieties:



Edible gardens



Therapeutic gardens



Educational gardens



Indoor gardens



Pollinator gardens



Sensory gardens

Areas impacted:



Rural



Suburban



Urban

Plants grown include:



Basil



Blueberries



Blackberries



Broccoli



Butterfly gardens



Chocolate mint



Corn



Cucumbers



Eggplant



Flower bulbs



Herbs



Kale



Oak trees



Pear trees



Peas



Peppers



Maple trees



Marigolds



Romaine lettuce



Sweet potatoes



Tomato



Watermelon



Zinnias

Community Impact

“We had a neighbor send in emails to our CEO about how the **garden is making [the neighborhood] look better**. Neighbors also would just stop by and tell us how amazing it is looking.” –Sharon Petroski, **Maternity Care Coalition Early Head Start, 2022 Grant Recipient**



“**The impact of this program is permanent.** Children will forever remember the way their tomatoes grew from a seed and taste in the salad; they will know joy when they see mud, and know it is not only OK to get dirty, it's encouraged! The sense of wonder, joy, and connection to the outdoors is an impact that will grow with each of these children and their parents.” –Jennifer Bagdanov, **Acelero MM Freehold Head Start, 2022 Grant Recipient**

“We also opened the garden to the greater community after school and there was much interest among some of the other local children who are home-schooled. Many of the parents and local farmers have expressed interest in contributing to the garden as we get it going. **It was truly a joy to have students of all ages engaging with the creation of this garden.** Our garden is just beginning, but it has already begun to yield a beautiful harvest of joy and learning.” –Claire Bergeron, **El Grito Early Learning Center, 2021 Grant Recipient**

“At the end of the year we asked our families through a survey what they thought about the gardening project, which we called farm to home and this is what they responded: **‘It was a way to connect with my daughter,’** ‘my children love doing gardening activities,’ ‘please continue sending us nutrition and gardening activities to do at home,’ and ‘my child was very excited to see his plant growing.’” –Marcela Zepeda, **Chicanos Por La Causa, 2020 Grant Recipient**

“The Garden Project has created a **sense of unity** within the Head Start community sparking an interest among our volunteers that continues throughout the season.” –Samuel Raponi, **PEACE, Inc. Head Start and Early Head Start, 2019 Grant Recipient**

“Tribal Elder and College President Dr. Cynthia Lindquist said, ‘Working together, **being good stewards of Mother Earth**, helping children and families to eat healthier and to be physically engaged are all part of Dakota values to live in a good way and to be a good relative.’”
–Heidi Ziegenmeyer, **CCCC Head Start, 2019 Grant Recipient**



“A displaced community member saw the garden manager working in the garden and asked politely ‘Could I please have something from your garden? **I am homeless and cannot always get fresh food**,’ he expressed his gratitude and complimented the work that was being done. Our garden not only touched the lives of the families we serve, but it gave community members the opportunity to engage in our mission and learn more about our program.” –**Greater Erie Community Action Committee, 2018 Grant Recipient**

“In the 2022-23 program year, Bunny’s Garden and the gardening program goals include **giving out more than 1,000 pounds of produce to the community, running a cooking blog that promotes healthy eating, and giving out produce for Thanksgiving to ABC’s families like kale and collard greens.**” We are honored to serve around **400 members of the ABC community** each year through our educational programming, food giveaways, composting efforts, and cultivation of an urban oasis.” –George Edwards, **Association to Benefit Children, 2022 Grant Recipient**



Children's Outcomes

“One first grader told me that this was his **best day at school**. Older students were asking if they could come back during lunch break. They were excited about contributing to the project. Since this is a rural community, I noticed that many of the **students were so proud of being able to make use of their skills which form a part of their ranching culture**, such as building a fence.” –Claire Bergeron, **El Grito Early Learning Center, 2021 Grant Recipient**

Greater Erie Community Action Committee

“We used the **therapeutic gardening approach to help children overcome negative childhood experiences**. We allowed them to explore and learn at their pace, while providing a supportive and safe environment.” –**Greater Erie Community Action Committee, 2018 Grant Recipient**

“Food harvested from the garden was shared with our children and families at no cost. **The children have developed a love for gardening, received invaluable hands-on education, social and emotional support, and teamwork ethics, that are priceless**. The garden approach worked well in collaboration with the UTSA Miranos project which focuses on healthy eating and obesity.” –Samuel Raponi, **PEACE, Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start, 2018 Grant Recipient**

