Corey Humphrey, District Manager

2026 Agriculture in the Classroom Program – Request for Proposals

The Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District is requesting proposals for projects to develop, sustain, and expand classroom agricultural education programs in Suffolk County schools (K-12). The goal of this grant is to increase awareness of local agricultural production in Suffolk County, and to strengthen the connection students have with healthy, fresh, local foods. This grant provides funding for programs aimed at increasing student awareness and exposure to different agricultural systems that may unknowingly interact with day-to-day.

This year Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District has $100,000 to award students!

Awards range from $3,000 up to $50,000. Projects may include but are not limited to indoor and outdoor agriculture infrastructure. Projects pairing with local food pantries, supplying hungry families with fresh produce or partnering with local farmers will score higher.

Awards will be given to qualifying applicants who provide the information requested below – please limit proposals to four pages or less. Provide a plan that demonstrates how the proposed program will provide impactful educational opportunities for the students. Justifications should emphasize educational goals and impacts of the project, as well as identify the individual who will be responsible for the program's administration. Please make sure that the proposal addresses the following questions/topics for the Project Description (see next page):

- What type of infrastructure/equipment will be installed and for what purpose? *If no infrastructure/equipment is needed*: Where will you be going? Who will you be partnering with *(if applicable)* why are you going to this location?
- How will students be involved in the project?
- How will the project be integrated into the classroom? Which teachers and departments will benefit from the project?
- What will you do with the resulting agricultural products? Is there any community benefit? *(If applicable)*
- How will you measure student knowledge gained? Will agricultural education be used to satisfy curriculum requirements (e.g., Common Core) and/or other elective courses (Art, Tech, cooking)?
- How will the project be maintained or utilized throughout the years? How will the project be continued in subsequent years?
- Do you currently have any agricultural education programs or related after-school clubs?

- Roughly what percentage of students rely on free/reduced price meals and how will this program impact them? Explain any current food security issues present in the school/community.

Provide a projected itemized budget in simple table form (see example below) that lists all project costs including equipment, supplies, etc. This grant will not provide funding for labor. **All District provided funds must be expended by Dec. 31, 2026**.

Projects that receive matching support (either cash or in-kind contributions) will score higher than proposals without match. Labor may be counted as matching support. For proposals requesting **$10,000 or more a 25% cash match is required.**

Demonstrate project support from stakeholders such as teachers, administrators, and parents. Letters of support are strongly encouraged and will not count toward the four-page proposal limit.

- Proposals will only be accepted from public schools in Suffolk County.
- Proposals must be received by COB **February 28, 2026**. Please submit proposals to https://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Departments/Soil-and-Water-Conservation-District

Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to:

- Indoor Agriculture Infrastructure: Grow lights/grow tables, hydroponics, plant tissue cultures, etc.
- Outdoor Infrastructure: Raised garden beds, greenhouses, drip irrigation, High Tunnel/Hoop House etc.
- Rooftop gardens
- Compost systems
- Food Production, Produce Processing/Preservation, Cut Flower Sales
- Pollinator Habitat to Enhance Success of Existing Garden Beds
- Apiculture Activities
- Chicken coops for eggs and manure
- Projects pairing with local food pantries to supply district families with fresh produce
- Raising insects (mantids or ladybeetles) to be used as biological control for garden pests
- Partnering with local farmers: Students helping farmers with harvesting, planting and maintenance of vegetable beds.
- Agroforestry (Replanting, invasive species control, native tree production)
- Urban Forestry activities (growing trees for use in urban settings)
- Field trips to local vegetable farms, floriculture farms, viticulture, orchards, poultry farms, cattle farms, aquaculture farms for educational purposes.
- Growing species of beach grass to be planted along bluffs and dunes to protect shorelines
- Aquaculture Farming (Oysters and Clams)
  Tip: *Consider partnering with local non for profits, other schools, community programs and of course farms!*

Have an idea, not sure how to implement it? Give us a call! We will help you walk through it.

