

Example Grant Application* – Nix Farm Habitat Improvement Gardens

**This is a fictional application that has been created by Nature in the City staff. The Cost estimates have been made up and are not accurate. However, the Nix Native Plant Demonstration Garden does exist at the Natural Areas Office buildings and is open for the public to enjoy! [Learn more.](#)*

Administrative Questions

1. What is the address of your proposed project? (All projects must be within the [City of Fort Collins Growth Management Area.](#))

1745 Hoffman Mill Rd, Fort Collins, CO, 80525

2. Are you the owner of the property where you are planning the project? If not, do you have permission from the property owner? And is the property owner part of your team? (The property owner will be required to sign the grant agreement if awarded)

I am not the owner. However, I have permission from the owner to do this habitat improvement project. The owner is part of the project team and will be involved in the project as it moves forward.

3. If selected for a grant, you and/or the property owner will be required to sign a Nature In the City (NIC) project agreement similar to the one found in the "Background and Guide to Submitting a Proposal". After reviewing the document found on the NIC website, would you be able to agree to the terms of the agreement?

Yes

4. Most projects require a [minor amendment](#) or other permitting from the City. Have you consulted with the City's Planning Services staff to discuss whether you need a permit or amendment to proceed with your project? What permits or process will be required for your project?

Yes, our project will need to get a minor amendment since we are changing the original landscaping. We have already met with City staff about what documents they need from us and plan to submit them once we know if we will be awarded a grant.

General Questions

1. What type of grant are you applying for?
 - a. Small (less than \$5,000) - enhances existing habitat.
 - b. Medium (\$5,000 – 25,000) – addresses at least two of Nature in the City's three goals: access, habitat, and stewardship.
 - c. Large (\$25,000 or more) – addresses all three of NIC's goals: access, habitat, and stewardship.

Medium – we are asking for \$25,000

2. Please list the key team members of your project and their roles. This should include individuals from within your organization, as well as collaborators from other organizations, contractors you may hire, and/or representatives from the community this project will serve. ***(Please note the project manager – They will serve as the main point of contact for communication)***

Project Manager – Kate Rentschlar, City of Fort Collins

Landscape Designer - Crystal Strouse, City of Fort Collins

Accountant – Barb Brock, City of Fort Collins

Landscaper, installation and maintenance – Aaron Reed, City of Fort Collins

Property Owner – Zoe Shark, City of Fort Collins

3. In two to three paragraphs, please provide:
 - a. An overview of your proposed project,
 - b. Details about the elements of your project (such as your goals, what you will be planting/creating, etc.), and
 - c. Where this proposed project would be located on the property.

We are planning to install a demonstration native habitat garden at the Natural Areas Department Office complex. The demonstration garden will feature plant species native to Colorado and showcase how native plants can rival the attractiveness of typical non-native landscape plants. The demonstration garden will be broken into sections, highlighting different features and landscapes, including a: butterfly garden, grassland garden, water garden, rock garden and fruit garden.

This project will primarily focus on supporting two of Nature in the City's goals – increasing the quality of habitat and inspiring stewardship. The gardens will improve habitat for pollinators, birds, and small mammals by providing food sources and creating shelter. It will inspire stewardship by labeling plants and being a gathering space for programming, staff, and the community.

The project will be around the Main Office and Farmhouse buildings. The landscaping will help bring these two buildings together in a cohesive way. The Office complex is located in Kingfisher Point Natural Area and right off the popular Poudre River Trail which both have significant use by the community.

4. Describe how your proposed project would support a diversity of *native* plants and animals.

The current landscaping is primarily grass and a few trees – this project will greatly enhance the habitat value of the area by diversifying the species and structure of the landscaping. The gardens will feature plants native to Colorado. We used the City's new Plant Database to select our native plants: <https://www.fcgov.com/vegetation/>. We plan to plant over 40 different species. Many of the species have flowers that will attract pollinators and produce seeds and berries that birds and mammals can eat. In addition, the structural layering of grasses, forbs, shrubs, and trees will create excellent shelter and nesting locations for wildlife.