“One child from our program absolutely would not try vegetables for his mom at all and he was one to come and help plant the garden in the beginning. With helping with the garden and his ability to work with the plants he became excited to try new foods. Now with us picking and trying things his mom **cannot get him to stop eating vegetables and this small success made all the work worth it.**” –Megan White-Noel, **Blue Water Community Action Head Start, 2018 Grant Recipient**

“We have many children who would not eat many of the fruits or vegetables provided daily. Through learning about them, watching them grow, and being able to learn what they do for your body, the children are now really enjoying eating them. They are really soaking up the information and I have witnessed them **sharing what they learned with their families** many times.” –Jamee Allen, **Marsing Head Start, 2021 Grant Recipient**

“The gardening project provides numerous learning opportunities for the children which include, but are not limited to, gaining social awareness (learning how what they do can impact others); confidence building (feeling pride as they plant seeds and nurture them to maturity. **As the plant grows, so does the child!**); and finally, gardening gives children the opportunity to be a kid! What can be better than turning off the ipad, laying down the blocks, putting aside crayons and markers, and just spending time...digging in the dirt!” –Edith Gray, **Child Inc. Head Start, 2020 Grant Recipient**

“The garden affords a calming change of scenery for the students and the structured layout of it allows them to **experiment with new materials and experience the natural world** in a way they can't in our classroom or on the playground. I have seen them try food that they did not want to try in the classroom at the garden because they got to interact with it.” –Paul Ryland, *Preschool Teacher*, **Verner Center for Early Learning, 2022 Grant Recipient**

Overcoming challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic

“While the COVID-19 pandemic caused a **delay in implementing the gardens, now that we have the beds set up and have gone through one season of growth**, Nia Family Center is excited to have this amazing long-term resource for our children and families.” –Mary Penn, **Chicago Commons Nia Family Center Garden, 2020 Grant Recipient**

“Just before the pandemic started, we received the funding from NHTSA. This was definitely a challenging time for us to start our garden, as we initially planned because **we were in shut down. We closed our centers and sites for a year and seven months**, so all of our services were given virtually. To reduce the spread of COVID-19, we decided to use the funding on **gardening kits that were delivered to each enrolled family’s home**. We were able to deliver to our Migrant, Early Head Start and our Family Child Care Option families. The gardening project that initially was planned for one of our sites turned [out] to be the **hope and light of all our early childhood development program**.” – Marcela Zepeda, **Chicanos Por La Causa, 2020 Grant Recipient**

“There were some difficulties that came up. It was COVID-19 time and everyone was juggling things around. We were **not able to get a working agreement with the Farm Bureau** and summer came and went, and still there was no garden. In September, it was time for a new plan to make this garden happen. **We found a suitable site on Cliff Campus** and made a plan for construction. A substantial portion of the funding will go for drip irrigation materials that we will install ourselves, creating our garden as a more long term and sustainable venture.” –Claire Bergeron, **El Grito Early Learning Center, 2020 Grant Recipient**



“We knew projects that promoted children and families interactions was something that our organization needed to promote in this new pandemic centric world. With all the new world challenges that have come, our new garden project is something where we could constantly find some source of positivity and adventure to get us through those tough days. **This grant has been a shining light in some of the most challenging times** in human history.” –Nathan Douglas, **BI-CAP Head Start, 2020 Grant Recipient**

Success Stories



[Published October, 2022](#)

After receiving the GroMoreGood garden grant in 2019, the Cankdeska Cikana Community College Head Start garden survived the COVID-19 pandemic and brought the community closer—even while socially distanced. The sense of community built around this garden turned it into a refuge from the pandemic’s aftermath and daily stressors. It continues to create opportunities to celebrate native heritage, traditions, and cultures.

To preserve Native American traditions, knowledge, and cultural practices, the community grew sage in the garden. Sage is a sacred element of many AIAN cultures, typically used in native rituals. Tribal College President Cynthia Lindquist participated in the sage harvesting event at the community garden. She spoke about how sage is essential in smudging and making head, wrist, and ankle wreaths for the sun dance ceremony. Community members joined in with expressions of gratitude and prayers.

The garden attracts different generations and creates a unique place for connection and collaboration between children, their parents and grandparents. One of the families contributing to the garden consisted of three generations. They told Krantz-Nelson that the grandparents had a big garden that had enough vegetables to cover the entire family’s winter needs. They appreciated the reminder of their history and expressed gratitude for family unity.

Resources for Programs

Blog Posts

- [Native Heritage Thrives in Head Start Community Garden](#)
- [GroMoreGood Garden Grants](#)
- [How Garden Programs Combat Food Insecurity](#)

Professional development opportunities

- [Garden Storytime Recordings](#)
- [Gardening with Kids Basics](#)
- [Nutrition Basics](#)