



# 2022-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Grow Pittsburgh's focus is to ensure that all people in our community have the resources, capacity, and knowledge to fully realize the benefits that food growing projects bring to our neighborhoods.

## OUR VISION

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

## OUR MISSION

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

## WHO WE ARE

Grow Pittsburgh was formed in 2005 as a nonprofit community outreach effort by the owner operators of two urban farms: Mildreds' Daughters Farm, a five-acre USDA certified organic farm in Stanton Heights, and Garden Dreams, a small-scale, intensive market garden in Wilkinsburg. What started as a small collaborative effort to promote urban gardening has developed steadily over the past 16 years to become the region's go-to resource for connecting people and communities to opportunities to grow food.

Grow Pittsburgh is staffed by energetic, knowledgeable and engaged educators and gardeners whose passion for their work is palpable. The organization's board cares deeply about food growing projects and plays a central role in guiding growth and strategy. The communities served by Grow Pittsburgh are vibrant, diverse, and share in the organization's vision.

Since the previous strategic plan was adopted in 2018, the organization has seen significant growth and interest in its programs and in urban agriculture in general. The School Garden program has grown from four to 44 gardens with an expanded focus towards ensuring that all students have access to edible education. The Community Projects team has worked to support over 100 community gardens and regularly receives dozens of applications for support from new and existing gardens. The Farm Education and Production team saw a particular rise in interest and engagement in programming during the pandemic as neighbors searched for safe and affordable ways to grow and access fresh produce in their neighborhoods. This department has doubled its food production for neighbors and has expanded to a new site in Wilkinsburg that will serve as an urban agriculture hub for growers across the region. As the organization shifts from its effort to expand and promote gardens as essential resources to supporting the strong network of growers towards a sustainable future, it is a perfect time to reflect and map out the next stage for the organization.



## THE NEXT CHAPTER OF GROW PITTSBURGH

During the summer and fall of 2021, Grow Pittsburgh convened a Strategic Planning Committee to work alongside board and staff to create its next five-year strategic plan. This plan came at a unique time in American history with the growing momentum for Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI), the increased evidence and impact of the climate crisis, and the continued effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. A leadership transition in 2021 additionally marked a new chapter of Grow Pittsburgh's work -- building on past successes and looking forward to its future. The work of this strategic planning process allowed for a dedicated period of reflection and deep dive into Grow Pittsburgh's future work, strategies, and vision for food growing projects both within and beyond its programs.







## BUILDING UPON PAST SUCCESS AND SUSTAINING CURRENT MOMENTUM TOWARDS LONG TERM IMPACT

The strategic planning process allowed Grow Pittsburgh's board and staff to voice their vision for the future of the organization. As the momentum and interest in gardening and urban farming continues to grow, it is Grow Pittsburgh's role to ensure that new and experienced growers, teachers, and community members have the resources, tools and knowledge to fully realize the many benefits that gardens bring to our neighborhoods. Having worked for over 15 years to promote and encourage backyard, school and community gardens and urban farms, this effort has become embedded into the fabric of the region and Grow Pittsburgh must now focus on ensuring that these existing and future food growing projects thrive as essential regional assets for generations to come.



### THE STRATEGIC PLAN NAMES THESE THREE ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS TO REACH THIS VISION:

**1. Prioritize internal efficiencies and capacity for organizational stability** By focusing on internal processes and communications, shared data and consistent evaluation, and cross-department staffing and collaboration, the organization can streamline efforts, reduce redundancies, and prepare for long term sustainability and impact.

**2. Cultivate the future of urban agriculture in the region by building sector-wide capacity**

By working to build sector-wide capacity through education and resource distribution, Grow Pittsburgh can increase financial sustainability, increase organizational efficiency, and build autonomy in communities that are served by existing programs, and elevate the quality and quantity of work in urban agriculture region-wide.

**3. Deepen and operationalize Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) efforts across the organization and the greater community**

Grounded in a history of racial and social justice work, Grow Pittsburgh will continue to learn, grow and lead with its effort to implement best practices in JEDI work across internal and external operations, program development and delivery.





## BASED ON GROW PITTSBURGH'S STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES, THERE ARE FIVE STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS:

- **Expand fundraising capacity and channels**

Grow Pittsburgh will improve its fundraising toolkit by expanding its major donor program, launching a planned giving campaign, increasing program specific consulting and earned revenue opportunities, and tapping into new mission-aligned funding prospects.

- **Define, implement, and communicate Grow Pittsburgh's role in advancing urban agriculture throughout the region**

As the interest and need for food growing projects continues to increase, it is essential that Grow Pittsburgh identify and communicate its role in supporting and advancing this movement. Each Grow Pittsburgh department will develop work plans to identify the highest impact initiatives and clearly communicate its role in the greater urban farming landscape.

- **Hone internal processes and collaboration**

Growth has allowed for a wide programmatic reach. Now Grow Pittsburgh intends to monitor staffing models, design and operationalize internal committee and communication strategies, increase access to professional development opportunities, strengthen board engagement, and invest in internal organizational capacity to break down internal silos and cultivate leadership and effective communication.

- **Focus on education and training**

Grow Pittsburgh will have the greatest impact if it prioritizes education and training as it works to reach its vision where everyone is able to grow and eat fresh, local, affordable and culturally relevant food.

- **Strengthen existing program models through community engagement, partnerships, and evaluation**

Grow Pittsburgh's programs are relevant, useful, and thoughtfully designed; they will continue their important work. Strengthening and refining these existing programs through intentional opportunities for community participation and consistent evaluation ensures a grassroots and data driven grounding of the organization's program development and implementation.



## OUR VALUES

A central focus of the strategic planning process was reviewing and evaluating the list of organizational values. Grow Pittsburgh reaffirmed its commitment to upholding these values, while designing processes to communicate and operationalize them into the daily work of the organization.

### Community Participation

Prioritizing neighborhood voices to guide programs

### Fiscal Integrity

Making responsible and effective use of available resources

### Social Justice

Understanding systems of privilege, oppression, and racism, and using this knowledge to drive our work

### Environmental Responsibility

Using, teaching, and advocating for restorative practices

### Food Sovereignty

Supporting everyone's right to access, produce, and distribute healthy and culturally appropriate food

### Transparency

Being accountable by using clear, direct, and inclusive communication

### Equity

Working alongside communities to build access and power for all

### Resourcefulness

Creating hands-on opportunities to build individual community self-sufficiency





# ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

Grow Pittsburgh has entered a new phase of organizational development as it moves from a rapid expansion phase to a more sustained growth model that will focus on ensuring that the momentum and enthusiasm for urban farming and gardening in the region will be supported and sustainable towards long-term, equitable impact and success in the community.

The organization-wide goals named below address the coming needs for clear and efficient operations, external clarity and prioritization in mission and services, and the continued commitment to ensuring that this work is centered around justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. The following section details five strategies that can address these goals.

These goals are in no particular order of importance. All of these goals serve the broad, overarching priority of the strategic plan: **ensuring that all people in our community have the resources, capacity, and knowledge to fully realize the benefits that food growing projects bring to our neighborhoods.**





- **Prioritize internal efficiencies and capacity for organizational stability**

A common theme identified by stakeholders throughout the strategic planning process was the growth in interest among residents in gardening and participating in Grow Pittsburgh's programming. In order for the organization to best meet this demand and prioritize the highest impact programs, it must focus on ensuring that it has internal systems and capacity to effectively grow and adapt to this community interest and need. In focusing on internal efficiencies and capacity, the organization will be able to:

- Identify and implement opportunities for cross-departmental staffing and collaboration to reduce redundancies and increase impact.
- Strengthen and prioritize consistent evaluation to shape program development and overall priorities.
- Develop and articulate clear program offerings and pathways for community participation and engagement.
- Strengthen an internal culture of participation, inclusion, collaboration, and leadership development.

- **Cultivate the future of urban agriculture in the region by building sector-wide capacity**

As the momentum for food growing projects continues to grow and expand, it is important for Grow Pittsburgh, as the region-wide leader in urban agriculture, to identify where to invest its resources to have the highest impact in supporting the success of this gardening ecosystem. In prioritizing education and resource distribution while connecting gardeners and enthusiasts across the region, Grow Pittsburgh will provide the necessary support to increase the autonomy, community ownership, and success of existing and future garden projects. Focusing on this goal enables the organization to:

- Prepare itself for financial stability in focusing on program delivery models that increase community member capacity while not overextending Grow Pittsburgh staff.
- Connect and facilitate networks of partners and communities to resources they need to build internal leaders and grow capacity to sustain their work.
- Be resilient and adaptable to effectively reach and support the growing number of gardeners and farmers across the region.

- **Deepen and operationalize Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) efforts across the organization and the greater community**

Grow Pittsburgh is a values-driven organization with a strong commitment to social justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI). By continuing to learn, grow and lead by operationalizing best practices in JEDI work across internal and external operations, communications and programming, the organization will be able to:

- Create a positive, reflective, and inclusive work culture where all staff members are supported and can thrive.
- Maintain and strengthen diverse and inclusive hiring and onboarding strategies to ensure that the board and staff reflects the great diversity of the region and the communities that Grow Pittsburgh serves.
- Deliver culturally responsive and accessible programming to ensure that all community members have access to meaningful garden based programming.
- Conduct impactful communications strategies in order to utilize Grow Pittsburgh's platform and voice to educate and advance relevant and intersecting JEDI initiatives.
- Strengthen and support BIPOC-led farms and businesses.

# FIVE STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

## 1. EXPAND FUNDRAISING CAPACITY AND CHANNELS

The past four years, marked by the hiring of the organization's first Director of Development, has seen Grow Pittsburgh expand upon its heavy reliance on foundation giving to include a focus on state and federal funding, as well as individual and corporate giving. As the need for Grow Pittsburgh's services continues to grow, it is essential that the organization builds upon this fundraising success to ensure that it can sustain for years to come.

In order to achieve this, the Communications/Operations team requires greater capacity in the form of additional staff resources and strategies to diversify and grow funding.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### EXPANDING CAPACITY

- Creating an additional development position will bring the staff capacity closer to the industry standard for nonprofits of similar size and allow for the Development Director and the Executive Director to focus on new strategies and external facing initiatives as opposed to clerical and grant writing tasks.
- Transitioning the communications position from part-time to full-time will allow this individual to focus on storytelling and more regular donor communications that will support fundraising goals.

#### EXPANDING AND PRIORITIZING FUNDRAISING CHANNELS:

- Continue to grow individual giving via direct donor mailings, list segmentation, individualized communications, and events.
- Expand major donor program by implementing a Moves Management Strategy which focuses time on donor cultivation, solicitation, stewardship, and relationship-building.
- Establish a Planned Giving Campaign through consistent solicitation, expansion of donor base and ongoing donor-focused communications.
- Build greater opportunities for earned revenue by implementing program specific initiatives
- Maintain strong relations with local foundations while exploring new local, national and federal grant opportunities.
- Analyze current corporate giving program to identify which models (grant, event sponsorship, EITC, etc) are most effective and focus strategy on expanding these efforts.





## 2. DEFINE, IMPLEMENT AND COMMUNICATE GROW PITTSBURGH'S ROLE IN ADVANCING URBAN AGRICULTURE THROUGHOUT THE REGION

As the interest in and need for food growing projects continues to grow, it is essential that Grow Pittsburgh identify and communicate its role in supporting and advancing this movement. This strategy will help to ensure that Grow Pittsburgh's programs and decisions are based on the greatest need and highest impact opportunities.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Identify the highest impact initiatives and priorities for each department.
- Prioritize education, garden sustainability, network development, and capacity building when developing new program priorities.
- Utilize yearly evaluation data to adapt and shift programming based on results and feedback.
- Identify areas that are not currently addressed by Grow Pittsburgh-led programming and highlight partner organizations and community leaders who specialize in these supporting realms.
- Emphasize community input and need when adapting and advancing Grow Pittsburgh's commitment to and engagement in urban agriculture.
- Align communication plans to these priorities so that potential program participants and stakeholders will understand the specific opportunities to engage in programming and the larger role Grow Pittsburgh plays in the greater urban agriculture landscape.

### 3. HONE INTERNAL PROCESSES AND COLLABORATION

Constant improvement of internal processes that promote collaboration and leadership development, develop staff expertise, align staffing models to be most effective, and increase staff and board engagement and commitment to the mission will benefit the organization as it expands its footprint and operations.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Nurture a positive culture of feedback and staff development through regular check-ins, goal setting, staff evaluation and accountability of all staff members to program delivery models and each other.
- Review job descriptions yearly to ensure alignment with shared priorities and organizational needs.
- Evaluate staffing structure annually and consider changes based on data, community input, and organizational strategic priorities.
- Build rapport between the Grow Pittsburgh staff and board through specific opportunities for collaboration and engagement in programming and events.
- Organize planning meetings between each program and the communications team to ensure that program specific communications and outreach priorities are understood and integrated into the greater Grow Pittsburgh communications strategy.
- Work to streamline shared calendars and collaborate on workshops and events to reduce redundancies and ensure that a unified message is delivered to stakeholders and program participants.
- Prioritize professional development and normalize career goal setting and mentorship to ensure that all staff members grow within the organization or are supported in transitioning to their next professional opportunity.
- Continue to build upon strong organizational culture through celebration, team building, and regular opportunities to share food.

### 4. FOCUS ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

As Grow Pittsburgh explores how to best serve the existing and future urban agriculture community, it will have the greatest impact if it prioritizes education and training as it works to reach its vision where everyone is able to grow and eat fresh, local, affordable, and culturally relevant food.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop and enhance robust workshops and educational trainings that are inclusive and expansive to ensure easy entry and meaningful participation across varying backgrounds.
- Highlight and emphasize the educational benefits to all aspects of programming across departments.
- Align communications and fundraising strategies to share this commitment to education.



## 5. STRENGTHEN EXISTING PROGRAM MODELS THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, PARTNERSHIPS, AND EVALUATION

The programs of Grow Pittsburgh are relevant, useful, and thoughtfully designed; they will continue their important work. Strengthening and refining these existing programs through intentional opportunities for community participation and consistent evaluation ensures a grassroots and data driven grounding of the organization's program development and implementation.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Edit program-specific evaluation plans to ensure that they are effectively measuring the new strategic goals of each department.
- Identify organization-wide evaluation goals and metrics that can be implemented, tracked and evaluated across programs.
- Highlight quantitative and qualitative data as equally important components to a successful evaluation plan.
- Provide diverse and meaningful opportunities for program participants to provide feedback and shape the future of Grow Pittsburgh programming through surveys, informal and formal interviews, focus groups and observation.
- Expand opportunities to bring partners and growers together towards building strong and interconnected networks.



# SCHOOL GARDEN PROGRAM PRIORITIES

## PROCESS

The School Garden (SG) team convened three times during the strategic planning process. Individual interviews were conducted with four SG staff members and all members completed a survey.

