



## Early Childhood Garden Application



### Application Timeline:

**We are excited to share our Early Childhood garden program!** Applications for Early Childhood gardens will be accepted on a rolling basis!

**Please direct general application questions to Victoria Thurmond at:**

- [victoria@growpittsburgh.org](mailto:victoria@growpittsburgh.org)
- 678-977-9389

Grow Pittsburgh and Sampson Foundation have partnered to offer an early childhood garden education program for Early Childhood Centers across the Pittsburgh region. Gardens are outdoor classrooms that are adaptable to most play yards and are designed to fit the space and needs of each center. The program will integrate garden and cooking activities into the classroom curriculum to support the development and education of the whole child. We aim to support teachers in teaching their students how to grow, cook and eat fresh food while celebrating the cultures and experiences of our families and our city. The work of Grow Pittsburgh across the region is driven by the understanding that hands-on, inquiry-based learning has significant positive effects on the development of children and youth.



Grow Pittsburgh's school garden program began in 2007 and during the 2018-19 school year we piloted an Early Childhood garden program through a partnership with the Sampson Foundation. In this program, we work with ECE educators and communities for one year to assist in planning and building on-site gardens. We work with teachers to train and host garden classes throughout the season and align garden classes with the center's mission and curriculum to create a dynamic, sustainable site-specific program.

New facilities will be selected for garden builds and programming will continue for one year. In person programming is dependent on Covid 19 guidelines and safety restrictions. We will work with you to tailor the program to your needs.



## Early Childhood Garden Application Criteria:

The application that follows will enable our team to evaluate whether the Early Childhood Garden Program would be a good fit for your Early Childhood Center. **Programs that meet the following criteria will be eligible to be considered for garden builds.**

### Early Childhood Criteria:

- ☐ Complete application (Parts 1-6, including photos) emailed or submitted by postal mail.
- ☐ Located in Allegheny County
- ☐ Early Childhood facility (includes: family, group and center) licensed by the state of PA.
- ☐ At least 5 organized and motivated people in your garden leadership group. Groups can include any staff and parents but must include at least three teachers interested in supporting this program. For example, your garden team could include parents, health coordinator, custodian, and assistant teachers. (Exceptions will be made for smaller facilities)
- ☐ Signatures of support from director and head custodian.
- ☐ A suitable site for gardening on the property that gets at least 6 hours of sunlight a day with supporting photos and the completion of Part 3. Grow Pittsburgh can help you with this parts
- ☐ Enrollment of at least 50% of children receiving subsidized funds through CCIS, CACFP, Head Start or Pre-K Counts.

**Note:** If you don't meet these criteria, please submit as much information as you can and we will try to help you in other ways. Get in touch early and often throughout the process. The more we know, the better we can assist!

### For assistance, please contact:

Victoria Thurmond  
Early Childhood Garden Educator  
6587 Hamilton Ave #2W  
Pittsburgh PA 15206  
[victoria@growpittsburgh.org](mailto:victoria@growpittsburgh.org)  
Cell: 678-977-9389

(Application begins on the following page)



## Part 1: CONTACT INFORMATION

The success of a garden relies on committed and engaged teachers, school staff, and parents. Please identify at least five individuals that would like to serve on the garden leadership team. The first name should be the primary contact person. We recommend one person in the garden team not be tied to classroom teaching. Responsibilities of the team include: organizing garden activities like weekly watering, maintenance and harvest; regularly connecting and engaging with other teachers and parents so that they can successfully use the space; and communicating and collaborating with Grow Pittsburgh staff through the process of building the garden, running programming and creating a sustainable garden plan for years to come.

### Primary Contact Person / Garden Team Member #1

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Role and relationship to school: \_\_\_\_\_

### Garden Team Member #2

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Role and relationship to school: \_\_\_\_\_

### Garden Team Member #3

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Role and relationship to school: \_\_\_\_\_

### Garden Team Member #4

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Role and relationship to school: \_\_\_\_\_



### Garden Team Member #5 (Optional)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Role and relationship to school: \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 2: Early Childhood Facility Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address with ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Director Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Director Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Director Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Neighborhood: \_\_\_\_\_

Diversity:

% Black:	% Hispanic/Latino:	% White:
% Asian:	% American Indian/Alaskan Native:	% Middle Eastern/North African:
% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander:	% multiracial:	% _____ :

Total Number of Students: \_\_\_\_\_

Ages Served: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of classrooms \_\_\_\_\_

What is the estimated percentage of children from low income families? \_\_\_\_\_%

Does your facility participate in the CACFP (Child and Adult Food Care Program)? Circle one: Yes No

**Survey Questions** (The questions below will not be used to determine the eligibility of your center for a garden program. They are for survey purposes only.)



Does your facility already have a garden?

Does your facility prepare lunch on site?

Does your facility have active parent volunteers?

What grants or initiatives has your center received in the past that are no longer being utilized? Why?

