



Andrew J. Quarnstrom
Supervisor

Prosperity Gardens Inc.
302 N. 1st., Champaign, IL 61820
Attn: Nicole Bridges-Musumeci

Nicole,

Please find the attached transition proposal from the City of Champaign Township. We believe we can quickly transition Prosperity Gardens while keeping the mission of Prosperity Garden Inc. intact. We also believe our vision for the future of Prosperity Gardens will allow sustainable operations for years to come allowing the gardens to continue to serve our community. I hope you find the proposal sufficient. Should you need any additional information or have questions regarding the proposal, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. Thank you in advance!

Andy Quarnstrom

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy Quarnstrom", written over a horizontal line.

Township Supervisor

**Prosperity Gardens
Request for Proposal Submission
City of Champaign Township**

Contact Info:

Andrew Quarnstrom-Township Supervisor
53 E. Logan St.
Champaign, IL 61820
Office: 217-403-6120
Cell: 217-841-0823
Andy.cctownship@champaignil.gov

Overview

The City of Champaign Township is a unit of local government that generally shares the same boundaries as the City of Champaign. The City of Champaign Township is one of almost 1,500 townships in the state of Illinois and shares the distinction of being one of 17 that are coterminous. Coterminous townships are townships that generally provide services in more micro urban communities and share the same boundaries as a municipality. Of those 17 townships, the City of Champaign Township is one of the largest.

The City of Champaign Township has two elected officials. Andrew Quarnstrom, Supervisor, was elected in 2013 and has been the Supervisor for 6 years. Paul Faraci, Assessor, was elected in 2017 and in the middle of his 1st term. The Township is governed by a Board of Trustees, made up of all sitting City of Champaign Council members. The Township employs a total of 7 full time employees, one part time, and one contracted employee.

The City of Champaign Township Supervisor's office can best be described as the social service branch of local government. Tasked with ensuring that those most in need in Champaign receive the help they need; the City of Champaign Township not only provides programming for those in need but also collaborates closely with other governmental agencies and nonprofits. This collaboration provides strong leverage towards work being done in the community to help eliminate hunger, homelessness, and underemployment among other needs in Champaign.

Creative Team

Initially, Andy Quarnstrom and Brad Buldak will be the team tasked with the Prosperity Gardens project and transition. Andy, a 23-year veteran of the Champaign Fire Department was elected to Supervisor of the City of Champaign Township in 2013. Since taking office, he has designed and implemented new programs including CU@ Work and the Township's Emergency

Rental/Eviction prevention program among others. Andy previously worked for Harford Farms, a 2000-acre grain farm in Mazon, Illinois and has some experience in agriculture and gardening.

Brad Buldak has a degree in Social Work from Eastern Illinois University and has worked at the City of Champaign Township since 2018. Previous to the Township, Brad worked at the Times Center as well as various social service agencies from 1999 through 2013. Brad's experience includes coordinating transitional housing programs, completing state reporting for funding, resident stabilization, as well as general case management among other tasks.

Strengths

The City of Champaign Township is located at 53 E. Logan in midtown Champaign. Just blocks from Prosperity Garden, the Township works closely with nearby partners such as CU at Home's Phoenix and the Bread Soup Kitchen. The City of Champaign Township plays a significant role in the provision of services for those most in need in Champaign and to an extent beyond our borders through our work with homeless in Champaign County.

The City of Champaign Township has strong working relationships with many of the organizations Prosperity Gardens has partnered with in the past. In addition to our close work with CU at Home, we have worked with the Summer Youth Employment Program, United Way, and Frances Nelson. Additionally, we work closely and regularly with Cunningham Township, Regional Planning, Regional Office of Education, Daily Bread, and others.

In addition to our strong commitment and proven success in helping those in need in Champaign, we come with organizational attributes that will allow for smooth and successful transition. We have employees with backgrounds in agriculture, government, safety, social work, housing, and case management. Our offices, just blocks from Prosperity Gardens, are ADA accessible and open Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 4:00. We have a state-of-the-art Community Forum in which we can host seminars, classes, and meetings. In addition, we have vehicles in our fleet available to do the work of the gardens.

The City of Champaign Township currently contracts services with the City of Champaign. We have a close working relationship with legal, finance, and the City Manager's office among others City departments. Our elected Board of Trustees, made up of the City of Champaign Council, will help to ensure a smooth transition of City owned property.

Financials

The Township has operated with a balance budget while adding programs and increasing benefits for clients. In the last 6 years, we have seen a significant expansion of our services, purchased new Township Offices, and increased significantly the number of residents we provide services to. In FY 2019/2020, which begins July 1, 2019, the Township estimates a total

of \$804,000.00 in revenue from various sources. The Township has approximately \$900,000.00 in assets in the form of equipment and real estate and has reserves of approximately \$800,000.00 as of July 1, 2018 (FY 2017 Audit). Our total annual budget for FY 2019/2020 is estimated to be approximately \$900,000.00. All financial documents from the last decade including annual budgets, revenue, audits, and annual reports can be found on our website (https://cctownship.com/statutory_documents/).

Proposal

Since July of 2018, the City of Champaign Township in partnership with CU at Home, has been operating a program called CU @ Work. CU @ Work provides the opportunity for homeless individuals and pan handlers in Champaign/Urbana to work for \$10 per hour doing beautification projects in the community. Participants work 4-5 hours a day doing litter abatement, light gardening, assisting other non-profits, and other tasks as assigned and needed. Participants are paid for their work after each day in the form of cash. During this time, clients are fed a meal and have the opportunity to receive various types of social services and case management that are made available to them. Although encouraged, no participant is mandated to accept social service assistance or case management. Since starting out at one day a week in 2018, the program now operates two days a week with hopes of future expansion in the coming months and years. Future goals of CU @ Work include not only continuation of our current projects but also an expansion of the scope of work that we do. One area of interest regarding program development has been urban agriculture.