## RESULTS

### GENERAL

- The School Garden team recently completed the initial Learning Garden expansion (to 40 gardens) in partnership with Big Green and is transitioning to a smaller staff more consistent with other departments.
- SG staff are adjusting to the change in capacity and feeling the need for at least one more staff member to support the existing gardens and ongoing requests for new school gardens.
- There appears to be significant opportunity for expansion to support Early Childhood Centers. Initial data from these efforts show positive results and there is general consensus from staff that this is a good area of focus moving forward.
- While during the School Garden expansion, the department was split between Flagship and Learning Garden programs, this distinction is no longer necessary in the organizational structure and efforts to combine these teams are ongoing.
- Staff agree that a desirable sustainability strategy would be to better engage Pittsburgh Public School District in adopting facets of the School Garden program, such as adopting curriculum as an embedded feature of primary education, as well as providing funding for seedlings, soil and other garden necessities. The ultimate goal would be to have PPS funded garden coordinator positions in a similar model to coaches.
- The pandemic has proven to be very challenging for the SG team with school building closures, changing regulations and overall pressure on the school staff, families and community. There is a need for an immediate plan for managing this school year, as well as a longer term plan for post-pandemic support.
- While school gardens could be a key solution in supporting safe, outdoor learning, many staff are finding that the teachers are overwhelmed with being in the classroom and the added effort to manage students outdoors can be a major barrier.
- There is an interest in fee for service efforts if there were more staff capacity.
- Teacher trainings have been quite successful and there is an opportunity to expand and grow this offering.
- Expanding to offer summer camp programming is an area of interest to some staff members.
- In addition to supporting the educational curriculum, there is a strong recognition that gardens contribute to the social and emotional health of students and that they should be celebrated for their therapeutic as well as academic benefits.



## FLAGSHIP

- The Flagship School Garden Program appears to be thriving at Dilworth and Colfax with significant stakeholder and GP staff support.
- Pittsburgh Montessori has struggled during the pandemic with communications and is not currently engaged in the traditional flagship level. However, during the current school year (2021/2022), teachers of all grade levels have opted in to participation and the gardens are being used much more regularly than the prior year.
- Pittsburgh Montessori is slated to move buildings in the coming years. Other Pittsburgh Public Schools with school gardens will undoubtedly be affected by restructuring and building closures and a plan for each garden will need to be established.
- Expanding Flagship School Garden Programming to include 3rd to 5th graders towards school-wide access and equity is a priority.

## LEARNING GARDEN AND SUSTAINABILITY

- There is a specific strain on one Learning Garden Educator who is charged with supporting 40+ existing gardens.
- There is a great disparity in graduated gardens between those that are self sufficient and high functioning and those that need more support. GP involvement and program priorities should directly address this disparity.
- There is a clear interest from teachers in receiving more lesson plans and teaching support specifically for high school students.
- Big Green, the national Learning Garden partner, has gone through a significant transition in 2021. A plan for how and if to continue to work with this group is a priority.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### GENERAL

- Emphasizing the social, emotional, and health benefits of school gardening during a pandemic, in fundraising and general teacher and school outreach, should be a priority in the first year of this plan.
- Early childhood education should continue to be a priority as capacity allows.
- The creation of high school lesson plans and overall curriculum development should be a priority for program staffs' winter work when indoor cooking lessons may not be possible in the early stages of this plan.
- Review and update existing lesson plans to ensure that they are still relevant and accessible to teachers across the region.
- Work to edit the website, as this can be a major asset in school garden support. Make sure that it's easy for teachers to locate lesson plans and resources on the website.
- Review other national school garden resources and lesson plans and consider embedding links to existing resources to avoid duplication of efforts.

- High school program development could be a collaborative process with the farm education team to ensure that the summer Urban Farmers in Training and the high school garden program are aligned and follow similar best practices. Some topics of exploration could include curriculum integration, entrepreneurship, social justice and other interdisciplinary ways to utilize a farm or garden space.
- In later years of this plan, explore expansion to other sites that would benefit from the school model which could include more affluent schools, shelters, and community centers.
- Given Grow Pittsburgh's current reputation and existing relationships at the Pittsburgh Public Schools, there is an opportunity to advance the effort to embed this work within the district and this work could be led by the Director of School Garden Programs. It would also be advised to work with the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council to identify key opportunities to advocate and leverage policy to support school garden education. One immediate example is to advocate for school garden funding as part of the federal food and nutrition program expansion.

## FLAGSHIP

- The immediate priority for Pittsburgh Colfax and Pittsburgh Dilworth should be to go deeper and work to support more students in the program rather than looking to expand to new schools.
- Physical infrastructure improvements and expansion could be considered at Flagship schools to continue to ensure that these spaces are models of what is possible in school gardening. Outdoor classrooms, fruit trees, arbors, and labyrinths are a few examples of physical expansion.
- Pilot programs to work with older grades at existing flagship schools could include an open lunch-time garden program, open time-slots for upper grade teachers and teacher trainings and passive lessons available to empower teachers to utilize the space without a Grow Pittsburgh Garden Educator.
- Classes can continue to be offered to teachers at Pittsburgh Montessori who are interested since this seems to be a viable model for their current state.
- Work with Pittsburgh Montessori leadership and key stakeholders to envision and implement a garden program that best meets their needs and Grow Pittsburgh's capacity regardless of whether the school moves locations. This could be a continuation of the flagship model if there is long-term commitment or it could be a transition to more of a learning garden support model.
- Work with flagship garden educators to help develop and teach regional teacher trainings so that their experience and knowledge base can support and inspire new and emerging school garden leaders.
- Ensure that these workshops continue to share the social and emotional benefits of gardening as well as the academic benefits.
- Work on a plan to make flagship school gardens ADA accessible as we complete necessary improvements and maintenance.
- Another opportunity to utilize flagship school gardens as summer camp spaces could be pursued pending a detailed development and implementation plan.



## LEARNING GARDEN

- In recognition of the pandemic challenges and the strain on schools, the priority in the first year of this plan should be focused on supporting the 40+ existing school gardens.
- This existing school garden support should include a continued commitment to offering teacher training, site visits and supplying necessary resources.
- Supplying seeds, seedlings and soil to all school gardens is an effort that should be prioritized for all school gardens as it removes barriers for teachers and increases the viability and success of all school gardens. The coordination of this effort could be adapted to include mailing seeds and engaging regular volunteers for seedling and soil distribution.
- The amount of time allocated for each school should be based on data and not necessarily their prescribed year of programming. Regular teacher surveys, site visits and the use of the school garden progress report should be used to identify and allocate staff time and resources for each school. Continue to follow the “no garden left behind” mantra.
- Consider hiring an additional Learning Garden Educator so that one staff member is working with current and high-needs schools while the other is managing ongoing school garden network and graduated garden support.
- Encourage interested new schools, in year one, to participate in school garden teacher trainings. Consider offering a beginner “how to start a school garden” training for all interested new schools.
- In year two of this plan, begin accepting new school garden applications. School gardens can be designed to meet the needs of each school programmatic and physical space with best practices applied in all cases.
- Establish protocol for working with new school gardens outside of Allegheny County in a more limited way.
- Work with Big Green to establish a contract where Grow Pittsburgh can purchase Learning Garden beds to install in schools where appropriate, but is not restricted to Big Green design restrictions. Acknowledge that given supply chain issues and the instability of Big Green’s organizational leadership, it may not be possible to attain new learning garden beds and an alternative plan should be established.

## PROGRAM EARNED REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES

- Consult with more affluent school districts for a fee. This consultation could include garden design and build services, curriculum integration, best practices in outdoor classroom management and more.
- Lead a comprehensive school garden training that would have a higher fee and bring people from surrounding states and ultimately across the country.

# COMMUNITY PROJECTS PRIORITIES

## PROCESS

The Community Projects (CP) team convened three times as an entire team and two additional times in smaller focus groups, during the strategic planning process. Individual interviews were conducted with 2 CP staff members and all members completed a survey.

## RESULTS

### COMMUNITY GARDENING

- The Community Projects team is conscious of being deliberate about meeting community needs through their gardening programs.
- There is a clear interest in identifying how to balance the need for new garden support versus support for existing community gardens.
- The team has created a methodical and systematic way for new and existing garden groups to engage in programming, but there is a concern for how to support gardens that don't neatly fit within these categories or gardens for whom applying proves to be a barrier to access.
- There is a will to reduce unnecessary gatekeeping so that all groups can easily access resources and support.
- There is a commitment to explicitly prioritize BIPOC-led gardens and institutionalize practices that do so.
- Offering community garden coordinator stipends has at times been quite successful and is an area for further exploration.
- Working with more affluent communities who pay for services to offset costs for those that can't afford it is a strategy of interest if the financial benefits and time commitment are manageable.

### COMMUNITY GARDEN NETWORK

- The main initiatives that fall under the network include: the Community Garden Sustainability Fund, Workshops and Adult Education Series, Master Composter Program, Newsletter, Grower's Map, Regional Network Clusters, and Events (Seed Swap, Urban Ag Week, Three Rivers Urban Soil Symposium).
- The work of the community garden network has expanded significantly over the past three years and generally encompasses all of the ways in which the community projects team supports existing gardens and gardeners.
- The Community Garden Sustainability Fund (CGSF), a mini-grant program providing garden resources and education to existing gardens in need, is largely run by Grow Pittsburgh with less staff time and funding from partners Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.
- The staff would like for community gardens to actively join the network and gain access to specific programming and opportunities and also agree to participating in yearly evaluation.



- Gardens who don't specifically opt-in to the official network will still have access to workshops and education.
- There is some uncertainty as to whether the workshops and events that include the seed swap and the Three Rivers Urban Soil Symposium should fall under the community garden network effort.
- There is a recognition that a great benefit of the network would be to identify "garden sages" and experts in different regions who could help neighboring gardens and gardeners.

## **GARDEN RESOURCE CENTER**

- It is clear that the Garden Resource Center (GRC) provides much more than just tools and bulk resources and that one of the great strengths of the GRC is the community that it has created.
- The GRC is a gathering space where many folks come to talk about their gardens, to have questions answered and to build community.
- An additional strength of the GRC is its volunteers who deeply enjoy being a part of the space.
- A major challenge is ensuring that all of the tools are kept in good shape and repaired in a timely manner.
- An additional challenge is ensuring that the GRC has the correct number of tools and that the balance of hand tools and power tools reflects the usage of GRC users.
- The Garden Resource Center's (GRC) user program seemed to overlap with membership, causing some confusion for both Grow Pittsburgh members and GRC users.
- Satellite GRC locations in the West End, Northside and other neighborhoods is an opportunity that has significant interest.
- Relocation of the Garden Resource Center to Garden Dreams is a potential consideration. The GP team is leaning towards utilizing Garden Dreams as a satellite GRC site to distribute bulk materials.
- The GRC is underutilized by some departments. If all departments were more actively promoting the opportunity to their constituents then it could be a stronger resource for all programs.
- Recent developments have highlighted the relative insecurity of the land currently used for the GRC and an alternative location may need to be identified within the next two years. Regardless, long-term land security is a concern for the current GRC location.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

- The Community Projects team has struggled to fully communicate the scope of services that it provides and some of the internal program jargon (ex. City Growers vs. Allegheny Grows) has further complicated external communications.
- The community garden team often receives inquiries throughout the year and it is difficult to explain or even identify how the department can best meet each gardener group's needs with limited staff capacity and resources.
- Outlining specific communications that would help new and existing community gardeners navigate and identify ways to directly plug into GP offerings is important.

## POLICY WORK

- Land access and security continue to be a major challenge for community gardeners and a priority for the CP team to address through the Three Rivers Agricultural Land Initiative (TRALI) and other means. TRALI is a partnership with the Allegheny Land Trust dedicated to preserving thriving community gardens and farms in perpetuity.
- In advance of the joint venture agreement with Allegheny Land Trust coming to an end in 2023, identify the most impactful future for the TRALI program. Identifying how best to support the continuation and growth of TRALI will be essential. Potential options could include the continuation of the joint venture agreement or the creation of an independent non-profit dedicated to land preservation.
- Working with municipal governing groups to embed community gardens and greenspace with neighborhood and community master plans is a priority.
- Soil contamination is another critical issue in community gardening and education
- There is an interest in emphasizing climate resilience and stormwater mitigation as an additional benefit of community gardening, school gardening and urban farming.
- With the existing Food Action Plan and the established Food Policy Council, many staff believe that it is Grow Pittsburgh's role to represent the needs and perspectives of farmers and gardeners and continue to advocate and highlight the most pressing issues facing growers in the region.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### COMMUNITY GARDEN PRIORITIES

- Develop a more nuanced menu of services for new gardens that allows for the community projects team to still work with new gardens but to not always engage for two years with the historically high levels of staff involvement and financial commitment. Solicit existing community partners and participants to help in editing and providing feedback on new communications and program offerings.
- Utilize the community garden "phases" framework to inform the level of engagement with new gardens. Recognize that Grow Pittsburgh does not have to lead each phase.
- Balance work loads to explicitly provide time for one-off consultation with high priority gardens that engage outside of the traditional application process. Include discretionary funds to support these initiatives that don't easily fit into existing programming.
- Consider developing a toolkit for paid community garden coordinators that can be adopted by partner gardens and organizations. Include a job description, recommended pay rate and policies.
- Develop a winter community garden coordinator training program that could include stipends.
- Conduct a cost/benefit analysis to identify the optimal price point and scope of work for fee for service opportunities.



## COMMUNITY GARDEN NETWORK

- Add BIPOC-led projects as a metric in deciding which projects to select for the sustainability fund.
- Increase sustainability fund budget towards ultimately accepting all eligible and qualified garden applications.
- Consider spending Community Garden Sustainability Fund dollars on insurance and utilities costs
- Consider maintaining the strong structure and WPC partnership for the sustainability fund but focusing this effort on larger projects that require more money and staff time.
- Establish a separate budget line and less burdensome process that would allow for GP staff to more immediately provide support to gardens throughout the season.
- As a third tier of resource distribution, create regional supply distribution events where all garden network participants can receive garlic, compost, seeds and seedlings.
- Work on communications to clearly outline what participation in the community garden network entails (regular communications, access to resources, reporting, etc..)
- Develop a “garden sage” program that would identify expert community gardeners in different regions who have an interest in supporting neighborhood initiatives. Some areas to consider in developing this program include:
  - Develop the job description for this role that focuses on volunteer leadership and site management, strong organization and delegation skills
  - Develop an equitable process for determining who would be eligible for stipends.
  - Engage Garden Sages and community leaders in the development of the garden leader curriculum.
  - Identify whether new community development oriented funding can be leveraged to support this initiative.
  - Identify key outcomes and methods of evaluation.
- Work with GP communications and all departments to create an adult education series that meets the needs of community gardeners, home gardeners, and emerging urban farmers and centralizes coordination and communications.
- Evaluate each CGN event and decide whether it should be held within the network or a different initiative of the Community Garden team or the organization as a whole.
- Consider changing the Community Garden Sustainability Coordinator title, to be more expansive and include the significant program management aspect of the role.
- Establish an advisory committee, comprised of key partners and Garden Sages to inform programming. Identify a list of people who we can count on to lead one-off workshops and consultations to spread the wealth and leadership.