### Part 3: GARDEN SITE INFORMATION

Please identify a tentative garden site on facility property and complete this section to the best of your ability. Grow Pittsburgh will help to identify the best location for the garden if you are selected and this is meant to be a starting point. We have found that the best locations for a garden get at least 6 hours of direct sunlight, are in plain view and easily accessible by all. You are encouraged to reach out directly to Victoria ([victoria@growpittsburgh.org](mailto:victoria@growpittsburgh.org)) if you have specific questions around this section.

#### Photos:

The following photos and images are to be attached to the application:

- Four photos facing toward the proposed garden site from opposite directions (i.e. North, South, East, West). Include any obstructions in the photos and context of your proposed/preferred site
- One photo of the closest water source
- A Google Earth aerial photo showing where the garden site is in relation to the rest of the center

On what type of surface do you plan to build the garden?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Hard Surface (i.e. Asphalt, Concrete)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Soft Surface (i.e. Grass, Dirt)

Describe the conditions of the surfacing (i.e. is the asphalt or concrete failing/cracking, is the grass currently irrigated, does the area stay wet after rainfall, is it overgrown with weeds, is the soil very compacted?):

---

---

---

What is the exact dimension of the proposed site (i.e. 20' x 35')? A typical garden requires at least 700 sq ft of space.

---

---

What is your facility's plan for a water source for the garden? Are you connecting to an existing underground irrigation system? Are you planning to use the hose bib/spigot on the building? How far is the spigot from the proposed garden site? Please include a photo of your water source and confirm it is currently operable.



---

---

Identify the proposed area. Check those that apply.

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | On the playground or play space.        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | In a fenced or private space.           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Interior courtyard with limited access. |

Other: 

---

Describe the context of the proposed area (i.e. entrances, site access, circulation, most occupied spaces, and surrounding areas).

---

---

---

Which side of the building does your proposed space face? ☐ North ☐ East ☐ South ☐ West

Which best characterizes the slope of your garden space?

- |                          |                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mostly level    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Gently sloping  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Steeply sloping |

Have you seen any animals in or near the proposed garden site (deer, groundhogs, rabbits, others)? Please be specific.

---

---

---

## Part 4: GARDEN VISIONING AND PLAN



How would you define a successful garden program at your facility? Give examples of a few ideas you have to make your garden a success.

---

---

---

---

How would you plan to integrate the garden with your curriculum and current programming? Please share concrete examples of lesson plan or unit connections you may use in the garden.

---

---

---

Do you have after school programs? Please outline them. Do you plan to integrate the garden into these programs? Please provide as much detail as possible.

---

---

---

Do you have summer programs? Please outline them. Do you plan to integrate the garden into these programs? Please provide as much detail as possible.

---

---

---

How do you plan to use the produce grown in the garden?

---

---

How will you incorporate your community in the garden? How do you plan to get students, teachers, families and the larger educational community excited about the garden?



---

---

---

---

Tell us about your long-term maintenance strategy for the garden. What garden resources do you have available? (i.e. experienced staff, engaged parents, neighboring community garden, etc.) Please explain.

---

---

---

The Early Childhood Garden Program with Grow Pittsburgh is a one year support program, however it is our hope that the garden will last forever as a viable part of your school's culture. By accepting a garden program, it is understood your program is taking on a longer term commitment after the one year support from us. Fundraising for ongoing yearly supplies like seeds, seedlings, cooking materials may be necessary. What barriers do you see popping up after you complete from our one year supported programming? Please outline any strategies you might have for obtaining garden focused funding.

---

---

---

---

What is the biggest concern about installing and having a garden at your Early Childhood program? How will you overcome this concern?

---

---

## Part 5: EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT

Please provide the following signatures and contact information as evidence of support for this program. It is essential that all key personnel, including the Director and custodial staff are in support of the program and have a





say in the design and implementation of the garden.

HEAD CUSTODIAN:

---

Signature	Printed Name	Date	Phone
-----------	--------------	------	-------

Director:

---

Signature	Printed Name	Date	Phone
-----------	--------------	------	-------

## Part 6: AGREEMENTS & EXPECTATIONS

Garden team members 1-3 are asked to initial the following statements.

If selected to participate in the Grow Pittsburgh Early Childhood Program, I agree to:

\_\_\_\_\_ Coordinate and support Grow Pittsburgh teaching visits and teacher training opportunities over the year of the program.

\_\_\_\_\_ Work with Grow Pittsburgh and the school community to create a maintenance plan

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete two surveys per year to evaluate the impact of the program

\_\_\_\_\_ Comply with and help realize the values listed on Page 14

*This application is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge.*

Primary Contact's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please postmark or email completed application to:  
Victoria Thurmond, 6587 Hamilton Ave #2W Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
Email: [victoria@growpittsburgh.org](mailto:victoria@growpittsburgh.org)

## VALUES



In January of 2015, Grow Pittsburgh adopted eight values to guide the long-lasting positive impact we strive to realize through our work within local communities. We include our values here to ensure all applicants are familiar with them. Our participation in your garden will be in accordance and we ask all partners to comply with and help to realize these 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