

Chicago's Urban Agriculture Land Access Application through ChiBlockBuilder

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 January 2025 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 2025.

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. 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 Fleet and Facility Management (2FM) 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](#):

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 [here](#).
 - 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 found [here](#).

Community data map on food insecurity and related issues from the Greater Chicago Food Depository found [here](#).

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.

The following PINs have environmental requirements:

Site Name	PINs	Address	SQ FT	Valuation
167 N Cicero Ave	16-10-318-002-0000	167 N. Cicero Ave	8,163	\$2.50 sf
164 N Cicero Ave	16-09-419-014-000	164 N Cicero Ave	11,154	\$2.50 sf

The following PINs have no environmental requirements:

Site Name	PINs	Address	SQ FT	Valuation
W 66th St	20-21-122-009-0000	412 W 66TH ST	6350	\$3.00 sf
	20-21-122-010-0000	414 W 66TH ST	5081	\$3.00 sf
Union Ave (Site 1)	20-21-302-015-0000	6733 S UNION AVE	5693	\$3.00 sf
	20-21-302-016-0000	6747 S UNION AVE	5309	\$3.00 sf
Union Ave (Site 2)	20-21-307-025-0000	6828 S UNION AVE	6111	\$2.00 sf
	20-21-307-026-0000	6830 S UNION AVE	6116	\$2.00 sf
Union Ave (Site 3)	20-21-308-003-0000	6811 S UNION AVE	8000	\$2.00 sf
	20-21-308-004-0000	6817 S UNION AVE	8001	\$2.00 sf
Lowe Ave	20-21-308-020-0000	6820 S LOWE AVE	7999	\$2.00 sf
	20-21-308-021-0000	6824 S LOWE AVE	8001	\$2.00 sf
Parnell Ave (Site 1)	20-21-326-036-0000	7015 S PARNELL AVE	11506	\$2.00 sf
Vincennes Ave	20-21-424-007-0000	7000 S VINCENNES AVE	7686	\$3.00 sf
	20-21-424-008-0000	7002 S VINCENNES AVE	6757	\$3.00 sf
	20-21-424-009-0000	7004 S VINCENNES AVE	5625	\$3.00 sf
Langley Ave	20-27-206-011-0000	7141 S LANGLEY AVE	4940	\$2.00 sf
	20-27-206-012-0000	7153 S LANGLEY AVE	4941	\$2.00 sf
Parnell Ave (Site 2)	20-28-122-003-0000	7404 S PARNELL AVE	4001	\$2.00 sf
	20-28-122-004-0000	7408 S PARNELL AVE	3999	\$2.00 sf
	20-28-122-005-0000	7412 S PARNELL AVE	4002	\$2.00 sf
Yale Ave	20-28-210-024-0000	7236 S YALE AVE	6214	\$2.00 sf
	20-28-210-025-0000	7240 S YALE AVE	6211	\$2.00 sf
	20-28-210-026-0000	7246 S YALE AVE	3108	\$2.00 sf
6800 S Hermitage St	20-19-412-019-0000	6800 S Hermitage St	3231	\$3.00 sf
	20-19-412-020-0000	6802 S Hermitage St	3115	\$3.00 sf
6814 S Elizabeth St	20-20-314-026-0000	6814 S Elizabeth St	3,101	\$2.00 sf
	20-20-314-027-0000	6818 S Elizabeth St	3,102	\$2.00 sf
	20-20-314-028-0000	6920 S Elizabeth St	3,100	\$2.00 sf
6801 S Elizabeth St	20-20-315-001-0000	6801 S Elizabeth St	6198	\$2.00 sf
	20-20-315-002-0000	6807 S Elizabeth St	3099	\$2.00 sf
7205 S May	20-29-209-003-0000	7205 S May St	3120	\$2.00 sf
	20-29-209-004-0000	7207 S May St	3121	\$2.00 sf
	20-29-209-005-0000	7209 S May St	3118	\$2.00 sf
	20-08-301-005-0000			
1509-1511 W 51 st St	20-08-301-007-0000			
	20-08-301-008-0000	1509-1511 W 51 st St	9,040	
				\$3.00 sf

DUE DATE/SUBMISSION LOCATION

DUE DATE: November 15th 2024 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

Applicant Profile

- Applicant Type
- Applicant Name
- Applicant Email Address
- Applicant Phone Number

Stewardship Team

- Developer (required)
- Lead Grower/Site Manager (required)
- Landscape Architect
- Technical Assistant Provider
- General Contractor
- Attorney
- Applicant Legal Business Name
- Applicant Business DBA
- Applicant Business Street Number
- Applicant Business Street Direction
- Applicant Street Name, Apt #, City, State

Growing Experience

- Upload Growing Experience: This should include information illustrating your experience with urban agriculture. This may include certifications, evidence of training programs completed, or a personal and/or business narrative describing urban agriculture experience.

Property Details

- Enter the information as shown on the listing sheet and/or ChiBlockBuilder

Project Details

- Provide a document or documents describing in detail the proposed development, including as applicable the following key data points:
 - o *Activation Plan* - Describe how you will activate your urban agriculture site in time for the 2025-2026 growing season. This should 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 also specify who (your organization or another organization) will complete these activities.
 - o *Annual Management/Stewardship Plan* - Describe how you will annually maintain your urban agriculture site upon initial site activation. This may include annual staffing plans, crop rotation, soil bed maintenance, and community design processes to address current community food needs.
 - o *Site Plan* - Provide upload site plans, which can include crop plan, design plan, and other planning documents. Locations of soil beds, fencing, hoop houses, compost, restroom facilities, etc. should be shown.

Community Support and Engagement

- *Community engagement completed to date and community support for your project* - This may include but is not limited to letters of support from community members, organizations, aldermen, or other proof of community engagement (i.e. meeting dates and locations, number of attendees, door-to-door activities, survey responses, mailings distributed, etc.).
- *Community relationships & partnerships* - Please identify the community partners, where they are based, and what services they will provide. If applicable, please also identify any existing community relationships supporting this project.
- *Impact to adjacent properties and mitigation* - This should include any anticipated impacts the project may have on adjacent properties and proposed methods to mitigate or eliminate said impacts.
- *Positive impact to the neighborhood* - This should include as applicable to the type of development number of jobs, new residents, services provided, pounds of food estimated to be produced, etc.
- Please describe your community engagement plans. Describe what you have already done to engage the neighborhood/larger community if applicable and what you plan on doing to engage the community in the future.
- Please describe existing community relationships/partnerships or any new community partnerships planned that will support this project.
- Please describe how your project will benefit the community or provide a service to the community it is situated in, specifically who this site will be providing food to. Tell the story of why you want to grow on this site.

Budget and Financing

- *Project Budget* - This should include 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. Provide your project budget using the template provided below. It should include all itemized costs and total overall cost.

- *Proof of Secured Funding* - This must include at least two pieces of evidence demonstrating financial and technical readiness for this project. This may include letters of support from other growers, donors, or other non-profit organizations who may provide financial and/or technical support.
- Upload Budget
- Upload Proof of Secured Funding
- Upload any other anticipated funding sources

Purchase Offer

- Please enter your purchase offer for the property in question. Because you are submitting an offer for properties assigned for development with the Urban Agriculture Land Access Program, this should be \$1.00 per property. If applying for a "cluster" of properties, the purchase offer should be for all properties (example: buying three properties, purchase offer is \$3.00).