

COMMUNITY APPLICATION GARDEN



Do you want to start a community food garden in Allegheny County?

Grow Pittsburgh can help! Using a tailored, community-based approach, Grow Pittsburgh provides materials, education and organizational support to groups like yours. This application helps us assess your community group’s needs and assets. If your group is selected for our program, our support will include project management, education, and infrastructure.

Our goal is to help communities start sustainable food gardens that will be enjoyed for generations to come. Our program is funded in part by Allegheny County Economic Development.



Application is due August 1, 2023

Staff use only:

Received (date): _____ Municipality/Neighborhood: _____



GROW PITTSBURGH'S VALUES

MISSION

Our mission is to teach people how to grow food and promote the benefits gardens bring to our neighborhoods.

VISION

We envision the day when everyone in our city and region grows and eats fresh, local and healthy food.

VALUES

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: prioritizing neighborhood voices to guide programs

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY: using, teaching and advocating for restorative practices

EQUITY: working alongside communities to build access and power for all

FISCAL INTEGRITY: making responsible and effective use of available assets

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY: supporting everyone's right to access, produce and distribute healthy and culturally appropriate food

RESOURCEFULNESS: creating hands-on opportunities to build individual and community self-sufficiency

SOCIAL JUSTICE: understanding systems of privilege, oppression and racism, and using this knowledge to drive our work

TRANSPARENCY: being accountable by using clear, direct and inclusive communication

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

This Application Packet will enable our team to begin to evaluate your group's needs, assets, and readiness to start a community garden.

- **DO THIS FIRST:** Schedule a phone call or meeting with a member of our team to confirm eligibility for this program.
- Read through the Application Requirements and Program Timeline and make sure this is a good fit. (pages 3 – 5)
- Identify two main contacts for your garden application. Convene at least 6 organized and motivated people in your garden group. Begin outreach to your broader community. (pages 6 – 8)
- Identify a Primary Sponsor for your garden. (pages 9 – 10)
- Visit at least 1 other community garden and speak with a garden leader or gardener. (page 10)
- Identify at least 1 garden site owned by a non-profit or municipality. Invite Grow Pittsburgh staff to complete a site visit and soil test. Then, get written permission from the owner to use a lot for at least 3 years. (page 11)
- Obtain support letters from Primary Sponsor and a local official. (page 9)
- **Submit complete Application Packet by August 1, 2023 to be considered for a Spring 2024 garden build. Do not wait until the deadline to ask for an extension**
- Accepted groups will be informed by September 15, 2023.
- Plan to attend How to Start a Community Garden, our signature class designed for community garden leaders, in the fall.

Contact:

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PROGRAM DETAILS

DESCRIPTION OF GROW PITTSBURGH SUPPORT

- A member of the Grow Pittsburgh community garden support staff will essentially join your garden team for about 2 years
- Grow Pittsburgh staff will attend garden meetings, keep in touch with garden leaders, and visit your garden site regularly throughout the season
- We will consult with you on team-building and group organization, community outreach and engagement, garden design, infrastructure installation, supplies acquisition, organic gardening practices
- We will purchase and organize many essential supplies and infrastructure elements to help set up a functional garden space
- We can leverage our in-depth knowledge and experience with community gardens as a resource for you
- Each conversation and process we work on together will be customized to your specific project and group

TIMELINE

2023: Application Year

- Spring/Summer 2023:
 - Reach out to us to confirm eligibility as soon as possible.
 - Visit an established garden, select a site and get permission from the owner, connect with a local community organization, and convene your garden group.
 - Submit the complete application by August 1. If you need an extension, let us know before the due date.
- Fall 2023:
 - Plan for one or two members of your group to attend How to Start a Community Garden workshop.
 - If your application is approved, a member of our team will meet with your group to get started with planning and budgeting in the fall.

2024: Year 1 – Outreach and Organize, Design and Build

- Winter/Spring 2024:
 - Gather a committed garden team, assign roles, and schedule regular meetings.
 - Build community support with an outreach strategy and public events.
 - Agree on shared goals for the garden.
 - Design the garden with community input.
 - Make a plan for how to maintain the garden.

- Spring/Summer 2024:
 - Build and plant the garden with support from local volunteers.
 - Begin weekly site visits and garden workshops with Grow Pittsburgh staff.
 - Try out the maintenance and community engagement plans, caring for the garden space and the garden group throughout the season.
 - Survey your garden members and record volunteer hours and harvest totals.
- Fall 2024:
 - Reflect on the season, setting goals for year two.

2025: Year 2 – Sustain

- Winter/Spring 2025:
 - Reflect on garden progress on team building, community outreach efforts, and gardening and site maintenance
 - Keep learning what practices work best for the group and the project
 - Review and refine the shared goals for the garden
- Spring/Summer 2025:
 - Garden together, strengthen the team's ability to manage the garden
 - Expand or improve the garden as the group wants & is able
 - Slowly separate Grow Pittsburgh staff support from garden team
- Fall 2025:
 - End the growing season with a well-cared-for garden and active group of members, practicing sustainable gardening and inclusive community outreach
 - Graduate into the county-wide Community Garden Network

Post-Graduation: Community Garden Network

After your garden graduates from our program (typically 2 years of support), you become part of the **Community Garden Network**. This network will connect you to other gardens, funding opportunities and resources to keep your garden growing.

