

Chicago's Urban Agriculture Land Access Application

PROGRAM AND APPLICANT INFORMATION

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Urban agriculture increases equitable community access to healthy foods, promotes community cohesion, and provides business and educational opportunities to neighborhood residents. As part of its [Food Equity Agenda](#), the City of Chicago seeks to reduce barriers for urban agriculture by increasing land access to growers through City-owned vacant land to be sold for \$1 per parcel on the City's land sale platform, ChiBlockBuilder. The purpose of this program is to support projects led by experienced growers that show a commitment to growing edible produce for community and long-term stewardship of the land. It is anticipated that selected applicants are notified in early 2024 and the land transfer process is anticipated to begin shortly after. Successful applicants should demonstrate that they have sufficient financial and staff resources to begin in Spring / Summer 2024.

These sites have previously been reviewed through initial environmental assessments by the City and are located in areas zoned for urban farming and community gardens. Sites that received applications in previous rounds of City land sales will not be eligible for sale through the Urban Agriculture Land Access program.

Program Requirements

Land sold through the Urban Agriculture Land Access Application will be sold for \$1 per parcel. A "site" is defined as a set of contiguous, City-owned vacant land parcels that, in total, cover at least 9,000 square feet. Applicants must apply for an entire site and are unable to apply for individual parcel within a site.

After selection, the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) will begin the process of permanently transferring land to the applicant (i.e., transferring the title for the site to the applicant); this process may take several months. After selection, applicants will also work with the City to secure a Right-of-Entry (ROE) agreement for their site, which would allow access prior to land transfer. Selected applicants should be prepared to work with the City's Department of Assets, Information, and Services (AIS) in early 2024 to secure an ROE so that the applicant can begin preparing the site for growing. An ROE issued by the City is valid for up to 180 days.

- To be eligible for an ROE, applicants must:
 - Complete an Economic Disclosure Statement (EDS) and ROE request form
 - Provide proof of insurance that lists the City of Chicago as an insured party and meets certain coverage requirements and amounts.
- Note: Applicants should be prepared to meet the City's ROE eligibility requirements before applying for land access. Please reach out to the program contact listed below if you have questions or concerns about your ability to do so.

Before the title is transferred to the applicant, the applicant must demonstrate sufficient progress towards urban farm creation; examples of such activities include obtaining a produce merchant license, obtaining a business license, and initial site preparation. These activities must be completed within one year of selection. The Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) will verify that these requirements are met.

Selected applicants also commit to long-term stewardship of the site for urban agriculture (for a minimum of 10 years, after which there are no further restrictions on land use).

- Annually, selected applicants will be required to submit proof of acceptable land use to BACP, which will monitor land activity for the first 5 years.
 - Active maintenance of the site includes but is not limited to growing produce for the community, maintenance of soil beds, weed removal, maintenance of fencing, and maintenance of hoop houses.
- Farms are expected to be fully operational within five years. If by the fifth year a farm has not reached this milestone, DPD may require the buyer to either (a) sell the land to another entity who can continue urban agriculture operations, or (b) reconvey the land to the City.

Financial Requirements

Eligible applicants must have sufficient financing to meet annual anticipated costs of land ownership and operational costs for these sites, including annual taxes and water access amongst other costs.

- **Property taxes:** Property taxes are determined by the Cook County Assessor based on the property’s assessed value, which is not the same as the site’s market value. For comparative purposes only, 2021 taxes for vacant lots previously sold by the City to private buyers are below.
 - Certain non-profit and charitable organizations may also be eligible for property tax exemptions in Cook County. Please find more information about these exemptions here: <https://www.cookcountyboardofreview.com/what-we-do/property-tax-exemptions#:~:text=In%20order%20to%20qualify%20for,leased%20or%20used%20for%20profit>

ADDRESS	NEIGHBORHOOD	2021 TAXES	ASSESSED VALUE	SQ FT
5938 W IOWA ST	Austin	\$858.29	\$4,268	4,493
3459 W FULTON ST	East Garfield Park	\$1,246.44	\$6,178	5,258
5014 S LAFLIN ST	Greater Englewood	\$390.30	\$1,942	2,987
5006 S MICHIGAN AVE	Greater Englewood	\$1,938.26	\$9,610	5,653

- **Water access costs:** Growers in Chicago may secure water access for their site through (a) permanent water access / water lines, or (b) hydrant access.
 - Permanent water access is billed at rates specified in [this table](#) (approximately \$4.55 per 1,000 gallons from June 2023 through June 2024).
 - Non-profit organizations may be eligible for exemptions from City water charges; please find additional information on whether your organization may be eligible for this exemption at the following link: https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fin/provdrs/utility_billing/svcs/apply-for-utility-charge-exemptions.html#mctoc_1dil850r09
 - Urban farms and community gardens are also eligible to secure water supply through seasonal hydrant access. Applicants must apply for a hydrant access permit at least one month before the permit is required, and the cost of a seasonal permit varies depending on the amount of growing space at the site.

