



# Press Release

Hamilton County Health Department

Web: [health.hamiltontn.org](http://health.hamiltontn.org)

**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

August 9th, 2023

## Health Department Relaunches the Step ONE Teaching Garden Grants Program; Accepting Applications through September 7th

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN – The Hamilton County Health Department announces the Step ONE Teaching Garden Grants Program, which focuses on addressing the issue of childhood nutrition by encouraging youth and their families to make healthier food decisions. The Teaching Gardens introduce positive skills such as balanced nutrition, teamwork, and responsibility to students at a young age. These gardens are outdoor classrooms reinforcing math, science, and language skills.

The Teaching Garden Grant application is now available on our website at [Health.HamiltonTN.org](http://Health.HamiltonTN.org).

- **Who:** Schools, churches, preschools, libraries, community centers, & local organizations may apply.
- **When:** Applications will close on September 7th, 2023, at midnight.
- **Where:** Teaching Gardens must be located in Hamilton County.
- **Grants:** Up to ten \$1,000 applicants will be selected.

Step ONE selects up to 10 Hamilton County applicants to be awarded the \$1,000 grants. Any organization or community group interested in starting a Teaching Garden in their community is encouraged to apply. The vision for the Teaching Garden Program is to create involvement and awareness of the connection between quality of nutrition and quality of health for children and their families. These gardens are located throughout Hamilton County, and all applicants with a vision for improving nutrition and gardening education are considered.

“We are looking forward to the return of the Teaching Gardens. I am especially excited to introduce Christopher Marinello as the new Step ONE Public Health Representative and Teaching Garden Grants Coordinator,” says Renee Craig, Community Health Program Manager at the Hamilton County Health Department.

“Since the program’s inception, the Teaching Gardens established through this grant have positively impacted individuals and communities in myriad ways. As we hit the ground running, we are excited to nurture young minds again, teaching them the profound impact of gardens and healthy food choices. Together, we will cultivate a brighter, greener future, where children can develop into champions of sustainability and well-being,” says Christopher Marinello, Step ONE Public Health Representative at the Hamilton County Health Department.

Step ONE has funded 69 teaching gardens at schools, churches, preschools, libraries, community centers, and more since its launch in 2008. Step ONE has funded many gardens in neighborhoods considered food deserts or communities experiencing food insecurity. While the Step ONE garden program mainly focuses on education, gardens in these communities often increase awareness of access and food insecurity.

### Additional resources

- For more information, call 423-209-8247 or email [CMarinello@Hamiltontn.gov](mailto:CMarinello@Hamiltontn.gov)
- To read this information in Spanish, visit the Health Department’s Spanish Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SaludHamiltonTN>