## GARDEN RESOURCE CENTER

- Have all GRC users automatically become Grow Pittsburgh members. Ensure that upon signing up for a GRC usership, a part of orientation includes a basic overview of Grow Pittsburgh and the benefits of their membership to Grow Pittsburgh. Share GRC user data with the communications team each month. Users can then choose which emails they wish to receive from GP.
- Ensure that communication for new Grow Pittsburgh members explains that the GRC is a resource, but that there is a separate fee for joining the GRC.
- Work to create satellite GRC locations in other neighborhoods including the Northside and the West End/ South Side by partnering with neighborhood partners and organizations that have land and could staff the distribution of bulk materials, hand tools and books. GRC users could go to satellite locations to sign-up, access bulk materials and build connections and relationships with neighbors. The main GRC would be open to all and be the location where power tools would be distributed. Grow Pittsburgh would raise funds for the materials and provide infrastructure support for satellite locations.
  - Figure out what would be needed in terms of staffing.
  - Could we support local organizations in creating startup tool lending libraries and bulk materials depots?
- Pilot the satellite location idea at Garden Dreams to test the logistics, financial and IT needs.
- Consider Garden Dreams as a future location for the GRC if it would allow for the GRC to be open for more hours, allow for more space for workshops and overlap with existing programs in a cohesive way.
- Ensure that parking at Garden Dreams is addressed in anticipation of an increased number of visitors to Garden Dreams if the GRC is to be relocated to the site.
- Work with each GP department to explore direct ways to connect with the GRC and best utilize the space for both internal operations (i.e. accessing bulk materials and tools for programs) and program participants (i.e. encouraging farm stand customers and school garden teachers to visit and become part of the GRC community).
- Develop a transition plan from the Larimer location that would not only prepare the organization if they were forced to move, but allow for a new space to provide new opportunities to meet GRC and community goals.
- Consider partnering with other organizations and initiatives in identifying a new space. AgRecycle is one potential partner to reach out to in the early stages of this plan.
- Bring back the advisory committee to aid in new developments with the site(s).

## COMMUNICATIONS

- Find meaningful ways to explicitly prioritize BIPOC-led projects and make that priority clear in communications and actions.
- Utilize the website, social media and physical brochures and signs to articulate the different ways in which gardeners can access programming from new garden support to network engagement.
- Try and limit the use of specific program jargon and rather identify ways in which Grow Pittsburgh can help make it easier for community gardeners to realize the many benefits that gardens bring to our neighborhoods.



## POLICY WORK

- Through direct work in urban farming, community and school gardening, continue to ask and identify what key policy issues are most affecting gardeners and farmers in Pittsburgh. Use this information to prioritize advocacy.
- Work within the existing Food Action Plan framework to highlight key areas of importance to the organization and the communities and individuals that it serves. Increase communication and collaboration with the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council leadership and network.
- Identify new and innovative ways to connect interested farmers and gardeners with available land by exploring national models for “land linking” in addition to existing land preservation efforts happening with TRALI.
- Build relationships and connections between local government leadership and the gardens in their districts to build awareness and funnel direct support for these assets in the community.
- Identify key strategies in utilizing gardens for stormwater mitigation and climate resilience. Emphasize this work through signage and educational workshops.
- Monitor the progress and overall policy landscape throughout the next five years to identify whether establishing a Grow Pittsburgh led policy position would be beneficial for the community.

## PROGRAM EARNED REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop and update the Garden Primer and How to Start a Garden as booklets that can be purchased like merch.
- Develop merchandise strategy to have more opportunities to buy merch at GP sites, releases of new material, working with artists.
- Develop the GRC to provide more products, bulk buying club for local urban growers.
- Get coaching on how to ask participants in workshops etc. for donations.
- Rely on list of local professionals to forward fee-for-service requests.
- Be proactive with partnerships and bigger projects we could consult on, fundraise together with partner organizations, be mindful of staff time and focus on projects with fewer resources.

# FARM EDUCATION AND PRODUCTION PROGRAM PRIORITIES

## PROCESS

The Farm Education and Production (FEP) team convened four times during the strategic planning process. Individual interviews were conducted with 3 FEP staff members and all members completed a survey.

## RESULTS

### GENERAL

- The balance between “education” and “production” has been an area of focus for at least a decade and remains to be, at times, a source of tension.
- All FEP staff are committed and passionate about ensuring that the farm sites are educational centers that inspire and teach others how to grow their own food.
- There is a recognition that even the more production oriented activities like farm stand and seedling sale have meaningful educational benefits embedded into the process.
- Farm staff want for the sites to be available and utilized by all departments as educational centers that they can utilize for their own program and participant goals.
- Many staff feel the tension between financial goals of production activities (seedling sale and farm stand) and the emphasis on education. At times it feels impossible to both prioritize things like hiring less qualified seasonal staff in order to provide an educational opportunity, while also needing to meet specific production goals.
- There is a concern around projected seedling sale numbers in the new greenhouse that were created before the pandemic and challenges with site construction.
- There is an interest in understanding the finances further to help inform the goals and balance between production and earned revenue activities versus education-specific activities.
- Seasonal community events on the farm sites have been very successful and should continue, though expansion is not a current priority.
- Braddock Farms is currently growing at its max capacity and doesn’t have the ability to expand further.
- Long-term land security is a concern for Braddock Farms
- The workshare program has been successful and offered meaningful learning opportunities and essential labor for the farm sites. There is a recognition that this model prohibits many people from participating and finding ways to pay new and aspiring farmers in a PASA pre-apprenticeship model would be ideal.
- Farm education staff would like a direct social media outlet for them to regularly share happenings and educational information from the farm.

- There is a feeling from some staff that the current department name does not appropriately or effectively reflect the work of the department.
- This department and the organization as a whole is committed to land-based farming as their focus area given its community and environmental benefits.

## **FARM STANDS AND FOOD ACCESS**

- Onsite farm stands at Shiloh and Braddock Farms have been very successful in building community, connecting neighbors to the farms, and providing fresh affordable produce to community members.
- Participation in the Wilkinsburg farmer's market has been a meaningful way to connect with neighbors, support the community and build awareness and connections to Garden Dreams.
- Grow Pittsburgh has been the anchor organization supporting the Homewood Market and the increased interest and participation from other Homewood farms and customers has been positive.
- Distributing food to off-site farm stands and generally staffing farm stands takes a lot of staff capacity and resources. There is a concern around expanding to support more farm stands based on this capacity as well as the limited amount of produce that can be grown.
- There is a recognition that GP farm stands do help feed our neighbors but that teaching others to grow their own food is where Grow Pittsburgh can make the most profound community impact. Strategies to utilize the farm stands to emphasize education and community building, encourage connections to the farm sites, support of other farms and general GP and community programs are examples of how GP farm sites add additional value as compared to other regional food distribution efforts.

## **YOUTH PROGRAMMING**

- All staff agree that finding ways to meaningfully engage high school students in the farm sites should be a priority.
- There is a recognition that the Urban Farmers in Training summer program has not been a major focus over the past few years and that there needs to be some changes made or the adoption of a new model to best integrate with the farm sites.
- There has been some collaboration with the Braddock Youth Project to support year-round garden programming at Braddock Farms which could be a model for deepening youth engagement on the farm sites.
- In the past, the expectation of farm managers' involvement in youth programming was limited but in practice it has been more appropriate for the farm managers to be actively involved in the programming and education.
- The Youth Market pilot program in 2019 was quite successful and could be a model to expand upon in years to come.



## ADULT PROGRAMMING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- The FEP team has seen significant changes that seem to follow funding availability. Most notably, the shift from the urban farm apprenticeship program to the workshare program.
- The FEP staff have noted a need from the community to provide educational opportunities for backyard, community and urban farmers who want to grow a significant amount of food. Differentiating between these groups and solely focusing on urban farmers may not be necessary.
- There is an interest in offering shorter term paid opportunities for less qualified community members to engage in farm work alongside other staff with more experience so that they can learn and grow into more permanent positions.
- FEP staff would like the organization to prioritize a more advanced farmer/gardener workshop series or program. FEP staff could help teach and the farm sites could be the location for workshops, but the FEP staff does not have the current capacity to organize this effort.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### GENERAL

- Conduct a cost/benefit analysis of seedling sales and farm stands to identify both the financial costs and benefits as well as the educational and community building benefits. Staff time, capacity and morale should also be considered in the overall equation.
- Spend the first two years of this plan establishing routines and understanding the costs and workflow in the greenhouses at Garden Dreams, while keeping budget numbers consistent with past years. After year two, consider what the target income should be and make staffing and budget adjustments accordingly.
- Prioritize on-farm signage as a way for visitors to navigate the farm on their own and for staff to utilize during farm tours
- Consider allocating one to two seasonal farm site jobs for less qualified individuals to work 4-6 hours per week as an educational introduction to the farm sites. Reserve other seasonal positions for those that have experience with priority given to those individuals who have gone through GP programming. This “pre-apprenticeship” model could be a logical stepping stone from the workshare program.
- Continue to prioritize meaningful community engagement as outlined in the community engagement section of this document.
- Consider reducing the number of varieties and crops grown at Braddock Farms to decrease labor needs on the farm. Supplement farm stands with other urban and rural farm produce if necessary.
- Ensure that new programming models are discussed and priorities shared among FEP staff and operations staff.

- Work with other GP departments to brainstorm and identify ways in which they can utilize the farm sites as educational resources for their department goals.
- Work with communications team to identify regular opportunities to share through GP social platforms or consider a separate channel specifically for news and education from the production sites.
- Create yearly surveys, focus groups and interviews to gain feedback from community members, workshop participants and stakeholders in order to help shape and adapt priorities.
- Review strategic plan priorities at each established review period and adapt based on current community needs and overarching strategic goals.
- As the priorities and plan of the department are created through this plan, consider renaming the department within the first two years to more effectively reflect the work.
- In pursuing the new initiatives outlined in this section, reference the list of program examples in appendix and consider visiting and/or establishing remote relationships to learn from national success stories and best practices.
- Consider establishing clear communications around why Grow Pittsburgh prioritizes land-based farming over hydroponic/aquaponic indoor growing. Identify partners who can field inquiries around establishing these indoor systems.

## **FARM STANDS AND FOOD ACCESS**

- Continue to utilize the farm stands and seedling sales as educational opportunities for engagement with neighbors and the general public. Work to expand the educational and community building benefits of these regular events by emphasizing customer engagement with passive recipes, growing guides, tours, tastings, etc.
- Continue to have a presence at the Wilksburg farm stand as part of a concerted effort to support the Wilksburg community and connect to Garden Dreams.
- Hold seedling sales at Garden Dreams but focus on produce sales at the Wilksburg market.
- Continue to support the Homewood market but over the period of this plan, transition leadership to other Homewood Farms and reduce the amount of GP produce being sold as capacity increases from other farms.
- Highlight the Homewood Market as a replicable model for other community based markets.
- Share best practices and farm stand model for other neighborhoods and regions but focus GP staff time and produce on existing farm stands rather than new farm stands in other neighborhoods.
- Consider hiring a part-time, seasonal staff member or intern to focus on sales and marketing for farm stands and seedling sales



## YOUTH PROGRAMMING

- In strengthening and further investing in youth programming on production sites, consider the following questions:
  - What aspects of youth programming have been most successful? What elements do students get most excited about? Should programming focus on these areas?
  - How do the current program partners (BYP, WYP, HCV) benefit the program and how might the relationships evolve to better serve the students?
  - What are other partner organizations that could collaborate on program delivery and expansion?
  - What staffing structure is necessary to adequately run youth programming? What are the specific roles needed to expand/develop curriculum, deliver and oversee programming?
  - Are there opportunities for collaboration with the school garden team's effort to support high school garden education?
  - Do the currently stated goals for the high school program still reflect the needs and goals of the organization or should the goals be changed?
  - What would further year-round youth engagement look like at Braddock Farms (fall) or Garden Dreams (spring)?
  - What is the ideal number of hours per day/week of onsite farm work versus other youth programming that could include cooking, food justice education, farm stands, etc...
- Consider expanding the youth market program to both meet the staffing needs at farm stands and seedling sales, while offering meaningful opportunities for youth engagement on farm sites. An expanded and intentional curriculum could include entrepreneurship, business planning, public speaking, cooking, food justice, and community and personal health and well being.
- Clarify the farm manager role in supporting youth education and consider deeper involvement which would reflect the current reality that sees farm managers directly guiding and teaching youth about the happenings on the farm.



## ADULT PROGRAMMING

- Organize adult educational workshops in collaboration with other departments that could be promoted across the organization and attended by community gardeners, backyard gardeners, school gardeners and aspiring urban farmers.
- Create two adult educational workshop tracks.
  - One track would be a series of workshops that anyone could attend at any point in the series. This would most closely mimic the GP effort in recent years but include workshops relevant to all program participants and be promoted across departments and to the general public.
  - The second track would be billed as an educational program with participants committing to attend all sessions that follow an articulated curriculum that includes farm and garden visits.
  - With adequate resources and demand there could be a third track, which would be specific to urban farmers who would distribute their produce to the community; while the second track would be for those wanting to grow more food for their family's consumption.
  - Explicit grower “career paths” could be directly explained and associated with the second (and third) paths, which would include employment opportunities at Grow Pittsburgh farm sites and partner opportunities including the Pasa apprenticeship.
- Consider hiring a new position to oversee all adult education or shifting current staff roles to include the full management of this effort.
- Consider a third track in later years with the two more advanced year-round tracks differentiating between growers focused on food for their family and those that are growing for community distribution and/or sale.
- Expand and align the Grow Pittsburgh online educational resources to the in-person education effort. Ensure that the website, info hub, newsletter and social media outlets continue to prioritize education.
- Discuss with other departments to identify which department should oversee this public adult education effort.

## PROGRAM EARNED REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES

- Continue to prioritize seedling and produce sales as the highest earned revenue opportunity for the department that also meets programmatic goals of the organization. Ensure that this earned revenue strategy is balanced with other educational goals of the farm sites.
- GP merchandise sales at farm stands
- A higher price tag for the year round growers educational series (which could be subsidized for those who need it by the urban farmers fund through PFPC)

# COMMUNICATIONS/OPERATIONS PRIORITIES

## PROCESS

The Communications and Operations team (CO) convened five times during the strategic planning process. Individual interviews were conducted with two CO staff members and all members completed a survey.

