



## Learning Garden Application



### Application Timeline:

Applications are accepted on rolling basis. Schools that apply before the end of the school year will be considered, but the sooner you apply the sooner we can start planning for your school's garden.

Please direct general application questions to Eva Barinas at:

- [eva@growpittsburgh.org](mailto:eva@growpittsburgh.org)
- 412-362-4769 ext.212

Grow Pittsburgh and Big Green (formally The Kitchen Community) have partnered to offer a school-based garden education program for schools across the Pittsburgh region. Learning Gardens are outdoor classrooms that are adaptable to most schoolyard and are designed to fit the space and needs of each school. The program will integrate garden and cooking activities into the regular 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 students and our city. The work of Grow Pittsburgh and Big Green in schools 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 has been enhanced through a partnership with Big Green through the Learning Garden model in 2016. In this program, we work with school staff and community for two years 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 school's mission and curriculum to create a dynamic, sustainable school-specific program.

Roughly five to seven new schools will be selected for garden builds in the spring and summer seasons. Programming will begin either in the fall or spring after the garden is built.



## Learning Garden Application Criteria:

The application that follows will enable our team to evaluate whether the Learning Garden Program would be a good fit for your school.

### School Criteria:

- Complete application (Parts 1-6, including photos) emailed or submitted by postal mail.
- Located in Allegheny County
- At least 4 organized and motivated people in your school garden leadership group. Groups can include any school staff and parents but must include at least two teachers interested in supporting this program. For example, your garden team could include a science teacher, gym teacher, librarian, and a social worker.
- Signatures of support from school principal and head custodian
- A suitable site for gardening on school property with supporting photos and the completion of Part 3. Grow Pittsburgh can help you with this part
- Schools serving student populations of at least 40% nationally recognised as low income families

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:

Eva Barinas  
School Garden Programs Manager  
6587 Hamilton Ave #2W  
Pittsburgh PA 15206  
eva@growpittsburgh.org  
412-362-4769 x212

(Application begins on the following page)



## Part 1: CONTACT INFORMATION

The success of a school garden relies on committed and engaged teachers, school staff, and parents. Please identify at least four individuals that would like to serve on the school 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: \_\_\_\_\_

**Garden Team Member #6 (Optional)**

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

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

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

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

**Part 2: School Information**

School Name:

Address with ZIP Code:

Phone:

Principal Name:

Principal Email:

Principal Phone:

School District:

School Neighborhood:



Student Diversity:

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

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

Grade Levels Served: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Is your school eligible for School Meals Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)? Circle one: Yes No

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

Does your school already have a garden?

Does your school prepare lunch on site?

Does your school have an active parent organization?

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

### Part 3: GARDEN SITE INFORMATION

Please identify a tentative garden site on school 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. You are encouraged to reach out directly to Eva (eva@growpittsburgh.org) if you have specific questions around this section. We have found that the best locations for a garden are in plain view and easily accessible by all.

#### 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 school
- If available, attach CAD drawings of the proposed site provided by the Facilities Manager or District



On what type of surface does your school plan to build the garden? Unlike more traditional gardens, the Learning Garden containers are best suited for asphalt and concrete surfaces. If accepted, we will work with you to discuss surfacing and resurfacing options. For now, please check all that apply:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Asphalt
<input type="checkbox"/>	Concrete
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grass
<input type="checkbox"/>	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?):

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What is the exact dimension of the proposed site (i.e. 20' x 35')? A typical garden requires at least 1000 sq ft of space.

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Are there any obstructions in the proposed area (i.e. light poles, irrigation heads, overhead or underground utilities, trees, etc.)? If yes, please explain and include the obstruction in your photos.

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What is your school'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.

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Identify the proposed area. Check those that apply.

- On the playground or play space.
- In a fenced or private space.
- 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).

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Does your site receive at least six hours of direct sunlight a day in the spring, summer and fall months?  yes  no

Which best characterizes the slope of your garden space?

- Mostly level
- Gently sloping
- Steeply sloping

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

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Does the school have an outdoor classroom/gathering space?

- Yes. Where is it in relation to the proposed garden space? \_\_\_\_\_
- No. Is there space available near the garden for this? \_\_\_\_\_



**Part 4: SCHOOL GARDEN VISIONING AND PLAN**

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

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How does your school plan to integrate the garden with your school's curriculum and current programming? Please share concrete examples of lesson plan or unit connects you may use in the garden.

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

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

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

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How will you incorporate your community in the garden? How will the school get students and the school community excited about the garden?

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

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The Learning Garden Program with Grow Pittsburgh & Big Green is a two 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 Learning Garden program it is understood your school is taking on a longer term commitment after the two 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 your school graduates from our two year supported programming? Please outline any strategies you might have for obtaining school garden focused funding.

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

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**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 principals and custodial staff are in support of the program and have a say in the design and implementation of the garden.

HEAD CUSTODIAN:

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Signature	Printed Name	Date	Phone
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PRINCIPAL:

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Signature	Printed Name	Date	Phone
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**Part 6: AGREEMENTS & EXPECTATIONS**

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

If selected to participate in the Grow Pittsburgh Learning Garden Program, I agree to:

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete two surveys per school 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:  
Eva Barinas, 6587 Hamilton Ave #2W Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
Email: [eva@growpittsburgh.org](mailto:eva@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