- Additional information on hydrant access is available here: [City of Chicago :: Water Service Permits](#)
- **Other costs:** Other costs of land ownership may include produce merchant license, business licenses, or other permits.

The applicant will be required to submit a project budget and proof of sufficient financing for all necessary costs in the application below.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants will:

- Be an individual, non-profit organization, or business entity in the City of Chicago that is able and willing to own the site if selected.
- Commit to growing edible food for the local community.
- Have connections to the community the applicant would like to grow in or a detailed community engagement plan that aligns with neighborhood goals.
- Have a long-term commitment to land stewardship and using the site for urban agriculture (for a minimum of 10 years).
- Be able to maintain and care for the site; have sufficient financing to purchase and pay property taxes on the site as well as other operational maintenance costs.
- Have previous experience growing.
- Before title transfer, must demonstrate sufficient progress towards establishing an urban farm (such as obtaining necessary permits for the project and conducting initial site preparation).

Application materials required:

- Completed application form
- Detailed project description and site plan
- Project budget (e.g., estimated costs for first year of site ownership, including water access costs, taxes, construction costs for hoop house, fence, and/or growing beds; soil and seed costs; labor costs, etc.)
- Proof of support for the project from neighbors, community organizations, non-profit organizations, and/or other community growers
- Description of impact on adjacent neighbors and surrounding neighborhood

SELECTION CRITERIA

All proposals that are received by the deadline will undergo a technical review to determine whether all required components have been addressed and included. If the application review team determines that a proposal is incomplete, it will not be considered. The review team reserves the right to waive irregularities that, within its sole discretion, it determines to be minor. If such irregularities are waived for one proposal, similar irregularities in all proposals will be waived. Proposals that are determined to be complete will be forwarded to a Review Panel. The Review Panel will evaluate and rate all remaining proposals based on the evaluation criteria below. The application review panel reserves the right to recommend qualified proposals out of rank to ensure adequate geographic distribution of urban agriculture and programming.

Category	Description
Feasibility of Project	Priority given to projects with clear plans and designs and realistic timeline, and that are ready to start activating the land during spring/ summer 2024
Community Support and Impact	Priority given to projects that have support from other growers, neighbors, or organizations as indicated through letters of support, community meetings, or clear plans to engage the community they want to grow in. Priority given to projects that will provide/sell food for the community they grow in.
Sustainability of the Project	Priority given to projects with evidence of clear commitment and financial and technical support, including: funding, partnerships with other organizations and clear plans for identifying further funding.
Applicant	Priority given to applicants residing in Chicago with connections to the neighborhood they are applying in. Priority given to applicants from communities disproportionately impacted by food insecurity.
Experience Growing	Priority given to projects where the applicant has previous experience with urban agriculture and similar projects

Food insecurity definition: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/measurement/#security>

Community data map on food insecurity and related issues from the Greater Chicago Food Depository: <https://www.chicagosfoodbank.org/get-involved/learn/community-data-map/>

Environmental Requirements

The City's environmental review of these properties have not yet been completed. The City will undertake further review to determine whether the property can be sold without restrictions, or whether use restrictions or additional environmental work, such as an environmental study of the property or enrollment of the property in the State of Illinois' environmental clean-up program, must be undertaken by the buyer. Among other factors, the buyer's proposed use for the property can impact the environmental review and requirements. Please contact CBRE at info@chiblockbuilder.com to provide the City with further information about your proposed use, to assist the City's further review.