In the 9 months since its inception, CU @ Work has employed over 100 chronically homeless individuals. Many participants have benefited from case management including assistance getting identification, birth certificates, township general assistance and other resources. Two of the participants have been able to find permanent housing through their participation in CU @ Work.

If successful in its proposal, the City of Champaign Township intends to continue much of the good work and cooperative programs that had been ongoing with Prosperity Gardens. The education and experience provided to our youth through urban gardening is paramount. The relationships built working in the garden are key to the success of our future generations. The pride of a day's work and growing something builds confidence and provides for the experience needed to be successful in life. We intend to work with programs such as the READY School and Regional Office of Education as well as Unit 4 to continue their horticulture programs using the raised beds. We also intend to work with Don Moyer Boys and Girls club to offer educational and summer programs as desired.

In addition to providing much of the programming that has been done at Prosperity Gardens, the City of Champaign Township proposes additional programs related to the Township's CU @ Work program as well as the Township's General Assistance program. Using the gardens located in the Beardsley Park neighborhood and understanding the constraints of those

gardens, the Township intends to use CU @ Work participants to build a raised garden concept at this location. Initially covering one half acre, we would use the Beardsley location to provide opportunity for our CU @ Work participants to experience the process of garden preparation and building, vegetable planting, growing, harvesting, and marketing. Participants would not only earn their income from CU@ Work but also receive, if desired, a weekly selection of vegetables using a Community Supported Agriculture concept.

In addition to youth programs and CU @ Work, the Township would use a Workfare type concept to assist in the operation of the gardens. Townships in Illinois offer two primary types of state mandated assistance. One type is General Assistance/Transitional Assistance (GATA), intended for those in our community unable to work. The other type of assistance is Workfare, where an assistance recipient receives a monthly grant for working in the community. Many times, this work is done at nonprofits and a certain number of hours must be worked. The City of Champaign Township currently only provides a GATA form of assistance. The addition of Prosperity Gardens to the Township's programming would allow the City of Champaign Township to add a Workfare program to allow individuals in Champaign that are able to work but out of work to work at the Gardens in exchange for a monthly grant. This same opportunity could be available to Workfare participants in Cunningham Township's program as Prosperity Gardens would be allocated a Workfare site for Cunningham participants as well.

As noted in the financials section, the Township has the financial ability to transition Prosperity Gardens into a Township resource. To ensure efficient operation of the gardens, the Township intends to hire a full-time employee to oversee all aspects of Prosperity Gardens. This position will also work closely with the CU @ Work Program and have some responsibilities associated with the Township's portion of the program. The Township is prepared to take over operations and maintenance of the gardens as well as assets of Prosperity Gardens as early as July 1st, 2019 once the exchange has been approved.

The Township intends to immediately start the work of building beds at the Beardsley Garden. Using current assets, donations, and grants as appropriate for supplies, we will use volunteer and CU @ Work labor to work to get the beds ready by the 2020-2021 growing season. In addition, we will use the same group of individuals to provide labor to do any deferred maintenance that may be needed to the current beds on First Street. The Township intends to make any repairs, upgrades, or unfinished renovations to 301 N. First early on in fiscal year 2020/2021. This will allow time for the transfer of property, evaluation of needs, and proper planning, funding, and bidding.

Once operations of Prosperity Gardens are operational, we intend to market our produce in two primary ways. First, we intend to offer fresh vegetables for sale at both the Tuesday Champaign Farmer's Market as well as the Saturday Farmer's Market in Urbana. This will provide participants experience in sales, marketing, inventory, and business operations. Additionally, this will allow us to offset our costs and provide income to the gardens to improve capital, pay for supplies, and maintain operations.

In addition to farmer's markets, we want to ensure fresh produce grown at Prosperity Gardens is available to families in our community facing food insecurity. We intend to have a traveling type market where we can do outreach in neighborhoods that may be located in food deserts. Going out into neighborhoods will allow residents the opportunity to obtain fresh vegetables during the season without the barriers usually found in food deserts.

Compensation

The Township is prepared to compensate Prosperity Gardens \$15,000 for the assets listed in the Request for Proposal. The Township is also prepared to negotiate with the City of Champaign for property currently owned by the City of Champaign including the City lot behind Land of Lincoln, the land behind the CPD parking lot, and the Beardsley Park acre lot.

Media and Social Media

The City of Champaign Township is active in both media relations as well as social media. We have regular contacts with local media and have built relationships with media outlets to help ensure our mission is properly portrayed. Our website, www.cctownship.com, provides access to information, data, and documents relative to our operations. In addition, citizens can request FOIA documents, offer service requests for CU @ Home, and print off applications and associated documents.

The City of Champaign Township has an active Twitter account at @cctownship. The Twitter account provides an active feed to the Township's Facebook account ensuring multiple social media outlets are used on all activity.

We are in the process of developing an Instagram account and guideline to further enhance our social media presence.

The following are examples of media contacts the City of Champaign Township has had in recent months:

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/oct/28/exchange-urbana-and-champaign-pay-homeless-to-help/>

<https://foxillinois.com/news/local/new-work-program-in-champaign-to-help-homeless-community>

<http://champaignil.gov/2018/08/24/township-city-launch-new-partner-program-cuwork/>

<http://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/2019-03-29/toms-mailbag-march-29-2019.html>

<http://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/2019-04-28/many-champaign-county-one-full-time-job-just-isnt-enough.html>

<http://www.news-gazette.com/news/local/2018-10-08/cu-work-pays-homeless-help-clean-champaign.html>

<http://www.news-gazette.com/living/2014-06-15/retirees-june-15-22-2014.html>