- Reach out to Grow Pittsburgh staff to say hello and find support when needed
- Apply to Community Garden Sustainability Fund for project support, and supplies
- Plug into Community Garden Network educational and networking opportunities
- Check in with Grow Pittsburgh staff each year moving forward to share updates

CONTACT INFORMATION

Gardens are most successful when multiple people hold leadership positions. Please identify two garden leaders.

PRIMARY CONTACT PERSON/GARDEN LEADER

Name: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Organizational Affiliation(s): _____

SECONDARY CONTACT PERSON/GARDEN LEADER

Name: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Organizational Affiliation(s): _____

Garden Pledges

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY CONTACTS ARE ASKED TO INITIAL EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS.

____ We pledge to send at least one garden representative to Grow Pittsburgh’s How To Start A Community Garden workshop.

____ We pledge to hold monthly public garden meetings during the growing season.

____ We pledge to grow organically by sourcing organic amendments and pest control products and not using chemicals in the garden.

____ We pledge to host at least 1 free community event per year (i.e. workshops, parties).

____ We pledge to positively engage our neighbors and keep our garden open to the public.

____ We pledge to assist with data collection, which includes tracking volunteer hours and produce harvested, and participating in surveys.



Tell Us About Your Interest

Please provide specific answers to the following questions:

1

Why do you want to start a new garden as opposed to joining an established one? What would be unique about your new garden?

2

What do you hope to accomplish by starting a community garden? What is your vision? What are your main goals?

3

What have you done already to engage your neighbors? How do you plan to engage your community in this project? (ex. yard signs, events, going door to door, talking to community groups)

PRIMARY SPONSOR

GARDEN GROUPS MUST BE SPONSORED BY A NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED GROUP

Primary Sponsor Organization: _____

Main contact at Organization: _____

How will the sponsor organization support the garden?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provide a responsive main contact to the garden group (<u>Required</u>) | <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tax exempt status/Fiscal sponsorship (Recommended) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bathroom access |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Liability insurance (Recommended) | <input type="checkbox"/> Purchase/Provision of materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer/Community outreach (Recommended) | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff time |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Technical gardening assistance |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| | _____ |

SUPPORT LETTERS

EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT

Community Gardens are most successful when they partner with and are supported by local organizations, municipalities, and individuals. **Collect and attach a letter of support from each of the following:**

- REQUIRED:** Land Owner (approving use of site for at least 3 years)
- REQUIRED:** Primary Sponsor Organization
- REQUIRED:** Local government official (council member, borough manager, etc.)
- RECOMMENDED:** Additional community partner support letter(s)
- RECOMMENDED:** Petition signed by supportive neighbors

The letters do not have to be long or complicated, but should include:

- Individual's name and job title or organization's name
- Their expressed support of your community garden project
- What they have committed to doing to help your community garden project
- Individual's or organizational representative's signature

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Identify organizations, companies, and/or individuals in your community with whom the garden can form a mutually beneficial relationship.

Partner(s) you have already reached out to:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Partner(s) you plan to reach out to:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Are you seeking funding for your garden project besides this application?

Yes

No

Unsure

If yes, please specify: _____

GARDEN RESEARCH

THERE ARE OVER 120 COMMUNITY GARDENS IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY! PLEASE VISIT AT LEAST ONE COMMUNITY GARDEN AND TALK WITH A GARDENER ABOUT GROWING FOOD, ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY, AND THE PROCESS OF STARTING AND MAINTAINING A COMMUNITY GARDEN.

➔ To find a garden close to you, visit Grow Pittsburgh's Grower's Map on our website: www.growpittsburgh.org

What is the name and/or address of the garden you visited? Who did you talk to?

What were your observations and initial reactions?

GARDEN SITE INFORMATION

IMPORTANT NOTE

This program prioritizes starting gardens in Environmental Justice Areas (<https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>) and areas with low income/low access to fresh food. Additionally, community gardens located in Allegheny County, but outside of the City of Pittsburgh, must be located in an area that meets certain resident income requirements. Contact us to verify your site's eligibility ASAP.

Have you identified a potential garden site?

- Yes. (If there is more than one, please complete this page for each site)
- No.
- We will need Grow Pittsburgh's assistance to locate one.
 - We will not need Grow Pittsburgh's assistance to locate one.

If yes, which requirements does your site meet?

1. The site is owned by the municipality or a non-profit organization. Yes No Unsure
(Private property is not eligible)
2. This site has access to water or the potential to install a water line. Yes No Unsure
3. This site gets 6+ hours of sunlight. Yes No Unsure
4. I have written permission from the landowner to use the site for 5+ years. *(If Yes, be sure to include your written permission)* Yes No Unsure
5. The soil has been tested for lead and has less than 300ppm. *(If Yes, be sure to include your soil test results. We can cover the cost of soil testing.)* Yes No Unsure

Where is your garden site?

Neighborhood/Borough: _____

Address/Nearest Intersection: _____

Lot Block Number(s): _____

To find the Lot Block Number, visit the Allegheny County Real Estate website at <https://www2.alleghenycounty.us/RealEstate/Default.aspx>