## RESULTS

### OVERALL & HUMAN RESOURCES

- The Communications/Operations team is small given the size of the organization.
- The Operations team has had two of its four full-time staff members transition away from the organization in July 2021, which has provided an opportunity to restructure the department to meet the current and future needs of the organization.
- Specific points of focus include the (1) interest in having a dedicated communications role that no longer holds operations duties and (2) to have additional development support to remove some grant writing and administrative fundraising tasks away from the Director of Development and the Executive Director.
- Some staff have shared concern around wages for seasonal, hourly staff members.
- The pandemic has proven that remote office work coupled with outdoor in-person work can be effective. The staff still misses the camaraderie, collaboration and culture of the office and generally leans towards a hybrid model moving forward.

### COMMUNICATIONS

- The organization has seen great success in regular communication efforts with donors and stakeholders, which include regular member newsletters, general public e-newsletters, program impact report, and an annual report.
- Social media has been a growing tool to engage with the public to promote GP events, share educational resources, and to promote partner and community events.
- There are a number of different newsletter segments (general, school, community garden, GRC, hiring) that could be more clearly delineated for our audiences.
- The “how-to” written gardening guides in the Info Hub are out of date and hard to find.
- The teacher lesson plans are out of date and do not include high school or early childhood focused lesson plans.
- There is an interest in creating more video content to engage the community and improve educational outreach.

- The Grow Pittsburgh website is not easy to navigate and has a number of dead links throughout.
- There is an interest in capturing and stockpiling more first person stories from program participants on how Grow Pittsburgh's work impacts real people.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

- While progress has been made in diversifying income streams, Grow Pittsburgh relies heavily on private foundation support.
- There is great opportunity and interest in continuing to prioritize expanding and deepening the individual donor base.
- The organization sees an opportunity to increase program-driven earned revenue though does not want to sacrifice its mission and impact in doing so.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **OVERALL & HUMAN RESOURCES**

- Hire two new staff members, a communications coordinator and a development coordinator, to increase capacity and prepare the organization for continued growth.
- Hire an operations manager or similar role to oversee office and business operations.
- Human Resources duties including payroll, new staff onboarding, staff evaluations, professional development and discipline should be revisited and distributed among the Executive Director, Operations Manager, Program Directors and/or contractors.
- Consider engaging an outside HR professional to serve as a support when needed for when more challenging HR events occur.
- Continue to edit and adjust the existing pay structure document for all levels of the organization based on industry standards and inflation. Ensure that the hourly rate of entry level seasonal employees reflects the equivalent of the entry level full-time employee salaries.
- Consider re-opening the office in a hybrid model where there are certain days when staff can work remotely. Prioritize regular all-staff events, meals, and celebrations to ensure that the cohesive and positive culture of the organization continues.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

- Streamline newsletter segmentation so that new interested community members all sign up for the general newsletter and then can also elect to join more specific segments.
- Edit and expand the Info Hub content and lesson plans and work to ensure that the naming of these resources and the online navigation is simplified. Work with program teams to provide content.
- Edit and remove dead links from the current website to ensure easy navigation. Revamp the website in year two or three of this plan to meet best practices and to reflect the current priorities and program offerings of Grow Pittsburgh.



- Establish an active YouTube channel to distribute educational content that is largely sourced from production sites. Develop regular processes to receive educational videos from the production teams.
- Consider establishing a TikTok account to be used largely at the production sites to provide real-time updates and connections with gardeners and farmers in the region.
- Strengthen Grow Pittsburgh's storytelling content in collaboration with a professional videographer to create professional video content that could include an "about us" video, targeted content for donors and stories from stakeholders.
- Work with program staff to connect communications and operations staff with engaged program participants to capture their stories throughout the year.
- Establish a brand voice and shared language around program offerings.
- Develop a communications internship program to start in the summer and potentially expand to each season towards adding capacity for Grow Pittsburgh and supporting a talent pipeline for the organization and its partners.

## DEVELOPMENT

- A comprehensive plan for supporting the cultivation of new individual, institutional, and corporate donors should be adopted to promote long term program and organizational stability.
- With increased capacity from an expanded development staff, the Executive Director and Director of Development should focus energy on deepening existing supporter relationships and cultivating new individual, corporate and foundation partners.
- Launch a planned giving campaign in partnership with monthly and major donor programs.
- Evaluate program specific earned revenue proposals and develop a strategy for implementation.

## PROGRAM EARNED REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES

- Moving the merchandise we have through new outlets: The Frick, farm stands, GRC
- Make a strategy for new/different merchandise
- Partnerships with local breweries (i.e. Dancing Gnome collaboration in 2022, which will feature one beer per month Jan-Dec and highlight garden tools)
- Special Events beyond the Garden Get Down, especially those that require a light lift for GP staff such as the past dinners at Independent Brewing Company, other restaurant partners.
- Farm to table dinners for small groups (donors, etc) at Garden Dreams once the site is complete.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS ASSESSMENT & PRIORITIES

## PROCESS

The Board of Directors completed a comprehensive survey focused on a SWOT analysis of the organization as well as the board makeup and function. A separate board session was conducted to focus more deeply on the board specific topics along with a full day board and staff retreat.

## RESULTS

### STRENGTHS

- The Board of Directors is an extremely well-run, well-organized apparatus.
- The current Board of Directors uses three high-functioning committees: Governance, Development and Finance.
- Current board members bring a great diversity of experience and skills while sharing a passion for Grow Pittsburgh's mission.
- The Board and staff currently collaborate on a project-specific basis (e.g. Garden Dreams, maps, events, GRC promotion)
- The Board functions as a governing, rather than working, board

### AREAS FOR FURTHER REFINEMENT

- The Development Committee of the Board is an underutilized resource; it currently functions more in a staff support role than in an advisory and cultivation role.
- All of the committees require a specific skill set that at times can leave some board members not clear on their role or place within the board.
- The need for more diverse racial, socioeconomic, and geographic representation on the Board is an ideal shared universally.
- Encouraging consistent Board engagement is often difficult; some members participate frequently and consistently while others are less engaged.
- The Board has identified a desire to interact more regularly with on-the-ground program work, through volunteering, touring, or attendance at events.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## ASSESSMENT

- The board should evaluate strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for growth annually as part of the end of year reflection and process for recruiting new board members.
- The Governance committee should identify opportunities to solicit feedback from the Executive Director as to the performance of the Board.

## ONBOARDING

- Updating the board onboarding Handbook should be a 2022 priority. This could also include pictures of staff and other board members to help in building early connections along with the organization chart.
- Onboarding of new members should include a full orientation of Board committees as well as individual time with the Executive Director.
- Timing onboarding to occur during the fall should be a continued practice, so as to allow for a tour of production sites and other program locations and to encourage attendance at the retreat held in the late fall.
- Onboarding procedures should include the following:
  - Site tours of Grow Pittsburgh's programming (as is current practice).
  - An overview of the Board of Directors' existing committees.
  - Dedicated time with program staff, ED and/or Board Chair to understand the three program areas.
  - Dedicated time with the Comm/Ops team, ED and/or Board Chair to understand non-program related work (e.g. development, communications).
  - Intentional conversations around baseline expectations and additional opportunities for engagement should be conducted early between new board members and board chair and/or the Executive Director.
- Onboarding new members should be carefully balanced with examining the number of members rotating off so as to not overload or under-populate the board at any given time.
- Ensure that onboarding also includes a direct discussion of why the board member was selected and what specific niche they can fill within the organization.



## ENGAGEMENT

- Consider establishing a board and staff buddy system with specific opportunities for relationship building, shadowing and volunteer opportunities.
- The board could outline their passions, skills and interests in engagement and share with the staff. This could be part of the board and staff retreat through a “speed dating” process or shared electronically with head shots for staff to review.
- Encourage staff to identify concrete tasks and projects that specific board members could participate in over a short but meaningful period of time.
- Board members could complete a personal goal setting exercise at the beginning of each year which would allow them to set specific goals around event attendance or unique opportunities for them to support the organization.
- By collaborating with the Development Director, the Board should continue to circulate a list of seasonal events. This increases the likelihood that Board members attend, volunteer at, and/or encourage their networks to participate in Grow Pittsburgh events and programs. A tweak on this existing practice should include more detailed information about the events to encourage targeted attendance, including:
  - How many board members are needed or expected to attend each event.
  - What role board members might play at the event (volunteering vs. simply attending).
- As the Board currently signs a Financial Commitment form, a Volunteer/Engagement Commitment form could be created to encourage deeper engagement.
- The Board could consider finding ways to engage with one another outside the explicit frame of board meetings and events (such as rotating hosting of social gatherings) to increase morale and feelings of teamwork. This could include specific tasks, such as writing thank-you letters at the end of year.
- The Board could reinstitute meeting outside of the Grow Pittsburgh offices or on zoom to hold meetings at production sites, community gardens or school gardens. These meetings could begin with a site tour and opportunity to connect with staff.

## BOARD DEVELOPMENT

- As Grow Pittsburgh prioritizes bringing on new members who have never served in board positions before, consider creating a board buddy system where more seasoned board members connect personally with newer board members in their committee.
- Explicitly identify and cultivate new leadership and board succession plans to ensure smooth transitions of leadership
- Consider creating opportunities for program participants from each department to participate on a specific or new committee as a way to recruit new board members.
- Explore national and local models for youth board positions or committees to increase participation from younger individuals.

## COMMITTEE STRUCTURES

- Board committees should consider formalizing their structure and function, including incorporating the following new practices:
  - Each board committee should convene at the beginning of the year to set ambitious but attainable goals for itself; the suggested amount is three, but dependent on the scope and needs of the organization.
  - Committees should submit a list of goals to the rest of the Board no later than the second board meeting of the year.
  - Committees should meet on a regularly scheduled basis, e.g. every other month.
  - Committees should self-evaluate at the end of each year.
  - Committees should invite evaluation from the rest of the board at the end of each year.
- The Development committee could earnestly increase its dedication to major donor cultivation and securing corporate sponsorships.
- Alternatively, the development committee could pivot to be more focused on community engagement and outreach following the strategic planning sub-committee goals.
- To allow space for deeper engagement from board members that have diverse skill sets, consider introducing subcommittees into the existing committee structure, including possibly:
  - A JEDI or Values subcommittee to the Governance committee.
  - An Engagement/Volunteerism subcommittee to the Governance committee.
  - A Major Donor Recruitment subcommittee to the Development committee.
  - A Corporate Sponsorships Strategy subcommittee to the Development committee.
- These subcommittees above could someday evolve into their own formal committees; this is for future consideration.
- To accommodate an expanded committee and subcommittee structure, the Board should consider inviting participation from non-Board members as a board recruitment tool as well.

# JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (JEDI)

## PROCESS

A social justice sub-committee was created with representation from all four Grow Pittsburgh departments. This staff committee met three times as an entire group. There was one board and staff specific session discussing this JEDI work. Specific questions around JEDI work were discussed in 12 individual staff interviews.

## OVERVIEW

Grow Pittsburgh has intentionally prioritized JEDI work within the organization over the past eight years. It has focused its efforts on staff recruitment, onboarding, organizational culture, professional development, community engagement, communications and program development. As so many other organizations have begun prioritizing social and racial justice during the Black Lives Matters Movement, it is the board and staff's priority to continue to be at the forefront of this important work and to be a leader in the nonprofit space.





# RESULTS

## GENERAL

- The 2017 strategic plan specifically highlighted the need to deepen the organization's effort to embody its social justice and equity values in all that it does.
- Grow Pittsburgh has many examples of ways in which it has demonstrated and grown in its effort to prioritize racial and social justice.
- Some of these examples have been embedded into organization-wide policy and procedures while others are more department or staff specific and could be shared and adopted across the organization.
- The organization has been holding monthly social justice meetings for the past four years. While initially seen as quite relevant to advance specific goals and provide a space for shared learning and discussion, some staff believe that this space is not as useful and could be restructured or reimagine to better support the work.
- There is an interest in both having a space to safely discuss current events and personal challenges and experiences.
- There is also an interest in utilizing the Social Justice meeting space to advance specific actions to support JEDI work.
- The facilitation of these meetings is currently shared among staff. This is a significant task to facilitate challenging conversations and perhaps a new structure or support should be adopted and explored.
- The previously adopted framework for this effort included the three main categories of staff hiring and onboarding, internal organizational culture and programming.
- There is an interest in expanding this framework to two additional categories which include communications and specifically supporting black-led farms, businesses and communities. The full JEDI plan can be found in the appendix.

## STAFF HIRING AND ONBOARDING

- The organization has made progress in hiring and promoting staff of color through outreach, partnerships, word of mouth and growing recognition across Pittsburgh.
- There are challenges in wanting to hire individuals with non-traditional backgrounds and barriers to employment and not always being able to provide the necessary support. Some examples include needing access to a car, accessibility and the physical nature of the work.
- There is a challenge in knowing how to prioritize and compare formal versus informal education and experience when deciding who to hire.
- Sometimes the JEDI jargon and shared language of staff during interviews and onboarding can be isolating or unfairly dismissive of potential and new staff members who live and breathe this work and "get it" but haven't gone through formal training.
- While progress has been made around distributing job postings that will specifically reach communities of color, there is a need to formalize and create systems to ensure that all job postings are being distributed in similar and expansive ways.



## INTERNAL CULTURE

- There is a general feeling that the uniquely supportive work culture allows for individuals to thrive and the organization to advance its JEDI priorities.
- Shared meals, celebration of milestones, appreciations, welcoming of partners, friends, pets, and intentional down-time are some examples shared by staff of the positive culture that allows the whole person to thrive.
- The individual professional development budget supports freedom and passions of each staff.
- There is an interest in some more regular all-staff trainings around unlearning racism or other JEDI-specific trainings.
- There is also an interest in coordinating volunteer and work day activities that directly support POC-led initiatives and partner organizations that support people in need.
- The open office and the accessibility of the office and farm sites could be a barrier for those with physical disabilities.
- Despite best intentions, microaggressions are experienced by some current or former staff within and outside of the organization and offer a place for continued improvement and attention.

## PROGRAMMING

- There are many meaningful examples around how programming reflects the organization's social justice and equity values from culturally relevant and responsive curriculum to facilitation practices and program participant selection criteria.
- Some staff share that often the most progressive and effective initiatives are staff driven and live within the staff knowledge base rather than institutionally implemented across programs.
- Much of the work in school gardens is modeling best practices in the classroom and there is a desire to support teachers and students during the many hours and days that GP staff is not directly present at the schools.
- There is a recognition that the organization has prioritized working in black communities around Pittsburgh and that there are more opportunities in Latinx and refugee and immigrant communities as well as opportunities to adapt infrastructure and programming to support individuals with varying physical abilities.

## SUPPORTING BLACK-LED FARMS, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES

- All of Grow Pittsburgh's departments work within black communities of Pittsburgh.
- Often the program selection criteria explicitly prioritize low income communities but do not name communities of color directly as a priority.
- There is a sense from many staff and board members that it is the organization's priority to support black-led farms, businesses and communities but that there could be more direct and intentional practices and communications to ensure that this happens.
- It is also important that in explicitly supporting black and brown communities, it does not become isolating or exclusionary of other communities.

- There is a recognition of Grow Pittsburgh's large network and reputation and the opportunity to leverage its standing to directly support black-led farms, businesses and communities.

