

1 April, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Corporate Secretary and Program Director

[REDACTED] Foundation
[REDACTED]

San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear [REDACTED],

My name is [REDACTED] and I am president and co-founder of [REDACTED]. We are a San Francisco based 501(c)3 organization established in 2021. Your commitment to supporting educational programs in the Bay Area is highly appreciated, and we deeply resonate with your mission to enhance quality of life through them. I am writing to inquire about obtaining a grant from [REDACTED] Foundation to support [REDACTED]'s environmental education programs in the underserved Bayview district of San Francisco, in the amount of \$25,000.

At [REDACTED] we strive to break down barriers to health equity in marginalized communities by addressing issues like environmental injustice and contaminated soil, while restoring habitats for a diverse range of insect, animal, and plant kin. As a BIPOC-led and serving organization, [REDACTED] empowers the voices of those most impacted by these issues. Our flagship project, the [REDACTED] Pollinator Sanctuary and Food Forest, was established amidst the challenges facing the environmentally polluted Bayview district; we have since converted numerous abandoned lots in San Francisco into thriving urban gardens. Through the Pollinator Sanctuary, we provide education on soil health, organic farming, and the importance of protecting habitats for local insects, amphibians, mammals, and plants. Our sanctuary has become a flourishing community space where people who share our passion for creating a healthier community gather to learn and connect. Annually, we proudly serve around 1,000 community members, with a special focus on 250 students and youth.

We welcome several schools and youth programs to our garden several times per year, including the Boys and Girls Club of SF, Willie Brown Middle, and Creative Arts Charter School. We also host educational workshops for Garden for the Environment's Get Up! Program, and UCSF's Growth Project students, a vocational program for adults with disabilities. We would like to host more groups from SF and beyond. We have most recently welcomed Mycelium Youth from Mission High School, where we cultivated mushrooms together and demonstrated the power of fungi as both a food source and for addressing the high lead content in our garden soil. Visiting groups have seen and assisted in the entire mycoremediation process and learned all the exciting ways mycelium is both a filter and a biocatalyst to remove harmful chemicals from the environment. Through age-appropriate education and demonstration, we can inspire others to become active gardeners, stewards and small farmers. For our low-income communities struggling with food insecurity and poor health, learning practical skills such as composting, planting, and harvesting, can help them become more self-sufficient and independent.

This Southeast part of the city has historically been subjected to neglect and disinvestment compared to other parts of the city—the poverty rate in Bayview is nearly double the citywide poverty rate, and 89% of residents are races other than white, who are most impacted by environmental injustice. Underserved communities often face a disproportionate burden of environmental hazards, such as pollution and toxic waste. By learning about sustainable gardening, youth can gain a better understanding of the impact of environmental issues on their community and ways to address them and work towards a more just and equitable community. Mycoremediation, for example, can be an effective way to clean up contaminated soil, which can help to mitigate the impact of toxic waste on the community. Learning how to grow good food not only improves health and addresses food insecurity, it can also provide a livelihood and increase self-sufficiency. Apart from practical skills in agriculture and horticulture, gardens are a living laboratory for the study of environmental issues, life sciences, and the fostering of social skills like collaboration and the exchange of ideas. Studies worldwide also reveal positive psychological and physiological effects of contact with nature in the form of gardens and green spaces.

Our annual operating cost is \$172,205, of which about \$110,000 will be provided by other funders, sponsors, and individual donors. We have recently won grants from the [REDACTED] Foundation (\$3,500) and the [REDACTED] (\$5,000) and have grants pending, including from the [REDACTED] Fund (\$50,000) and the [REDACTED] Fund (\$50,000). We are requesting \$25,000 from [REDACTED] Foundation to support our environmental education program through this letter of inquiry. These funds will be used to attract and pay visiting farmers, mycologists, land stewards, healers, and naturalists to our space as we increase the number of groups visiting our garden for environmental education; the next couple of groups we are scheduled to teach this spring include students with disabilities from CCSF, and youth from the Agricultural Institutes of Marin's Diggin' Education Program. We want our community youth to understand that there is a viable future in green jobs, including farming and environmental stewardship, and we can start mentoring them now.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to introduce [REDACTED] and its education programs to you for funding consideration. We deeply appreciate the aid you provide to the Bay Area and would be honored to have your support as we work to educate and empower youth with an approach rooted in the principles of justice, sustainability, and community empowerment. If you would like to discuss further details, I can be reached by phone at [REDACTED] or email at [REDACTED]. We look forward to hearing from you and working together to support a more equitable future for all members of San Francisco and beyond.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
President