2026 Agriculture Education in the Classroom

Suggested Proposal Format (limited to four pages)

Title of Proposal: Growing Students at GHS

Name/Address of School: General High School 123 Plain Road, Nowhere, NY 56789

Project Leader: Name/position/title/contact information (phone and email)

Other Project Cooperators: Name/title/contact information (phone and email)

Project Description: Thoroughly answer questions 1 through 8 (*see first page*) and describe the proposed project, its educational goals, and plans for future funding (i.e. project sustainability and longevity)

Project Budget: Please use sample below as a guide. Remember that while labor cannot be funded in this grant, you may include volunteer labor as match.

Budget Line	Items/Amount	Details/Notes	Line Total
Supplies: (List items individually)	• Top soil - $150 • Compost - $100 • Plugs - $250	To be purchased in May	$500
Equipment: (List items individually)	• 8'x12' Greenhouse - $1,800 • Work benches - $500 • Hose - $100	To be purchased in April	$2,400
Misc: (List items individually)	• First Aid Kit - $30 • Reference Book - $70	To be purchased in June	$100
In-Kind Match: (List individually)	• Volunteers - $500	50 Volunteer Hours @ $10/Hour	$500

Cash Match: (List individually)	• PTA Contribution - $500 • Partner Donation- $1,000	Cash donation towards project	$1,500
		Total Match:	**$2,000**
		***Total Requested:**	**$3,000**
		Project Total:	**$5,000**

Advanced Budget sheet Example: Oyster Farming (Partnering with an Existing Community Oyster Cultivation Program)

Budget Line	Items/Amount	Details/Notes	Line Total
Supplies: (List items individually)	• Oyster Seeds - $1,000 • Cleaning Brushes - $500	To be purchased in May/June	$1,500
Equipment: (List items individually)	• Folding Tables- $400 • Hose - $100 • Floating Oyster Bag Kit-$4,000 • Extra Clips- $200	To be purchased in May/June	$4,700
Misc: (List items individually)	• Field Trips - $3,000 • Coolers -$500 • Ice -$100 • Gloves- $200	Field Trip Scheduled for: 5/1/2025 5/30/2025 6/1/2025 To be purchased in May/June	$3,800
In-Kind Match: (List individually)	• Teachers Time - $5,000	100 Volunteer Hours @ $50/Hour	$5,000
Cash Match: (List individually)	• District Contribution - $1,500 • Partner Donation- $1,000	Cash donation towards project	$2,500
		Total Match:	**$7,500**
		***Total Requested:**	**$10,000**
		Project Total:	**$17,500**

Project Timeline: Provide a timeline for the project, including when purchases will be made, when construction/installation begins and is completed, as well as when you will begin using the project for educational activities.

Phase One:	Month:	Notes:
Finalize farm permits	March/April	Partnered with existing community program, permits already obtained
Purchase Oyster Seeds, Cleaning Brushes, Hose Floating Oyster Bag Kit and Extra Clips Student Actives: In class education, introduction to oysters and need	May/June	The entire cycle will take 18-24 months We plan to release our oysters to the protected sanctuary in November
First project check in: How can we help? Are there any unexpected challenges?	May/June	
Field trip to site: Student Activities: Initial measurements, set up and check nursery systems, learn about oyster life cycles, anatomy and place in ecosystem. •	June	
Field Trip to site: Student activities: Regular water quality monitoring, measure of growth, documentation and cleanings	July/August	Rapid growth period, regular cleanings School break, community members continue to clean and monitor while school is not in session.

Second project check in: How can we help? Are there any unexpected challenges?	August	
Third project check in: How can we help? Are there any unexpected challenges?	September	
Oysters reach 1 inch to 2inches, transfer to already established protected sanctuary reef Student activities: Students participate in releasing into the	September/November	Growth starts to slow
Final project check in:	December	Send photos, videos etc.

Letters of Support and/or Partnership: Please attach all letters of support/partnership to the application. (They do not count towards the four-page limit.)

Quarterly Updates: If your project is awarded funds, quarterly updates are ***required*** to be submitted through an online form to track development and progression.