

May 6, 2021
City of Cottage Grove
Attn: Budget Committee
400 E Main Street
Cottage Grove, Oregon 97424



RE: Huerto de la Familia Funding Request

Dear Members of the Budget Committee,

Huerto de la Familia is a local nonprofit providing Latino and immigrant families in Lane County with the opportunity to increase their health and economic security while building community. In our Organic Garden Program, families receive individual plots in community gardens we manage, along with supplies, one-on-one assistance from staff, and access to educational and social events. We currently manage six community gardens with more than 160 families growing their own organic food.

The Organic Garden Program is essential to ensuring that families can access fresh produce and preserve cultural traditions around food. Instead of direct assistance, our garden program provides families with knowledge and skills around food growing that they can use for the rest of their lives. Although we focus on providing bilingual services to Latino and immigrant families, our gardens and associated services are open to all community members.

We are currently developing a Cottage Grove Garden in partnership with the South Lane School District. This garden will be located at the wetlands at Bohemia Elementary School. This garden is in the planning phase, and construction will begin this summer. Our vision is to create a vibrant community space where families will have access to the land and resources needed to successfully cultivate their own fresh, organically grown, culturally specific produce. An important component of this experience is learning opportunities such as workshops on organic agriculture practices, environmental stewardship, food preservation, and more.

The Cottage Grove Community Garden's design includes some unique components such as a central, covered community space for outdoor cultural events and educational workshops, along with raised garden beds. These features will create a space which is inclusive and welcoming to all. We are also partnering with the Coast Fork Willamette Rivershed Council to conduct restoration of native plants and wetland habitats at the garden. Environmental stewardship and sustainability will be an ongoing priority.

Huerto de la Familia is requesting \$5,000 toward the costs of developing the new Cottage Grove Community Garden. The total cost to construct this garden is \$73,290. We already have

over \$35,000 of in-kind donations that have been committed to the project. This shows the strong community support for this project. The requested \$5,000 would be used to purchase materials needed to construct the garden space. By approving this request, the City of Cottage Grove will receive recognition on Huerto de la Familia's Facebook page (2,500 followers) as well as being included on garden signage listing contributors who made the garden possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration. In addition to serving the families who receive a garden plot, this garden will also serve as a space for all Cottage Grove residents to access gardening, food, and culturally-specific programming. We look forward to the wonderful community that will grow and flourish in the Cottage Grove Community Garden.

Sincerely,
Marissa Elena Zarate
Executive Director
Huerto de la Familia