5. Describe the audiences your proposed project would serve. How would your proposed project increase access to nature for the broader community? Are there any limitations to access?

The Natural Areas Offices see many visitors from those coming to the office for events or meetings, to people that pass by on the Poudre Trail, or those visiting Kingfisher Point Natural Area to fish. The gardens are publicly accessible and there are no limitations to access. The gardens will bring a more diverse form of nature to an area that had little to no landscaping beforehand for all visitors to enjoy.

6. Describe the current level of support for your project and how you built that support with your neighborhood and/or the community you serve/engage.

The project has a high level of support from leaders and staff that use the offices. An internal team has been meeting for a year to develop the plans. More recently the conceptual and landscape plans were shared at an All-Staff meeting where all employees had the opportunity to provide input or share concerns. After incorporating that feedback, the plans were taken to the decision-making board for approval – which the project received unanimously.

7. Describe how your proposed project will motivate your community to take care of the natural environment, including this project, and implement similar projects over the long-term.

The gardens will be well maintained and showcase how beautiful a native landscape can be around an office building; inspiring folks to transform their own spaces. The different gardens and plants will be labeled so that visitors can learn what plants they want to plant in their own gardens. In addition, once established, the gardens will be used for educational purposes to host events or programming. Finally, the gardens will be partially maintained by volunteers. These volunteers will learn about native plants and common weeds and then be able to share that with their own networks.

8. Tell us about the challenges and barriers that you are most likely to encounter in the implementation and ongoing maintenance of this project. Additionally, provide information about how you can address these challenges as they arise.

We anticipate our biggest challenge to be weed maintenance. This is a large project, and we know managing weeds for the first few years while the native plants establish takes up a considerable amount of time. Staff will have limited capacity to perform all the maintenance needed. A volunteer gardening group will be formed to help maintain the garden. If this is still not enough, then we can hire a landscaping company to come and do maintenance periodically.

9. What is your anticipated timeline for installation and completion of this project? Are there any specific deadlines or timing constraints you may have?

We will install hardscapes as early as we can in Spring 2024, followed by the irrigation system. Ideally, plant installation will occur in late Spring or early summer, as the weather allows, and other elements are completed. We anticipate getting our minor amendment approved this winter so that should not delay the project.

Funding

1. What is the total cost of your project? How much are you requesting from Nature in the City?

The total cost of the project is \$100,000. We are requesting a \$25,000 grant from Nature in the City.

2. Is any portion of the grant going towards outreach or project management costs? If so, how much? *(Cost for these elements cannot exceed 15% of the grant request in total).*

Yes, we are asking for \$2,000 to go towards Project Management time of staff and another \$500 for a celebration with the public and staff once it is complete. This amounts to 10% of the requested grant amount.

3. Will you have additional financial or in-kind contributions for your project and if so, what are they? While Nature in the City does not require a specific match to our granting dollars, projects that leverage additional contributions score higher on the evaluation.

We are also applying for a XIP Commercial grant and a Northern Water grant. The remaining cost will come from our budget. We will be able to complete the project even if we do not receive the other grants. The plant installation will be completed by volunteers, contributing to sweat equity. In addition, an estimated \$10,000 in staff time work has already been put into this project in the planning phase.

4. Have you received any funding previously from a City of Fort Collins grant program? *(Funding from additional sources is seen as a positive. Examples: NIC Planning Grant, Xeriscape Incentive Program, Utilities Water Allotment Management Program)*

We have not received other funding but are applying for additional funds to support this project.

5. Unfortunately, Nature in the City funds can't be used for ongoing maintenance. Please describe your plan for the long-term costs and care of your project.

Some staff time and contracted landscaper time has been budgeted to maintain this project in perpetuity, including watering, plant replacement, weeding, pruning, etc. In addition, volunteers will also help maintain the garden through regular weeding.