## COMMUNICATIONS

- There are many different terms and buzzwords as it relates to racial justice and equity work. There is an interest in defining these terms and agreeing upon some shared language used throughout the organization.
- The committee believes that Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) is the overarching term that they would like to use for the organization.
- There is an interest in more uniformly using "food apartheid" rather than "food desert" and using the opportunity to educate around this idea as an example.
- There is a strong belief that the food and farming work of Grow Pittsburgh is related to so many other social justice issues and there is an interest in utilizing the Grow Pittsburgh platform to speak to this intersectionality.
- Many staff believe that the past public stance process was too narrowly focused and kept the organization from using its platform to support common and important social and community issues that overlap with Grow Pittsburgh's mission.
- Grow Pittsburgh's social media effort to support Black Lives Matter in the past two years has been an effective model for utilizing Grow Pittsburgh's platform to educate and support bigger issues that connect to its work.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### GENERAL

- Reframe the social justice meeting time to ensure long-term effectiveness and sustainability.
- Consider dividing the social justice meeting or having two meetings. One would be a more informal space to discuss current events and processing while the second would be more action oriented to advance organizational and strategic JEDI goals.
- Identify the best way to facilitate JEDI meetings. Perhaps have the new Operations Manager organize and have a set rotation and training to support those that are taking on the important task of facilitation.
- Create an anonymous opportunity to submit topics to be discussed that are then vetted to either be included in the group discussion or moved to a 1-on-1 mediation or HR specific discussion.
- Clarify staff and board expectations around active participation in JEDI efforts which could include attending yearly training and JEDI meetings or sub-committees.

### STAFF HIRING AND ONBOARDING

- Review the specific challenges that non-traditional hires could face and identify how accommodations could be made to ensure success.
- Review current hiring rubrics and evaluate whether additional categories or weighting of priorities should be shifted.

- Review and adapt interview questions that are focused on JEDI work to address the candidates' real experience and core attitude and commitment to racial justice, rather than their ability to speak to current JEDI trends and theories.
- Include JEDI focused articles, definitions and discussions as part of the initial onboarding process.
- Update the hiring contact list to include new distribution partners and places and ensure that all new hires are distributing to this list.

## INTERNAL CULTURE

- Continue to prioritize and encourage the uniquely supportive work culture and make changes to ensure that these traditions and important elements of human connection and appreciation can persist during and beyond the pandemic.
- Explore annual or bi-annual trainings that could be led internally or externally to emphasize the JEDI priority and ensure that all staff are included.
- Do a training on microaggressions and continue to work to create systems and a culture where feedback can be given regularly and in a supportive environment
- Research and implement changes that could be made to the office and farm sites to improve accessibility.
- Consider finding ways to connect the Grow Pittsburgh board with JEDI goals and professional development.
- Evaluate and restructure the social justice/JEDI meeting time to be more specific and to have clear expectations around participation and facilitation of this space.
- Consider incorporating social justice/JEDI meeting facilitation into a staff member(s)' job description.
- Identify whether two separate JEDI meetings would be beneficial with one focusing on current events, personal processing and informal discussion, while the second would be more task oriented to advance strategic organizational JEDI goals.
- Identify specific staff and board goals and expectations along with a timeline for implementation as top priorities in year 1.

## PROGRAMMING

- Review JEDI best practices across each department and add them to established staff training and program implementation protocol.
  - School Gardens
    - Add JEDI focused literature to school garden manuals that are distributed to teachers (racial justice, non-binary language in the garden, social and emotional benefits of school gardening, etc...)
    - Continue to prioritize low-resourced schools to ensure equitable distribution of staff time.
  - Community Gardens
    - Incorporate information about how to engage and sustain a diverse group of community gardeners into curriculum for garden leaders.
    - weigh projects led by black and brown folks more heavily in decision making support for new and existing gardens.

- Institute a “no questions asked” sliding scale model for yearly fee for GRC.
- Use funds to support black and women owned businesses.
- Support some garden leaders with stipends.
- Farm Education:
  - Increase JEDI specific training for Farm Ed staff members and integrate conversations around JEDI work into team meetings
  - Emphasize JEDI and food justice education in weekly youth programming
  - Ensure that food grown and distributed is culturally relevant and accessible to community
- Consider explicitly supporting immigrant and refugee communities by translating educational materials and developing programs in collaboration with key regional partners.
- Collaborate with partners who are specifically working with immigrant and refugee populations.
- Explore physical infrastructure improvements and adaptations to educational offerings that would more directly support communities with varying abilities.
- Use data to reflect on what communities Grow Pittsburgh is currently serving and to strategically identify new priority areas.

## **SUPPORTING BLACK-LED FARMS, BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES**

- Connect interested funding partners to black-led organizations and partner farms.
- Continue to collaborate with other farms and organizations in fundraising and program efforts that would direct funding to black-led initiatives.
- Utilize the existing Grow Pittsburgh vendor spreadsheet to specifically highlight black-led businesses to support. Coordinate and track organizational purchasing towards supporting more black businesses.
- Explore the concept of loosening program restrictions (i.e. two year program lengths for school and community gardens) to allow for further support for gardens that have high turn-over or that are experiencing more challenges.
- Create a plan for supporting new farm businesses which identifies Grow Pittsburgh’s role and other organizations and resources that can be shared.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

- Create a public document that defines key JEDI terms and phrases that live on the Grow Pittsburgh website.
- Utilize the definitions document to identify certain terms that can be discussed in staff training and utilized by all staff members in communications.
- Edit the Grow Pittsburgh public stance process to allow for more flexibility and opportunity to engage in larger social issues that intersect with the direct work of Grow Pittsburgh.
- Explore and identify additional ways beyond social media that Grow Pittsburgh can utilize to advance its JEDI goals and partner-led initiatives which could include teacher trainings and newsletters.
- Create intentional and specific plans for who and how the organization highlights program participants with specific attention to how black and brown farmers and gardeners are highlighted



# EARNED REVENUE

## PROCESS

An Earned Revenue sub-committee was created with representation from all four Grow Pittsburgh departments. This committee met twice as an entire group. There was one board specific session discussing earned revenue and the entire staff engaged in one earned revenue session. Specific questions around earned revenue efforts were discussed in 12 individual staff interviews.

## RESULTS

### GENERAL

- The three main categories for earned revenue, as developed from the sub-committee, are:
  - direct sales (seedlings, produce, merchandise)
  - participant/program fees (workshops, flagship school gardens)
  - consulting (speaker fees, garden design consultations, outside trainings)
- Program specific earned revenue ideas have been discussed for years and there is an interest in clearly defining goals and expectations for this plan.
- The Farm Education team, in selling seedlings and produce, have earned revenue as a major line in their budget and have allocated significant staff time to these efforts. This effort has largely been successful and continued to expand because the work specifically meets the organization's mission while also earning revenue for the organization.
- The other departments have had opportunities to build revenue streams for the organization over the past five years, but staff capacity and lack of internal coordination has hindered these efforts.
- The benefits of expanding earned revenue opportunities include financial benefits (more consistent income), program benefits (expanding reach to those that don't fit within current programs), and internal benefits (increasing pride and engagement from staff in financial picture).
- The challenge of staff capacity to implement earned revenue opportunities is the main concern expressed by the sub-committee. Additional challenges and concerns include veering from the mission and taking time and energy away from core programs.
- One key question is when and how to decide whether to take on (or seek out) consulting opportunities.
- It was noted that Grow Pittsburgh receives many requests for consulting from backyard gardens to hospital and corporate garden design.
- A list of specific earned revenue ideas and implementation strategies was developed by each department and is found at the bottom of each program priorities section.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## GENERAL

- Develop individual earned revenue/consulting plans for each department which includes: a list of potential consulting services, staffing projections, cost/benefit analysis, overall fundraising goal, time of year, and outreach plan.
- Utilize the program specific earned revenue plans to identify what types of projects to pursue and which projects and opportunities to pass on.
- Run detailed financial modeling for the most promising earned revenue ideas to further advance the goals and ensure that they are financially viable.
- Create a master process flow document, held within the operations department, that can be used as a key for identifying whether the request is worth pursuing and then funneling the inquiries to the appropriate department or external partner.
- Clearly design and articulate roles as it relates to fielding, managing and implementing earned revenue strategies.
- After the first year of analysis, identify a target for the earned revenue percentage of overall organizational income.

## CONSULTING-SPECIFIC STRATEGIES

- Develop a list of contractors and community partners that could take on specific consulting opportunities that Grow Pittsburgh does not have capacity for or which reach beyond the scope of Grow Pittsburgh's mission.
- Create a menu of offerings and a consistent fee structure (hourly or project based) that can be shared with potential clients.
- Decide whether and how Grow Pittsburgh staff could take on consulting opportunities outside of their normal GP job and earn additional income for this. If this is a priority, ensure that there are clear mechanisms for deciding whether an opportunity falls within a staff job description or would be an opportunity to earn additional outside income if work was done on off-hours.
- Collect a list of all consulting inquiries for an entire year to better understand the actual consulting need from the community towards developing and adapting the earned revenue plan.
- Based on the need identified by the yearly inquiries, explore shifting job descriptions to include some amount of consulting for certain positions (example: farm managers could spend 15% of time consulting on new projects if there was a farm assistant that had more significant farm management responsibilities).

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## PROCESS

A Community Engagement sub-committee was created with representation from all four Grow Pittsburgh departments. This committee met once as an entire group. There was one board specific session discussing community participation. Specific questions around community engagement efforts were discussed in 12 individual staff interviews.

## BACKGROUND

The focus of this sub-committee was to explore how the Grow Pittsburgh led sites can best connect with and support the surrounding communities. These sites include the Garden Resource Center (Larimer), Shiloh Farm (Point Breeze North/Homewood), Garden Dreams (Wilkinsburg), and Braddock Farms (Braddock).

## RESULTS

### GENERAL

- The staff particularly noted the improvement and collective commitment to ensuring that these sites are welcoming and seen as community resources by neighbors.
- In the 2017 community feedback sessions in Braddock, there were clear voices providing feedback about the farm not meeting these goals. Four years later, the team has implemented changes to the farm that have directly addressed these concerns and positively changed the reputation in the community.
- The Garden Resource Center (GRC) continues to grow through word of mouth from its members and faithful volunteers.
- The consistent positive feedback from farm stand customers and success of the youth market program are additional highlights of current community engagement efforts.
- COVID has been a challenge in keeping the staff from running larger community events. Safety must continue to be a top priority in ensuring that sites are safe and welcoming.
- There is a recognition that engagement needs to happen off the farm as well as on the site and can include attending community events, meeting with partners, voting, supporting local businesses, etc...
- It was noted that the strong social media presence of Grow Pittsburgh does not always reach the direct neighbors to farm sites and the GRC. Signage, mailings, word of mouth, and direct conversations may be the most effective outreach strategies for reaching neighbors.
- Staff time to implement goals is a concern
- It is important to spend money in the communities surrounding production sites and the GRC as good neighbors and also specifically because Grow Pittsburgh is not paying taxes on their site locations.
- Grow Pittsburgh led sites are great spaces to share information about other GP and partner programs to break down silos and provide new opportunities for engagement.

## GARDEN DREAMS

- Understanding local politics has been very important in Braddock, and lessons can be learned for the approach in Wilkinsburg.
- The staff acknowledged the challenges of working with the neighbors at Garden Dreams when they may have historic impressions or feelings about the farm that the staff are unaware of.
- It has also been a difficult time for an “opening” with COVID and delayed construction timelines.
- The corner lot is not owned by GP yet, but reflects poorly on the organization and the site.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### GENERAL

- Expanding signage to bring people to sites from adjacent roads and on-site signage that can be navigated independently can encourage neighbors to visit on their own.
- Identify key partners, farms and neighbors to connect with regularly in each focused neighborhood.
- Explore new ways in which the farm sites and the GRC can be used to support community and neighbor needs and interests by conducting surveys at farm stands or open hours. Examples could include meeting space, school field trips, or event location.
- Create member and neighbor specific celebrations at the GRC to bring folks together. These can include potlucks, volunteer appreciations, or members day celebration.
- Prioritize paper signs, mailings, door-to-door outreach and flyers to bring neighbors to the farm site for events or to raise general awareness.
- Create and/or utilize community bulletin boards and free libraries at all sites to bring neighbors to the site who otherwise might not be particularly interested in the food growing activities. These can also be used to promote other GP programs that could be of interest to neighbors.
- Look critically at all job descriptions and identify who should have explicit community engagement goals and tasks associated with their work. Ensure that this doesn't just add more but redistributes responsibilities and/or changes the priority of tasks being done.
- Proactively engage with neighborhood organizations and events and rely on these connections to help during hiring.
- Implement yearly participant and neighbor surveys to ensure that activities are aligned with the community interest and need.
- Continue to grow the Youth Market Program as a direct way to connect youth from the neighborhoods with the farms and their community.
- Find meaningful ways to thank and appreciate community members and participants through yearly celebrations, local media outlets, gift cards, etc...



## GARDEN DREAMS

- Revisit the existing list of community partners, groups and neighbors in Wilkinsburg and update outreach efforts to prioritize these groups.
- Create neighborhood specific events (first tours, neighborhood block party, etc...)
- Stay current on the potential Wilkinsburg merger with Pittsburgh, leadership transitions
- Prioritize purchasing food and supplies from neighborhood businesses.
- Continue to prioritize hiring Wilkinsburg neighbors for Garden Dreams positions.
- Consider adding an outreach component to a seedling position that would split their time between production and community engagement.



# FOOD ACCESS AND SECURITY PRIORITIES

## PROCESS AND OVERVIEW

Grow Pittsburgh's role in addressing food access and food security was not initially designed as a stand-alone focus area, but later emerged as a common theme worth highlighting. This focus area was highlighted in the Grow Pittsburgh member survey, board of director surveys, program specific focus sessions and individual staff interviews.

## RESULTS

### GENERAL

- Ensuring that neighbors have access to affordable food was the top reason why Grow Pittsburgh members support the organization
- During the first year of the pandemic, access to fresh fruits and vegetables was specifically emphasized as school gardens were transformed to production sites and neighbors flocked to farm stands as a safe and affordable way to access food in their neighborhoods.
- Grow Pittsburgh's organizational vision for the future directly addresses food access and this continues to be a priority for the future.
- Grow Pittsburgh has historically looked at farm stand participation as its primary initiative addressing food access in the community.
- Staff and board recognize that while the farm stands do address food access, the benefits of these sites also include educational and community building outcomes.
- There is an interest in expanding the organization's framework and communication around food access to include its educational initiatives

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### GENERAL

- Continue to emphasize and strengthen the existing farm stands in Braddock, Point Breeze, Homewood and Wilkinsburg. Continue to develop and prioritize the distribution of produce alongside the educational and community building opportunities inherent in the Grow Pittsburgh farm stand delivery model.
- Step back from actively providing produce and staffing new farm stands and instead offer educational workshops and site visits to teach others how to successfully start a neighborhood farm stand.
- Emphasize the importance of backyard and community gardens as a means towards addressing food security in communications and program information.

