



# Press Release

Hamilton County Health Department

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

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

August 12th, 2024

## **The Health Department's Step ONE Program is Now Accepting Teaching Garden Grant Applications through September 20<sup>th</sup>.**

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN – The Hamilton County Health Department's Step ONE program is now accepting Teaching Garden Grant applications through September 20<sup>th</sup>. The Step ONE program 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 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 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.

"I am eagerly looking forward to supporting this new group of grantees as they bring their vision of a healthier community to life," says Christopher Marinello, Step ONE Public Health Representative at the Hamilton County Health Department. "We can't wait to see their creative and well-thought-out plans for improving health through gardening. We've witnessed firsthand the transformative impact these teaching garden programs have on children and the community; children emerge as leaders, communities come together, and awareness of the importance of growing fresh fruits and vegetables grows."

Since its launch in 2008, Step ONE has funded 87 teaching gardens at schools, churches, preschools, libraries, community centers, and more. It has also 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>