Please refer to the DPD listing sheet for more information on properties with environmental requests

The following PINs have environmental requirements:

Site Name	Pins	Address	SQ FT	Site Valuation
657 W 120th St (3 Parcels)	25-28-110-001-0000	657 W 120TH ST	5,009	\$24,723

	25-28-110-002-0000	653 W 120th ST	2349	
	25-28-110-003-0000	649 W 120TH ST	5003	
11918 S Union AVE (1 Parcel)	25-28-101-040-0000	11918 S UNION AVE	9266	\$18,532
709 W 120th (2 Parcels)	25-28-109-008-0000	709 W 120th	2,720	\$15,955
	25-28-109-009-0000	701 W 120TH ST	5257	
725 W 120TH (4 parcels)	25-28-109-001-0000	725 W 120TH ST	434	\$17,688
	25-28-109-002-0000 (723 W 120TH ST	2,171	
	25-28-109-003-0000	721 W 120TH ST	3119	
	25-28-109-004-0000	717 W 120TH ST	3,119	
11953 S EMERALD AVE (1 parcel)	25-28-101-025-0000	11953 S EMERALD AVE	8,333	\$16,666

The following PINs have no environmental requirements:

Site Name	Pins	Address	SQ FT	Site Valuation
412 W 66th (2 Parcels)	20-21-122-009-0000	412 W 66TH ST	6350	\$22,863
	20-21-122-010-0000	414 W 66TH ST	5081	
6733 S Union (2 Parcels)	20-21-302-015-0000	6733 S UNION AVE	5693	\$33,007
	20-21-302-016-0000	6747 S UNION AVE	5309	
6828 S Union Ave (2 Parcels)	20-21-307-025-0000	6828 S UNION AVE	6111	\$36,683
	20-21-307-026-0000	6830 S UNION AVE	6116	

6811 S Union Ave (2 Parcels)	20-21-308-003- 0000 20-21-308-004- 0000	6811 S UNION AVE 6817 S UNION AVE	8000 8001	\$48,005
6820 S Lowe (2 Parcels)	20-21-308-020- 0000 20-21-308-021- 0000	6820 S LOWE AVE 6824 S LOWE AVE	7999 8001	\$47,999
7015 S Parnell Ave (1 Parcel)	20-21-326-036- 0000	7015 S PARNELL AVE	11506	\$34,518
7008 S Perry Ave (1 Parcel)	20-21-423-012- 0000	7008 S PERRY AVE	11615	\$40,653
7000 S Vincennes Ave (3 Parcels)	20-21-424-007- 0000 20-21-424-008- 0000 20-21-424-009- 0000	7000 S VINCENNES AVE 7002 S VINCENNES AVE 7004 S VINCENNES AVE	7686 6757 5625	\$70,235
6801 S Dante (1 Parcel)	20-23-407-001- 0000	6801 S DANTE AVE	11760	\$52,918
7141 S Langley Ave (2 Parcels)	20-27-206-011- 0000 20-27-206-012- 0000	7141 S LANGLEY AVE 7153 S LANGLEY AVE	4940 4941	\$29,643
7404 S Parnell (3 Parcels)	20-28-122-003- 0000 20-28-122-004- 0000 20-28-122-005- 0000	7404 S PARNELL AVE 7408 S PARNELL AVE 7412 S PARNELL AVE	4001 3999 4002	\$36,005
7236 S Yale (3 Parcels)	20-28-210-024- 0000 20-28-210-025- 0000 20-28-210-026- 0000	7236 S YALE AVE 7240 S YALE AVE 7246 S YALE AVE	6214 6211 3108	\$54,365
251 E 134th St (3 Parcels)	25-34-300-012- 0000 25-34-300-013- 0000	251 E 134TH ST 257 E 134TH ST	7497 7500	\$45,160

	25-34-300-014-0000	261 E 134TH ST	7582	
243 E 134th St (1 Parcel)	25-34-300-028-0000	243 E 134TH ST	13724	\$27,447
8926 S Mackinaw Ave (7 Parcels)	26-05-105-034-0000	8926 S MACKINAW AVE	3,516	\$69,591
	26-05-105-035-0000	8928 S MACKINAW AVE	3,156	
	26-05-105-036-0000	8930 S MACKINAW AVE	3,157	
	26-05-105-037-0000	8934 S MACKINAW AVE	3,175	
	26-05-105-038-0000	8936 S MACKINAW AVE	3,156	
	26-05-105-039-0000	8938 S MACKINAW AVE	3,523	
	26-05-105-040-0000	8940 S MACKINAW AVE	3,514	

DUE DATE/SUBMISSION LOCATION

DUE DATE: November 30th, 2023 11:59 PM CT

Proposals must be submitted via online application. Emailed or faxed proposals will not be accepted.

DISCLOSURES AND LEGAL INFORMATION

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

All proposals submitted to the City are subject to the Freedom of Information Act. The City will make the final determination as to whether information, even if marked “confidential,” will be disclosed pursuant to a request under the Freedom of Information Act or valid subpoena. Respondent agrees not to pursue any cause of action against the City with regard to disclosure of information.