# GARDEN DREAMS STRATEGY

## PROCESS AND OVERVIEW

In 2019, Grow Pittsburgh completed a feasibility study that was led by Procopia Nonprofit Consulting, focused on identifying a new greenhouse and production farm space. This study led to the eventual acquisition of the Garden Dreams Urban Farm and Nursery, which had a rich 20 year history in regional urban agriculture. The property has been protected through the Three Rivers Agricultural Land Initiative in partnership with the Allegheny Land Trust, and the site redevelopment is currently underway. This new greenhouse and urban agricultural hub will be a major component of the five year strategy at Grow Pittsburgh and has therefore been a focus of this strategic plan.

## FINDINGS

- The site development has been delayed for various pandemic related and other reasons which has prohibited the staff from fully utilizing the new greenhouses.
- The pandemic and site construction have limited the initially planned opportunities for engagement with neighbors
- There is concern around the initial seedling sale projections, given the many uncertainties and challenges of the past two pandemic growing seasons.
- There is interest from some staff in exploring Garden Dreams as a potential GRC satellite location to distribute raw materials.
- With the insecurity of the current GRC location, identifying potential new locations, which could include Garden Dreams, has become a more urgent consideration.
- There is great enthusiasm and commitment from staff and board to realize the vision for Garden Dreams to become an urban agriculture hub for the region.
- Initial findings in the 2019 Greenhouse Feasibility Study, which include growing and educational space recommendations, still resonate with the current staff and board. In particular, the goals around utilizing the space for educational training for school, community, and backyard gardeners is a top priority.
- Garden Dreams staff are excited about the many educational and community building opportunities for the site and welcome interdepartmental use of the space.
- With the increase in building material costs, the renovation of the large yellow house onsite has been delayed
- The site holds a lot of potential for earned revenue outside of seedling sales, which includes event rental, GP fundraising events and merchandise sales. The staff and board are largely excited about these opportunities though they recognize the barriers to implementation that must be addressed.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### SITE DEVELOPMENT

- Move forward in completing the walk-in cooler and site development of the carriage house with currently available resources.
- Work with EvolveEA and key staff members and stakeholders to determine whether the large house renovation or demolition and new build is the best path forward given programming goals.
- Additional goals and uses for the current lot and/or corner lot could include:
  - Community garden demonstration beds used for training (in-ground, raised bed options)
  - Learning garden demonstration beds
  - In collaboration with community partners and service providers, integrate concepts of universal design to emphasize and demonstrate accessibility in gardens to truly support all community members
- Prioritize identifying and/or creating a dedicated educational/workshop space within the current or expanded footprint that would be the hub for GP and community workshops with other sites being optional satellite sites. The space would include:
  - Outdoor covered space (could be existing porch or new structure)
  - Access to restrooms
  - Internet access
  - Projector capabilities (screen, electricity, projector)
  - Flexible seating
  - White board or chalk board access
- Work to ensure easy and intentional flow of foot traffic across the space which includes signage, obvious footpaths through gardens and clear parking expectations and signage.

### PROGRAMMING AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Work with the Community Projects Team to explore whether Garden Dreams would be a good fit for a satellite or full GRC site.
- Create department specific Garden Dreams educational plans to ensure that each department can realize their specific goals.
- Prioritize community engagement with neighbors and the greater Wilkinsburg borough in accordance with the recommendations outlined in the community engagement section of this plan.
- Consider whether and how school field trips could be accommodated on the site, taking into consideration bus access, gathering space, and capacity.
- Create communication systems and site usage expectations so that during the height of seedling production season, cross-departmental educational opportunities (trainings, field trips, workshops) are led by each department and do not add significantly more work on Garden Dreams staff.



## EARNED REVENUE

- Spend the first two years of this plan establishing routines and understanding the costs and workflow in the greenhouses at Garden Dreams, while keeping budget numbers consistent with past years. After year two, consider what the target income should be and make staffing and budget adjustments accordingly.
- Evaluate the cost and benefits of holding fundraising events and site rentals while considering the following:
  - Site liability
  - Inclement weather plan
  - The time of year when events could happen (ex. the greenhouse could be used in fall or winter)
  - Necessary infrastructure (tables, chairs, plates, kitchen, electricity, bathrooms, parking)
  - Staffing capacity
  - Overall price and target financial and community building outcomes
- Expand certain seedling sale days and site specific events to include other vendors and partners while considering the following:
  - Prioritize Wilkinsburg neighbors, black-led businesses and community partners
  - Consider a sliding scale vendor fee once established
  - In addition to other garden and value-added products, food trucks and vendors could also be included
- Consider the sale of additional products by Grow Pittsburgh during seedling sales. This could include cut flowers, bulk gardening materials and Grow Pittsburgh merchandise.
- In addition to site rental and fundraising event space, consider using Garden Dreams educational space for paid or free workshops that expand beyond garden workshops to include a mindfulness series (yoga, meditation) and a cooking and food preservation series.



# GROWER AND URBAN FARMER SUPPORT STRATEGY

## PROCESS AND OVERVIEW

Grow Pittsburgh's role in supporting urban farmers and gardeners who do not fall into the existing school, youth and community garden programming has evolved over the years and creating a new strategy has emerged as a priority for the coming five years. This focus area was highlighted in program specific strategy sessions, the board and staff retreat and individual staff interviews.

For the purpose of this strategy, we can define urban farmers as those that are growing food on lots larger than a ½ acre and who are selling and distributing their produce to the community. Urban growers are farming on land less than a ½ acre and the outlet can be for sale but is often for personal consumption.

## RESULTS

### GENERAL

- The Community Projects team regularly fields requests for support of urban farm initiatives and does not currently have the capacity or expertise to meet the demand.
- There is a need to have a clear response to new inquiries and a strategy for how Grow Pittsburgh supports urban farmers and growers.
- The farm staff at Grow Pittsburgh strongly believe that in order to start their own farm, individuals should have at least three to five years of previous experience on a production farm.
- There are other regional groups that focus on new farmer support as well as business and entrepreneurial skill development.
- There seems to be community interest in more advanced gardening and farming classes and programs. This is currently a gap in regional offerings. The target audience for these programs could be both advanced urban gardeners and aspiring urban farmers.
- Connecting interested farmers and gardeners with land owners who are offering to rent, sell or share property is a process called land linking which has successful national models that have not yet reached Western Pennsylvania.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### GENERAL

- Consider creating a detailed “grower support plan/program” which allows for backyard gardeners, homesteaders and urban farmers to understand Grow Pittsburgh offerings and engage directly in programming.
- Work with the communications team to clearly define “growers” and “urban farmers” for internal and external purposes.
- Consider establishing an urban growers educational program as described in the Farm Education section of this plan. Prioritize farming education, demonstration and resource sharing coupled with support in navigating land access, regulations and funding as the Grow Pittsburgh niche. Allow other partners to focus on the business planning. Link to such partners and programs including the AgBiz Masters course which focuses on business planning for farmers.
- Create a clear educational and career pathway and recommendations for interested new farmers and community growers located on the Grow Pittsburgh website that could include the following key points:
  - A clear recommendation that anyone considering a production farm should spend at least three years working on an established production farm
  - Offer the Grow Pittsburgh workshare program and seasonal farm positions as opportunities to gain experience
  - Offer the adult workshop programs as opportunities to increase knowledge and skills
  - Link to partner organizations who offer additional farm education and business planning
  - Emphasize that for-profit farming is not the only outcome of these educational programs and “community growers” who grow food for their families and communities towards a goal of food sovereignty are equally important and prioritized in these programs.
- Consider creating additional grower support initiatives over the coming five years that could include:
  - Supporting the creation of a land linking website
  - Creating a mini-grant program for urban farms in the Community Garden Sustainability Fund model
  - Creating specific workshops and trainings on starting on-site farm stands in the Braddock Farms model, as well as other sustainability and food sovereignty classes.
  - Provide step-by-step assistance for aspiring growers who need support in accessing land and navigating regional and national opportunities that include the adopt-a-lot program.



# “BIG” IDEAS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

This strategic plan has focused its recommendations for Grow Pittsburgh on strengthening existing programs and processes, clarifying its role as a regional urban agriculture leader in the greater urban farming landscape and reaffirming its commitment to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion. While there are new and exciting initiatives outlined throughout the plan, the plan does not orient itself towards a major organizational shift or new direction.

Still, there were several “big” ideas that emerged during the planning process that are worth capturing and documenting. This list can be used by Grow Pittsburgh’s Board and staff as a living document to capture possible areas for major expansion, reorientation or investment in the coming years. Including these here ensures that the list is not lost and that stakeholders who were not present for all interviews have a chance to review a comprehensive list of these ideas.



- **Reorganizing Grow Pittsburgh Departments** from Community Projects, School Gardens and Farm Education & Production to three teams that focus on 1) garden designs, builds and resource distribution 2) Education across ages and venues 3) Production and larger farm management
- **The creation of new organization-wide positions** that span across programs. Initial thoughts for these positions include an adult education coordinator, a youth education coordinator and a policy position.
- **A visual rebrand of the organization**, including an updated logo. Some staff members expressed that the existing logo is inadequate because it visually represents buildings (and in some cases, specific companies), rather than food or plants.
- **A re-prioritization in the Community Projects Department** to step back from the 2-year new garden build program towards emphasizing the network and sustainability programming.
- **Establish a land-linking platform** to connect land owners with interested farmers and gardeners in the region.
- Strengthen the **Pittsburgh Public School ownership** and engagement with school gardens to include the hiring of PPS garden coordinators and the integration of school gardens into established curriculum across all ages and content areas.
- **Consider an alternate home-office** for Grow Pittsburgh based on whether the hybrid work model surfaces as the most effective path forward.
- **Expand the new farmer support** effort to include a Grow Pittsburgh led grant program for new farmers to access funds and technical support for new and established urban farms
- **Creation of an organizational mascot** that can be the public, cheerful face of Grow Pittsburgh. This could include someone dressed in costume, visual branding, and merchandising. The mascot could be specially adapted to appeal to children at events, and through possible merchandising opportunities such as storybooks, coloring books, and branded materials. One staff member suggested Tina the Turnip, an already-beloved fictitious character of Grow Pittsburgh.
- Utilize the Braddock Farm Stand and potentially Garden Dreams as a **“re-distribution” hub** for community markets as a way to sell and distribute additional products and support local initiatives.
- Publication of a **Grow Pittsburgh cookbook**, using recipes from communities where community gardens, production sites and school gardens are present.
- Prioritize and orient communications around **Climate Justice and Stormwater Management** and their direct connection with food growing projects.
- Work with partners to **host an Allegheny County Fair**, focused on local growing and food products, as well as fun activities.

- Explore new horizons in **demonstration farming** to include:
  - Use of biological pesticides including insecticides, fungicides
  - Plant and immune system boosters
  - Low tech, low cost, DIY solutions to common farm challenges: e.g. germination chamber, drawing on the “farmhack” movement.
  - Two wheel tractor technologies: Small scale farm cultivation, plastic laying, toolbars and PTO uses.
  - Enhancing plant health with simple tweaks: shade cloth, plastic mulch, etc
  - Plant variety trials and innovative variety growing and harvesting systems, e.g. salanova
  - Using research of plant behaviors to enhance crop cultural practices e.g. cherry trellising systems, fall planting strawberries
  - High tunnel growing: enhancing plant health and crop quality with cover.
  - Product marketing, online ordering, etc
  - Minimum tillage cultural practices
  - Creating on-farm fertility
  - Managing soil nutrition for enhanced crop flavor and nutrient value to consumer
- Revisit the **Grow Pittsburgh mission and vision** to ensure that it is aligned with the new strategy. One potential tightening up of the mission could be: “We help people learn how to grow food and share in the many benefits that gardens (or gardening) provide to our neighborhoods.”



# APPENDIX 1: STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE USE OF PLAN

As you embark on the path towards achieving the goals, strategies and objectives outlined in this strategic plan, it is important to create systems and procedures to ensure that the plan remains relevant and an active tool throughout the next five years. Below are some strategies and best practices for utilizing the plan for both staff and board.

## GENERAL:

- Don't be afraid to edit and adapt aspects of the plan as the food growing landscape shifts over the next five years.
- Read through the plan early in the first year and highlight the components that are particularly relevant and meaningful for you personally and for your department. Regularly return to these highlighted areas to ensure progress is being made.
- Practice describing the overarching goals, strategies and general plan with your neighbors, friends and program participants so that it becomes second-nature.

## STAFF STRATEGIES:

- Read through the program specific narratives and five-year work plans in advance of the 6-month staff goal setting process. Ensure that at least two of each staff members' goals reflect and support initiatives and strategies outlined in the program specific sections and work plans.
- At the end of each calendar year, work in program teams to review the program narratives and work plans, identify strategies to focus on for the following year, and make edits and additions based on current priorities and community needs.
- Dedicate a portion of the staff retreat or end of year staff meetings to reflect on major goals and strategies.
- When pursuing new partnerships, programs and opportunities, reflect upon the strategic planning major goals and strategies to ensure general alignment.
- Work to update communications to reflect initiatives and priorities outlined in the strategic plan
- Consider establishing committees to advance the JEDI and Community Engagement priorities from the plan.

## BOARD:

- Structure staff report-outs to the board of directors around the main strategic planning strategies.
- Consider establishing a Community Engagement board sub-committee to help advance this aspect of the strategic plan.
- Review the Board priorities section of the plan at least annually towards implementing recommendations.
- Incorporate a review of the strategic plan into the new board member orientation and onboarding.
- Structure a portion of the board and staff retreat around reflecting upon or advancing key aspects of the strategic plan.



# APPENDIX 2: GROW PITTSBURGH JEDI PLAN

## BACKGROUND

Grow Pittsburgh is an urban agriculture nonprofit with a mission to teach people how to grow food and promote the benefits that gardens bring to our neighborhoods. We believe that access to locally-grown, culturally appropriate, chemical-free fruits and vegetables is a right, not a privilege. We envision the day when everyone in our city and region grows and eats fresh, local, and affordable food.

In order for Grow Pittsburgh to meet its mission and to reach towards its vision, it is essential that we focus on justice, equity, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our internal processes and external programming.

## FIVE YEAR OVERARCHING GOALS

As we continue to work in diverse neighborhoods, schools and communities of Pittsburgh, our five year goals include ensuring that our board and staff reflect the great diversity of the communities that we serve, that our programming specifically supports BIPOC communities, farms and businesses in Pittsburgh and that our communications reflect and support a commitment to social justice and equity.

## OBJECTIVES

Our 5 year JEDI plan includes a focus on five main initiatives with specific objectives, strategies and indicators for each.





# 1. POSITIVE, REFLECTIVE AND INCLUSIVE WORK CULTURE

At Grow Pittsburgh, we know that growing food is a vehicle through which we can create meaningful social, economic, and environmental change in our neighborhoods. Our work is focused on people and begins with our staff.

