



City of Burnsville

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CITY OF BURNSVILLE RECEIVES \$125,000 HEALTHY EATING GRANT

The City of Burnsville has been awarded a \$125,000 grant to increase opportunities for locally grown produce, as well as enhanced access to open space and physical activity for their most vulnerable residents.

On Jan. 23, the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) and the American Beverage Foundation for a Healthy America (ABHFA) announced the nine winning cities of the 2021 Childhood Obesity Prevention and Environmental Health and Sustainability Awards. Each of the cities was awarded a grant to enhance health, wellness and environmental quality in their communities.

“Mayors have long understood the critical role that safe, clean, and green spaces play in improving the health status of children and families in our cities,” said Tom Cochran, CEO and Executive Director of USCM. “We congratulate the City of Burnsville, and encourage more innovative and comprehensive approaches to improving quality of life for residents in greatest need.”

The City of Burnsville took first place in its population category, and plans to use the grant dollars to launch a new program called *Grow Burnsville*. The program will focus on creating opportunities for healthy eating for families in poverty, families with nutrition access limitations and families underserved by park space. The program will provide access to locally grown healthy food through the development of a “Community and Market Garden,” which will offer education and internship opportunities for youth while providing locally grown produce to more families than can be served through existing efforts. It will also pilot a “Food Forest,” a new approach for putting underutilized public land and rights-of-way to work as spaces to grow fruits and vegetables through sustainable permaculture.

“The quality of public health and the environment in a city is essential to a vibrant community, so addressing these issues in a cohesive manner supports mayors’ efforts to deliver even greater impact for their citizens,” said Katherine Lugar, president of the American Beverage Foundation for a Healthy America board of directors and president and CEO of the American Beverage Association. “Congratulations to Mayor Elizabeth Kautz and the City of Burnsville. This extraordinary program is more than deserving of this grant.”

The City’s Sustainability Plan and commitment to environmental issues will provide a framework that will allow the City to quickly implement the project’s plan. Although some portions of the plan – such as creating permaculture areas – will take time to fully develop, the project is designed to kick off this spring and see achievements this year.

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“Our staff can’t wait to work on this project collaboratively with the community to enhance Burnsville’s food opportunities for everyone – especially our economically disadvantaged populations,” said Ryan Peterson, the City’s Public Works Director and *Grow Burnsville* Coordinator. “We are hoping to combat and bring attention to food insecurity while also offering many fun food opportunities for all residents.”

The City also sees *Grow Burnsville* as an opportunity to celebrate Burnsville’s rich cultural heritage and connect community through the power of food. Staff plan to roll out *Grow Burnsville* opportunities at community events such as the summer’s International Festival of Burnsville.

For more information on the *Childhood Obesity Prevention and Environmental Health and Sustainability Awards*, visit www.usmayors.org/programs/abfha-awards.



Cutline:

Sue Bast, Burnsville’s Environmental Specialist and Grow Burnsville Manager (left), and Burnsville Mayor Elizabeth Kautz (right) display information on the Grow Burnsville project and the 2021 Childhood Obesity Prevention and Environmental Health and Sustainability award given to the City.

(high resolution image available upon request)

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