PROGRAM CONTACT

Bryan Bautista

Email: bryan.bautista@cityofchicago.org

Phone: 312-744-5366

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Section I: Applicant Information

- Applicant First Name
- Applicant Last Name
- Applicant Home/Business/Organization Address
- Applicant Email
- Applicant Phone Number
- Have you or your organization previously submitted an application for City-owned land through ChiBlockBuilder?
- If yes, when did you apply and for what purpose?
- What type of Applicant are you (Individual, non-profit organization, for profit business corporation, co-operative, limited liability company, other)?
- Please provide your entity/organization's name, if applicable
- Please provide a link to your entity/organization's website, if applicable
- In one sentence please describe your entity/organization or provide your organization's mission statement
- Please describe your role and relationship to the entity/organization you are applying on behalf of

Section II: Site Information

- Preferred Site Name
- Site Address (Please provide all addresses associated with the site.)
- Property Identification Number/s (PINs) of site

Section III: Project Details

- When do you anticipate starting to activate the land you are applying to purchase for urban agriculture?
- Please provide a brief overview of your proposed urban agriculture project (including a timeline for when you will begin growing).
- Please describe your plan to activate your urban agriculture site in time for the 2024 growing season. For example, include plans for acquiring water, fencing, seeds, and seedlings, community design processes, any structures you plan to build on the site (e.g., produce stands, storage sheds, etc.) Please specify who (your organization or another organization) will complete these activities.
- Please upload a site plan (This can include crop plan, design plan, planning document)
- Who will you give or sell produce to (i.e., who is your customer base)?
- Will you offer any additional programming on the site (e.g., youth programs, community education)?
- If you will offer additional programming, please describe what programming will be offered.
- What is your staffing plan for the site? Will you need to hire new individuals to work on the site?
- Do you intend to partner with another entity (e.g., non-profit, business, and/or community organization) for operations?
- If yes, please list your partners and the operational activities they will help with

Section IV: Project Funding

- Do you have any funds secured for this project?
- Please record the amount of funding you have secured for this project
- Please describe how you plan to fund your proposed project. What sources of funding have you already secured, and which new sources of funding will you seek out?
- Please provide at least two pieces of evidence demonstrating financial and technical readiness for this project. This could include letters of support from other growers, donors, or other non-profit organizations who may provide financial and/or technical support.
- Please provide a project budget utilizing the template provided
- Please enter the total project budget
- Land sold through this application process must be used for urban agriculture for a minimum of 10 years from the date of sale. Can you commit to long-term maintenance of the site?
- Land sold through this application process must be used for urban agriculture for a minimum of 10 years from the date of sale. What are your plans for long-term maintenance of the site?

Section V: Growing Experience

- Please describe your growing experience. This may include certifications, training programs, or life experience growing.
- Please describe what growing practices you intend to use on the site and your experience implementing them.
- Do you currently operate other urban agriculture sites in the City of Chicago or elsewhere?
- If yes, please list the names and locations of those sites

Section VI: Community Engagement

- Do you have a community engagement plan for your proposed project?
- Please describe your community engagement plans. Describe what impact the proposed project will have on the adjacent neighbors and the surrounding community.
- Do you have any partnerships with non-profit, business, and/or community-based organizations?
- If yes, please list your non-profit, business, and/or community organization partners and describe who your partners are and what services (e.g., workforce training, youth education) you partner with them to provide.
- Are you or your organization located in the community you are planning to grow in?
- If your organization is not located in the community you are planning to grow in, please describe your plans to reach out to, include, and engage the community.
- Please describe how your project will benefit the community or provide a service to the community it is situated in. Tell the story of why you want to grow on this site.
- Is there anything else you would like us to know?

Section VII: Program Requirements

- If selected, the selected applicant must demonstrate sufficient progress towards establishing an urban farm (such as obtaining necessary permits for the project and conducting initial site preparation) within 1 year of selection and before title transfer. Can you commit to providing one or more of these site preparation steps?
- If selected, the urban farm must be active for 10 years. For the first 5 years, buyer must submit proof of active site maintenance to the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP). Active maintenance of the site includes but is not limited to growing produce

for the community, maintenance of soil beds, weed removal, maintenance of fencing, and maintenance of hoop houses. If not, buyer must either (a) sell to another entity who can continue urban agriculture operations at 5 year mark, or (b) reconvey the land to the City. By checking this box, I understand and commit to these conditions.

- If selected, the selected applicant must demonstrate sufficient progress towards establishing an urban farm (such as obtaining necessary permits for the project and conducting initial site preparation) within 1 year of selection and before title transfer. Can you commit to beginning one or more of these site preparation steps if sele?