OBJECTIVE	PROCEDURES	INDICATORS
<b>Ensure that all staff feel welcome and have space to provide feedback towards improving the work environment and culture</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All staff have regular check-ins with their supervisor with explicit opportunities to provide feedback towards improving the work environment</li> <li>2. Prioritize celebration along with work through appreciations at staff meeting, celebration of birthdays, and regular shared meals</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Staff report high levels of job satisfaction in end of year review with particular attention to staff of color.</li> </ol>
<b>Prioritize creating space for having courageous conversations around diversity and social justice</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct monthly social justice meetings open to all staff.</li> <li>2. Convene monthly social justice sub-committee meetings for the following committees: diversity and inclusion in hiring, social justice training for staff, external communications.</li> <li>3. Create space at all staff meetings to report out on social justice work and also to allow time to discuss challenges and successes as it relates to our diversity plan and overall social justice goals.</li> <li>4. Create space and resources for a monthly person of color affinity group meeting.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All established meetings and sessions are conducted and notes are shared with all staff.</li> </ol>
<b>Support the professional and personal development of staff members as it relates to issues around biases, social justice and diversity</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create regular professional development opportunities for the entire staff to explore biases and increase cultural competency. Recent examples included training from the YWCA and collaborations with the Islamic Center of Pittsburgh and the Latino Family Center of Pittsburgh.</li> <li>2. Provide individual professional development budgets for all staff and encourage using it for anti-oppression and diversity trainings including The People's Institute's 2-day anti-racism training, the Black Urban Grower's Conference and Inlusant's diversity in leadership training.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct at least two all-staff trainings per year</li> <li>2. At least five staff members each year use their professional development money to further their knowledge and experience in diversity, inclusion and social justice practices.</li> </ol>

## 2. DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE HIRING AND ONBOARDING STRATEGIES

We recognize the importance and value of recruiting diverse candidates and ensuring that the onboarding process for all new hires is welcoming, accessible and inclusive.

OBJECTIVE	PROCEDURES	INDICATORS
<b>Ensure that the candidate pool for new staff and board positions reflect the diversity of our city</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Follow the established marketing and outreach protocol for all new hires which includes sending to an established list of diverse partners, posting to wide reaching job search engines and distributing flyers at wide-ranging locations.</li> <li>2. Follow established protocol for the structure of the written job description which ensures that the posting is fair, appealing and accessible to diverse candidates.</li> <li>3. Strengthen and prioritize building sustainable talent pipelines to diverse hiring sources through Grow Pittsburgh's workforce development programs and those of partner organizations.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The applicant pool and interviewed candidates reflect the diversity of the groups that we work with.</li> <li>2. New hires add to the diversity of our staff based on race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual identity and orientation, ability, economic status, religion and experience.</li> <li>3. Receive applications from external and internal pipeline program participants.</li> </ol>
<b>Ensure that the hiring and decision making process is objective and addresses unintended biases</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use established, objective rubrics for evaluating resumes and interviews.</li> <li>2. Ensure that at least three people are on all hiring committees and that the group reflects the diversity of our staff.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Established rubrics are used for all hiring and notes are taken to be shared with the Executive Director</li> </ol>
<b>Conduct inclusive and welcoming onboarding practices</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Follow onboarding procedures to be conducted by the direct supervisor, program team, and the Executive Director and Director of Operations.</li> <li>2. Prioritize training on social justice, diversity and inclusion practices in initial onboarding</li> <li>3. Discuss and prioritize opportunities for career advancement for all employees</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Procedures are followed and tracked through the Director of Operations</li> </ol>

### 3. CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE PROGRAMMING

It is essential when working with communities around growing food, that we are specifically intentional about honoring and highlighting the traditions, experiences and knowledge of program participants. We work to ensure that programming is accessible to all residents in our region.

OBJECTIVE	PROCEDURES	INDICATORS
<b>Create and use culturally appropriate curriculum in school garden and youth programming</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All garden educators use established lesson plans that are culturally and age appropriate and address topics surrounding food, farming, history and the environment.</li> <li>2. When bringing in outside chefs and speakers, prioritize hiring family members of students and residents of the school community</li> <li>3. All garden educators make appropriate accommodations during lessons for students in collaboration with aids and school professionals</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lessons taught are tracked by garden educators</li> <li>2. Teacher survey results indicate that programming is culturally appropriate and relevant to their classroom learning.</li> </ol>
<b>Ensure that public workshops are accessible to all</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Choose locations for workshops that are accessible.</li> <li>2. Ensure that workshops are affordable and offer need based scholarships for all workshops</li> <li>3. Include childcare</li> <li>4. Create workshop schedules that accommodate working families</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sites are accessible</li> <li>2. At least 10% of participants are using scholarships to workshops</li> <li>3. Childcare is provided</li> <li>4. Workshops are conducted at varying times and include weeknights and weekends</li> </ol>
<b>Ensure that our community gardens are safe and inclusive spaces that honor the traditions and knowledge of the communities that garden there.</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct inclusive planning sessions that highlight local leadership, cultures and experiences.</li> <li>2. Work as a facilitator and resource in establishing gardens, but ensure that key decision making is held by the community gardeners</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Garden procedures are created by gardeners and unique to each specific community.</li> </ol>

## 4. RELEVANT AND IMPACTFUL COMMUNICATIONS

OBJECTIVE	PROCEDURES	INDICATORS
Utilize Grow Pittsburgh's position in the community and commitment to education to establish a shared language and understanding of how urban farming intersects with issues of systemic oppression, equity and justice.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a public document that defines key JEDI terms and phrases that live on the Grow Pittsburgh website.</li> <li>2. Utilize the definitions document to identify certain terms that can be discussed in staff training and utilized by all staff members in program delivery and communications.</li> <li>3. Definitions and resources are referenced in workshops and public trainings to promote a shared understanding and language.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Website analytics show that the definitions page on the website is among the highest visited pages.</li> <li>2. Staff feel confident in adopting a shared language around JEDI effort and report engaging in supportive conversations with program participants</li> </ol>
Work to elevate partner efforts and highlight the intersectionality between Grow Pittsburgh's work and broader justice oriented efforts in the city and country.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Edit the Grow Pittsburgh public stance process to allow for more flexibility and opportunity to engage in larger social issues that intersect with the direct work of Grow Pittsburgh.</li> <li>2. Utilize the public stance process in deciding when and how to publicly engage in JEDI related events and initiatives.</li> <li>3. Explore and identify additional ways beyond social media that Grow Pittsburgh can utilize to advance its JEDI goals and partner-led initiatives which could include teacher trainings and newsletters.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The public stance process document is effectively being used and staff report that the document is easy to use and effective.</li> <li>2. There is high engagement in JEDI oriented social media posts.</li> <li>3. Alternative ways of supporting JEDI efforts outside of social media are utilized alongside and at times in place of social media engagement.</li> </ol>



## 5. DELIBERATE EFFORTS TO SUPPORT BLACK-LED BUSINESSES AND FARMS

OBJECTIVE	PROCEDURES	INDICATORS
Leverage Grow Pittsburgh's reputation and position with the funding community to support other black-led initiatives and non-profits.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Connect interested funding partners to black-led organizations and partner farms.</li> <li>2. Continue to collaborate with other farms and organizations in fundraising and program efforts that would direct funding to black-led initiatives.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grow Pittsburgh can identify yearly at least four non-profits or partner farms that they helped financially support through following the outlined procedures.</li> <li>2. The number of partner farms and organizations that Grow Pittsburgh has helped to bring financial support to grows over each year of this plan</li> </ol>
Support black-owned businesses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Utilize the existing Grow Pittsburgh vendor spreadsheet to specifically highlight black-led businesses to support.</li> <li>2. Prioritize engaging black-owned caterers and service providers for on-farm and public events</li> </ol>	Grow Pittsburgh spending is monitored each year and the percentage spent in support of black-led businesses grows each year.
Support new farm businesses	Follow the "grower support plan" as outlined in the strategic plan to support new and emerging farmers through Grow Pittsburgh programming alongside partner programming.	The number of black-led farm and food businesses increases each year



# APPENDIX 3:

## SCHOOL GARDEN 5-YEAR WORK PLAN

### YEAR 1 (2022)

FLAGSHIP PROGRAM	LEARNING GARDEN MODEL	HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMMING	EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMING	GREATER SCHOOL GARDEN COMMUNITY
Emphasize the social, emotional and health benefits of gardening during a pandemic in fundraising, teacher and school outreach				
Update existing job descriptions and expand staffing based on review and analysis conducted prior to and during the strategic planning process				
Read through and edit existing lesson plans to ensure accuracy and applicability for varying school garden settings				
Develop new lesson plans specifically targeting high school and early childhood age groups				
Review other national school garden resources and lesson plans to help inform what gaps and unique perspectives Grow Pittsburgh can offer. Consider embedding links to outside resources on Grow Pittsburgh website				
Develop and implement a range of options for building teacher capacity. Proposed initiatives may include monthly newsletter, regional teacher trainings, resource distribution				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with Montessori stakeholders and administration to establish priorities and plan for ongoing engagement as it relates to teacher engagement and the potential moving of school buildings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize the 40 graduated gardens and those in existing programming to ensure that they all have what they need before thinking about expansion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Farm Education team to explore whether collaboration on program development would be beneficial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate regional need and identify priority and rate of expansion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicate at least one workshop to focus on social, emotional and health benefits of school gardening during a pandemic</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test various models for expanding to grades beyond k-2 at Colfax and Dilworth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that resource distribution to schools is a top priority. Explore new and more efficient ways to get supplies to schools that could include volunteer engagement, central distribution centers or the postal system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop new topics and lesson plans to include entrepreneurship, social justice, and other interdisciplinary ways to utilize a garden space for older students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop specific lesson plans and teacher training modules to specifically support the needs of young learners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and develop models for expansion to other sites that might benefit from the school garden model. This could include more affluent schools, shelters and community members</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with school stakeholders to identify potential infrastructure improvements that would benefit the students and serve as a model for gardens across the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit each garden and utilize school garden report data to inform distribution of time and resources based on need and separate from the number of years in programming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review all School Garden earned revenue ideas prioritizing mission alignment and cost/benefit analysis</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize flagship garden educator insight and experience when planning teacher workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the general interest and need for new k-12 school gardens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify how/if GP can engage with schools outside of Allegheny County in a more limited capacity</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on a plan to make flagship school gardens ADA accessible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on staffing analysis during strategic planning process, consider hiring another garden educator if the funding is available</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work to secure learning garden product for future repairs and garden builds in new relationship with Big Green</li> </ul>	

## YEARS 2-3 (2023-2024)

FLAGSHIP PROGRAM	LEARNING GARDEN MODEL	HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMMING	EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMING	GREATER SCHOOL GARDEN COMMUNITY
Complete lesson plan editing and creation for all age-levels. Edit and update website to make it easy for teachers and educators to navigate and access resources				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate whether expanding flagship model to new schools and or high schools is aligned with need and current priority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin expansion to new gardens as the need and capacity allows</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share best practices and educational models for older students through specific teacher trainings and regional workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to expand to new ECE centers according to year 1 evaluation and community need</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement expansion to new sites according to findings in year 1 planning</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement infrastructure changes and improvements that were identified in year 1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to prioritize the success of existing school gardens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on findings in year 1, consider collaborating with Farm Education to build connections and a pathway for students engaged in high school programming to access summer programming at GP and partner organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and share early childhood school garden toolkit based on experience and GP created resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the Food Policy Council to identify key policy opportunities that would advance and solidify school gardening work in the district.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement programming in higher grades based on the results of year 1 pilot</li> </ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider expanding teacher workshop series to include more expansive regional trainings</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore whether and how flagship school gardens could be utilized for summer programming</li> </ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update website and school garden offerings to include earned revenue initiatives identified in year 1</li> </ul>

## YEARS 4-5 (2025-2026)

FLAGSHIP PROGRAM	LEARNING GARDEN MODEL	HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMMING	EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMMING	GREATER SCHOOL GARDEN COMMUNITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement findings from expansion review and potentially start 1-4 new flagship gardens depending on strategy established in year 2-3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to adapt and grow program based on data</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build network and connections between ECE centers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore and pilot new applications for the school garden model at locations that could include shelters and community centers.</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to grow effort based on data from years 1-3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support the growing network of garden teachers and educators through newsletters, resource sharing and trainings.</li> </ul>



# APPENDIX 4: COMMUNITY PROJECTS 5-YEAR WORK PLAN

## YEAR 1 (2022)

COMMUNITY GARDENS	COMMUNITY GARDEN NETWORK (CGN)	GARDEN RESOURCE CENTER (GRC)	POLICY ENGAGEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop more nuanced menu of services and offerings for year 2-3 implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add POC as a metric for Community Garden Sustainability Fund (CGSF) decision making criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement GRC and general membership overlap and communications plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize connection to on-the ground farmers and gardeners to identify key issues and needs for growers in the region</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek community feedback on communications to ensure clarity and reduce jargon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze and explore the cost/benefit and implementation strategy for allowing CGSF to cover insurance and utilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further explore GRC satellite and pop-up idea through technical and logistical planning and community engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to represent the needs of stakeholders in regional and state policy meetings and initiatives</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore pros and cons and implementation strategies for paying community garden coordinators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for CGSF changes planned for year 2-3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify whether a shared model led by partner organizations would be possible for GRC satellite expansion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase participation in Pittsburgh Food Policy Council initiatives and communications with PFPC leadership</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot paying CG coordinators based on plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify internally and through external communications what participation in CGN network entails and how it is different from what GP offers to all community gardens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore how/whether Garden Dreams would be a good satellite GRC site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build relationships with local government leaders to raise awareness and support for community gardens and farms</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review all CG earned revenue ideas prioritizing mission alignment and cost/benefit analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop full scope of garden sage program and fundraise for year 2 implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with each department to identify specific ways that the GRC can support their programs and participants</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify stormwater management and climate resilience best practices in gardening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Communications and Farm Ed departments to ensure that adult workshop offerings meet community gardener needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring back advisory committee to help inform future location and satellite site decisions</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate all community garden network events (seed swap, TRUSS, etc) for whether each should be run within the scope of CGN or elsewhere</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a back up plan if the need to move arises quickly</li> </ul>	

