



2024 Community First Grant FAQ

Read through our FAQ to find answers to some of our Team Members' most common questions. If you have additional questions, contact Whole.Cities@wholefoods.com. If you're a Whole Foods Market Team Member who wants to stay up-to-date on Whole Cities announcements, TM spotlights and more, [Sign up for Dig In](#), a TM newsletter!

What is the Community First Grant Program?

The Community First Grant Program supports nonprofits focused on long-term fresh, healthy food access and nutrition education that are engaged with Team Members in the U.S. and Canada. This includes community gardens, mobile markets, healthy cooking classes and more.

What is a "community partner"?

A community partner is a nonprofit organization that is led by community members in your city. A community partner understands the assets, needs, and goals of local residents and uses this knowledge to direct and shape its work. Whole Cities is only able to fund US organizations that have 501c3 nonprofit status or nonprofit organizations that are partnered with a 501c3 designated organization (called a "fiscal agent"). For Canada, Whole Cities is only able to fund organizations with Canadian Registered Charity status or organizations that are partnered with a Canadian Registered Charity.

How does the Community First Grant work?

The program has a simple nomination process:

1. Team Members interested in nominating a nonprofit organization will complete a quick [10-minute training](#) to make sure their community partner is eligible for the Community First Grant.
2. Team Members need their STL (or TL/FTL if in an office or facility) to submit a [Support Form](#) by Wednesday, June 12, 2024.
3. Team Members in the U.S. or Canada will complete a nomination in support of a nonprofit community partner focused on fresh, healthy food access or nutrition/healthy cooking classes in their city from May 1 - June 12, 2024.

4. If the Team Member's nomination is selected, the Team Member is accepted into the CFG program and the community partner is invited to complete a Community First Grant Application.

Who can submit a nomination?

Team Members and Community Partners must meet the eligibility criteria below to be considered for the Community First Grant program:

Team Members:

- Are you a U.S. or CAN Whole Foods Market Team Member in good standing?
- Do you have support from your Store Team Leader, and does your STL know to submit the Leadership [Support Form](#) by Wednesday, June 12?
- Are you and other Team Members in your store willing to volunteer for your community partner in your personal time at least once per quarter (outside of working hours at WFM)? No compensation will be provided from Whole Foods Market or Whole Cities when participating in the CFG program. The CFG program is separate from [Whole Foods Market's Community Connections](#) program.
- Is the community partner you are recommending focused on expanding long-term fresh, healthy food access or offering nutrition education/healthy cooking classes? This grant will not be a good fit for food pantries, food banks, and other food donation/ redistribution programs.
- If your nomination is selected, is your community partner willing to complete an online Community First Grant Program Application? The application will include questions regarding the organization's work, leadership, impact, community engagement, long-term plans, and finances.
- Is the community partner you are recommending primarily focused on serving adults and/or older youth (ages 16-22)? The Community First Grant will not be the best fit for community partners that focus primarily on children or schools.
- Are you willing to submit a required mid-year update? The update will ask for a brief summary of how things are going and photos of your partnership in action.

Community Partners:

- **US:** Must be a 501(c)(3) organization or partnered with a 501(c)(3) organization. You can verify an organization's status [here](#).
- **Canada:** Must be a Registered Charity or partnered with a Registered Charity. You can verify an organization's status [here](#).
- Must focus on expanding [fresh, healthy food access](#) or provide nutrition education/healthy cooking classes.

- Must be willing to complete an online Community First Grant application, if the TM nomination is accepted.

What is the 2024 CFG timeline?

May 1: Team Member nomination opens

June 12: Team Member nomination closes

Late July: Eligible Community Partners invited to apply

Late October: CFG Partners Notified

Can a Team Member submit a nomination if they have already participated in the Community First Grant Program?

Yes! We welcome nominations from Team Members who are new to the program, as well as those who would like to participate again.

Can a Team Member nominate more than one organization?

Yes! A Team Member is allowed to nominate up to 3 organizations, so that each community partner can receive adequate support. STLs only need to submit one support form per TM, not per nomination.

Can a Team Member nominate a Community Partner who has already received a grant from Whole Cities?

Yes! Organizations that have been nominated and received grants from Whole Cities in the past are eligible to be nominated again.

My community partner was selected for a grant last year. Why do I have to submit another TM nomination this year before they are invited for a grant?

The magic of the Community First Grant is Team Member engagement. We want to know a Team Member is still engaged with their partner so that the organization receives their support throughout the year.

What if a Team Member is trying to find a local nonprofit partner to nominate?

If you don't have a partner in mind yet, no worries! We have some tips:

1. First, tap into your network. Ask fellow TMs if your store or office has supported local nonprofit organizations in your area through the CFG or other events or sponsorships.

2. A Google search can also be fruitful. Find nonprofit organizations in your area by searching your city name plus urban agriculture, community gardens, mobile markets, healthy cooking classes, and more.
3. Focus on nonprofit organizations that align with Whole Cities' mission of long-term healthy food access (so pantries and food banks would usually not qualify) and look for nonprofit organizations that are close enough that you could regularly visit.

How many partners will receive grants in 2024?

This year, we anticipate funding around 60 organizations with grants of about \$9,000 USD / \$12,000 CAD each.

What is expected of Team Members who participate in the Community First Grant?

Every partnership is unique and is determined by the Team Members and Community Partner involved. For example, some Team Members volunteer regularly on their Community Partner's urban farm while others give periodic technical assistance on a Community Partner's mobile market. The options are endless, but the minimum expectation is to volunteer with your Community Partner at least once per quarter.

Whole Cities loves hearing about these partnerships and understanding how we can continue to support the expansion of fresh, healthy food access. We will ask Team Members involved in the program to submit one required mid-year update that will ask for a brief summary of how things are going and photos of your partnership in action.

During the grant year, the Whole Cities team will create monthly touch points for CFG TMs that could be an email, webinar or call (which will all be recorded if a TM cannot attend live) to make sure that CFG TMs are involved, supported, and engaged.

Does the Team Member need to live close in proximity to the Community Partner?

Team Members do not need to live in the same city as the Community Partner, but they do need to live close enough to visit regularly.

What size city do I need to live in to nominate an organization? What if I live in a town?

We are called Whole Cities because we think that listening to communities and working towards their goals is the best approach to addressing food access barriers. Any Team Member at a WFM store, facility, or office (or even those working remotely) can nominate an organization in their city or town for a Community First Grant. We welcome nominations from Team Members living in communities of all sizes!

Can individual Team Members receive funding from Whole Cities?

No. We do not award grants to individuals. Learn more about what we fund and don't fund [here](#).

Does Whole Cities fund food redistribution programs?

Both food access and food redistribution are important. Whole Cities' focus is on food access. Food redistribution programs, such as food donations, feed more people experiencing hunger today. We support organizations expanding healthy food access for the long-term (Think—a donated bag of food vs. a garden that produces for years).

What happens when a CFG Team Member leaves WFM or transfers stores?

We understand that your situation may change in the middle of your CFG partnership. If you leave WFM or transfer stores, please ask the new CFG TM to fill out the [CFG TM Transfer Form](#).

Does Whole Cities fund programs serving kids?

Whole Cities focuses on serving adults and/or older youth (ages 16-22). [Whole Kids](#) offers a variety of grants that focus on children and school-based programs.

What if I have feedback about the CFG Program?

We LOVE to hear from Team Members! Please send any feedback, questions or thoughts to Whole.Cities@wholefoods.com.