



Press Release

For Immediate Release

04/13/2021

Kingston, RI. The Southern Rhode Island Conservation District has awarded over \$20,000 in grant funds to support community and school gardens in Washington and Kent Counties during the 2021 growing season. SRICD partnered with the Rhode Island State Conservation Committee with funding from USDA-National Resource Conservation Service, Rhode Island to offer the People's Garden grants. USDA's People's Garden program started in 2009 and has grown into a collaborative effort of over 700 local and national organizations all working together to establish community and school gardens across the country.

Gina Fuller, District Manager for SRICD announced this year's recipients for the Southern District are Peace Dale Elementary School PTO, the Compass School in Kingston, Middle Bridge School in Narragansett, Westerly Middle School's Garden Club, and the West Warwick Health Equity Zone. "We are really excited about this year's recipients, the projects vary from adding handicap accessible beds and interpretive signs, to adding new beds to school gardens to support the science curriculum, and expanding a public food forest in West Warwick" Fuller stated.

Grant funds can be used to purchase compost, tools, plants, and other basic garden needs. The grant does require a 50% match by the applicant. "This year's applicants submitted proposals which demonstrated collaboration between volunteers, school districts, and municipalities. The West Warwick HEZ for example includes in kind match from Thundermist Health Center, the town, and volunteers." Rhode Island's three conservation districts participate in the People Garden program with RISCC and NRCS. Grants are available annually pending funding, groups interested in learning more should contact their conservation district. "The People's Garden grants are an excellent way for schools, churches, and other community organizations start or expand a garden and it also provides a great opportunity for Conservation Districts to introduce the other services and programs we can provide to groups who need technical assistance with their gardens, science programs, and natural resource concerns."

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