## YEARS 2-3 (2023-2024)

COMMUNITY GARDENS	COMMUNITY GARDEN NETWORK (CGN)	GARDEN RESOURCE CENTER (GRC)	POLICY ENGAGEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share and implement new menu of services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase CGSF budget to meet the increased need</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement satellite and/or pop-up distribution site role-out based on year 1 findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to advance year 1 priorities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize “phases framework to inform level of engagement with new gardens, recognizing that GP does not have to lead all phases</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rollout CGSF insurance and utilities coverage if year 1 analysis calls for it</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize Garden Dreams as initial satellite site if possible (could be year 1 if appropriate)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider whether an organization-wide policy advocate position would advance the goals and mission of the organization and fundraise accordingly</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leave space in work loads to support high priority and time sensitive garden requests that come outside of traditional application process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy partnership initiatives to only include larger projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decide whether current location is ideal or whether shift is necessary and develop a plan for move if necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build upon local government connections to support fundraising efforts through council member discretionary funds and other government initiated funding</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include discretionary budget line to allow for 1-off projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create separate budget for smaller GP led support projects that can be implemented more quickly and through an easier application process</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a toolkit of best practices for paying CG coordinators to be shared</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create third tier existing garden support level through regional supply distribution events (possibly in conjunction with satellite/pop-up GRC initiative)</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement winter community garden coordinator training program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement “garden sage” program</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include fee for service offerings on menu of services as per year 1 analysis and recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potentially shift some events out of network programming per year 1 analysis</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share stormwater management and climate resilience best practices in gardening through signage, workshops and conference presentations</li> </ul>			

## YEARS 4-5 (2025-2026)

COMMUNITY GARDENS	COMMUNITY GARDEN NETWORK (CGN)	GARDEN RESOURCE CENTER (GRC)	POLICY ENGAGEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate and adapt menu of services and communications strategy based on year 2-3 experience</li> <li>Expand or eliminate paid CG coordinator program based on year 2-3 data</li> <li>Expand and adapt fee for service offerings based on year 2-3 data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and allocate full CGSF budget that would allow for most, if not all, eligible projects to be supported</li> <li>Evaluate and adapt CGSF, garden sage, and overall CGN effort based on year 2-3 data analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand and/or end satellite and pop-up initiative base on year 2-3 data and community need</li> <li>Move GRC if necessary and/or deemed beneficial for the organization and community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to adapt and prioritize the policy initiatives and priorities that would best support regional growers</li> </ul>



# APPENDIX 5: FARM EDUCATION AND PRODUCTION 5-YEAR WORK PLAN

## YEAR 1 (2022)

YOUTH PROGRAMMING	ADULT EDUCATION AND FARMER TRAINING	FARM STANDS AND FOOD ACCESS	PRODUCTION SITES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with other GP Departments to develop clear ways in which they can utilize farm sites to advance their educational goals. Ensure that these plans include programming that is led by department teams and supported by production staff.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a cost/benefit analysis of seedling sales and farm stands through both a financial and educational and community building lens towards identifying a sales goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit other farms and outdoor education sites to help develop ideas and create a comprehensive on-farm signage plan in alignment with JEDI and other Strategic priorities. Fundraise for initiative.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize questions in full strategic plan to develop a comprehensive youth engagement and programming plan for production sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with communications team to identify best means to share videos and time-sensitive updates from the field</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and distribute a survey for customers to help shape future plans around farm stands, seedling sales and events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to prioritize community engagement as outlined in the community engagement section of this plan</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider youth programming that could include the current summer program (UFIT) but also includes year-round programming, inter-departmental programming, and partner engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with other departments to implement a workshop series and communications plan specifically designed for community gardeners, backyard gardeners, school gardeners and aspiring farmers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase educational benefits of farm stand by focusing on recipes, growing guides, tours, tastings, etc...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider reducing the number of varieties and crops grown at Braddock Farms to decrease labor intensity</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-establish the youth market aspect of programming as the pandemic allows</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a plan for establishing a more robust two to three track adult training program (outlined specifically in strategic plan narrative)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support the Homewood Market with staffing, organization and produce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplement crops for farm stands from local farms</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specifically clarify all staff roles in supporting youth programming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue use of farm share and seasonal staff positions as opportunities to provide meaningful on-farm experience to aspiring farmers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire a part-time, seasonal staff member or intern to focus on sales and marketing for farm stands and seedling sales</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider and design a “pre-apprenticeship” model mediating 1-2 paid seasonal staff positions to interested individuals with less extensive farming experience</li> </ul>		



## YEARS 2-3 (2023-2024)

YOUTH PROGRAMMING	ADULT EDUCATION AND FARMER TRAINING	FARM STANDS AND FOOD ACCESS	PRODUCTION SITES
Consider renaming department to better reflect the goals and programming of the department			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement programming and expanded use of production sites by other departments based on year 1 findings and plan.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize findings in year 1 and 2 to set specific goals and associated staff time and resources for seedling sale and farm stands for year 3+</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement new on-farm signage initiative across all farm sites</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize finding from year 1 to implement a new youth programming strategy on production sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement social media and video sharing plan as designed in collaboration with communications team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to focus on community building and education as part of farm stand and food distribution effort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to prioritize community engagement as outlined in the community engagement section of this plan</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to strengthen and expand the youth market programming based on feedback and data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement new two-track adult training and education program that provides 1-off workshops for everyone (similar to the past) and a cohort model that requires full engagement and participation for entire program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition away from leadership role at Homewood Market as capacity and growing expands from other partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritize visiting and learning from local and national programs that could help inform program development at GP farm sites with attention to JEDI Priorities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider adapting the youth market program to include a spring program specific to the seedling sale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate scope of adult education and training program and consider hiring a staff member to support general adult education across the organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a toolkit for establishing site-based farm stands</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on year 1 analysis, potentially include 1-2 seasonal positions for less qualified individuals while reserving the main seasonal position for farmers with experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer trainings and consulting support for new and emerging farmers markets and stands</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work to create a pathway for farm share workers to feed into seasonal farm positions at Grow Pittsburgh</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus farm stand energy and resources on Shiloh, Wilkinsburg and Braddock</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on year 1 analysis, identify best model for managing farm stand staffing</li> </ul>	

## YEARS 4-5 (2025-2026)

YOUTH PROGRAMMING	ADULT EDUCATION AND FARMER TRAINING	FARM STANDS AND FOOD ACCESS	PRODUCTION SITES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to adapt and evolve youth programming based on interest, need and learning from the past</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to grow and adapt adult training program based on data and experience in years 2-3</li> <li>• Continue to grow and adapt workshare and paid season farm staff initiative based on experiences from years 1-3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize data and experience from year 3 to adjust seedling and farm stand sales accordingly</li> <li>• Based on year 1-3 work, consider limiting or transitioning away from Homewood Market to focus energy towards on-farm education and food distribution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to prioritize community engagement as outlined in the community engagement section of this plan</li> </ul>





# APPENDIX 6: COMMUNICATIONS AND OPERATIONS 5-YEAR WORK PLAN

## YEAR 1 (2022)

OPERATIONS AND HR	COMMUNICATIONS	DEVELOPMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire, train and establish workflow for a new communications coordinator, development coordinator and operations manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamline newsletter segmentation and sign-ups according to the details strategic plan narrative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the established development plan with specific focus on expanding individual, corporate and foundation giving</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to build rapport, consistent workflow and communications to ensure that the expanded operations team is well high functioning and well supported</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate current info-hub resources and identify needs and opportunities for improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building on the initial planned giving roll-out, prioritize consistent communication around planned giving campaign</li> <li>• Identify one donor who intends to make a legacy gift and see if they will provide testimonial for future communications needs around planned giving &amp; bequests</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the full scope of HR duties necessary at Grow Pittsburgh and distribute responsibilities across Executive Director, Operations Manager and Program Directors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edit and remove dead links from website and work to make easy changes to improve navigation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop brochure and web page with more planned giving information and establish resource contacts for donors who wish to set up more complicated legacy gifts</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a relationship with an outside contracted HR professional to assist when needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a Grow Pittsburgh YouTube channel as the main outlet for on-farm education from the production sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlight program initiatives from the strategic plan to inform year 2 fundraising strategy and outreach</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the existing pay scale document for the organization and make changes aligned with industry standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the pros and cons to establishing a TikTok account. Pending results, create a strategy and training for optimizing the platform impact.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate program specific earned revenue strategy and provide feedback and guidance around year 2 adoption of certain initiatives</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider raising the minimum wage for hourly employees to reflect the equivalent hourly rate of entry level full-time staff members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with program staff to connect communications and fundraising staff with community partners and program participants open to sharing their stories</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to be vigilant and follow best practices in public health as you navigate the pandemic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with program staff to streamline communications and clarify program offerings</li> <li>• Outline the need and vision for a professional video initiative that can lead towards fundraising and implementation in future years</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize team building, appreciations and celebrations to uphold staff morale and culture during the pandemic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start a communications internship program in the summer</li> </ul>	

## YEARS 2-3 (2023-2024)

OPERATIONS AND HR	COMMUNICATIONS	DEVELOPMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate HR responsibility distribution based on year 1 experience and redistribute tasks and expectations as needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with program teams to create new info-hub/suite of online resources for growers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create yearly development plans based on strategic initiatives and community needs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on staff interviews and industry standards, consider moving to a hybrid in-person/ remote work plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare and implement a comprehensive revamp of the GP website to ensure alignment with new strategic priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider writing a multi-year fundraising plan if any larger initiatives materialize</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate whether the current office is meeting needs and consider alternatives if necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with all departments to identify plan for expanding video content and best utilizing the Grow Pittsburgh youtube channel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify GP development staff role in program specific earned revenue strategies</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish new routines, all-staff gatherings and opportunities for team building and collaboration based on the newly established work expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create shared language around program offerings that can be used in all program descriptions and public communications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building on the initial planned giving roll-out, prioritize consistent communication around planned giving campaign</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire a professional to develop video content as outlined in narrative</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on success and feedback from the pilot internship program, consider continuation or expansion to more season and/or areas of operations and communications</li> </ul>	



## YEARS 4-5 (2025-2026)

### OPERATIONS AND HR

- Evaluate operations staffing structure to ensure adequate capacity to continue to advance organizational mission
- Pending the established in-office work routines and procedures, consider moving offices if the current space is no longer meeting the needs of the team
- Continue to monitor staff morale and organizational culture to ensure continued cohesion in a more remote work environment

### COMMUNICATIONS

- Continue to evolve and adapt communications strategies based on best practices and current trends

### DEVELOPMENT

- Continue to follow yearly development plans and adapt to meet the community needs





# APPENDIX 7: NATIONAL PROGRAM INSPIRATION

## GP Program Area: UFIT/Youth Education

### The Food Project

[thefoodproject.org/youth](http://thefoodproject.org/youth)

#### Program of note:

Dirt Crew



#### Notes on what we could learn/ what inspires you

The dirt project is their year-round program that could help inform year round education with high school students on production farms

#### Questions that could be asked in a direct conversation with folks at the organization

How do they structure pay of youth?

#### Notes

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## GP Program Area: New Farmer Training

### MSU

[canr.msu.edu/organic\\_farmer\\_training\\_program/index](http://canr.msu.edu/organic_farmer_training_program/index)

#### Program of note:

Organic Farmer  
Training Program



#### Notes on what we could learn/ what inspires you

Structured curriculum throughout the season with hands on component

#### Questions that could be asked in a direct conversation with folks at the organization

whats staffing structure to run this program? what does it set up participants to do? what are participants next steps after graduating program?

#### Notes

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**GP Program Area:**  
**Farmer Support**

**FreshFarm**

*[freshfarm.org/farmer-support](http://freshfarm.org/farmer-support)*

**Program of note:**  
Farmer Fund



**Notes on what we could learn/ what inspires you**

Annual competitive grant opportunity to fund new and small growers. similar to Community Projects funding of community gardens, but for small businesses and farms

**Questions that could be asked in a direct conversation with folks at the organization**

how do you fund this?

**Notes**

we could replicate our existing community projects grant program (rather than creating a new program from scratch), but it would target a different demographic if we can find funding for this program

**GP Program Area:**  
**New Farmer Training**

**New Entry**

*[nesfp.org/farmer-training](http://nesfp.org/farmer-training)*

**Program of note:**  
Farmer Training



**Notes on what we could learn/ what inspires you**

Several different tracks: Explore farming (2 hour workshop to gauge if farming is right for you), Crop Production workshop series (learn how to grow stuff), Business Planning Course, also Incubator farm for those who make it through all the trainings.

**Questions that could be asked in a direct conversation with folks at the organization**

interested in outcomes, farmer training is great. how do people get connected with a place to grow crops tho?

**Notes**

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**GP Program Area:**  
**Workshops/Events**

**Philadelphia  
Horticultural Society**

*phsonline.org/events*

**Program of note:**

Workshops/ Events



**Notes on what we could learn/ what inspires you**  
this organization is kinda a mashup of tree pgh, grow pgh, and phipps. solid workshop/ event series to engage and build a membership/ growing community

**Questions that could be asked in a direct conversation with folks at the organization**

workshops staffing and logistics, whats membership engagement look like a their community of people who attend the events?

**Notes**

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**GP Program Area:**  
**Adult Ed**

**Philadelphia  
Horticultural Society**

*phsonline.org/for-gardeners/  
gardeners-blog*

**Program of note:**

Blog



**Notes on what we could learn/ what inspires you**  
growers blog

**Questions that could be asked in a direct conversation with folks at the organization**

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**Notes**

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**GP Program Area:**  
**Adult Ed online Articles**

## North Carolina Extension

[content.ces.ncsu.edu/  
catalog/?keywords=gardening](http://content.ces.ncsu.edu/catalog/?keywords=gardening)

**Program of note:**  
Publications

**NC STATE**  
**EXTENSION**

**Notes on what we could learn/ what inspires you**  
online library of articles that grows every year as they  
write new articles

**Questions that could be asked in a direct  
conversation with folks at the organization**

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**Notes**

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**GP Program Area:**  
**Family Education**

## Bartrams Garden

[bartramsgarden.org/what-to-  
do/family-programs](http://bartramsgarden.org/what-to-do/family-programs)

**Program of note:**  
Family Programs



**Notes on what we could learn/ what inspires you**  
events targeted at families, also homeschool days

**Questions that could be asked in a direct  
conversation with folks at the organization**  
how to staff this?

**Notes**

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GP Program Area:  
UFIT

## Urban Roots MN

[urbanrootsmn.org](http://urbanrootsmn.org)

**Program of note:**

Market Garden/Cook Fresh



**Notes on what we could learn/ what inspires you**

Youth returned year after year, got siblings involved, etc. We interviewed youth & their parents - much more labor intensive, but yielded very positive results.

**Questions that could be asked in a direct conversation with folks at the organization**

Understanding year round programming & pay for youth, returning youth compensation, etc

**Notes**

Hanna used to work for this org as an Americorps VISTA - I recruited, conducted interviews, coordinated skill building workshops/field trips, did all around "capacity building"

GP Program Area:  
Education

## Omaha Sprouts

[omahasprouts.org/blog](http://omahasprouts.org/blog)

**Program of note:**

Blog



**Notes on what we could learn/ what inspires you**

nice useable blog format!

**Questions that could be asked in a direct conversation with folks at the organization**

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**Notes**

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THANK YOU

