

Questions to consider when Starting a Community Garden

Vision/purpose

- What type of community garden does the group want to create?
- What is the purpose of the garden?
- Who will the garden serve?

Organizational structure

- What type of organizational structure do you want? (i.e. Single site coordinator vs. leadership team)
- What type of decision-making structure will you use? Who makes decisions?
- How will you change the rules once you've made them?
- How will you ensure that maximum participation is encouraged to shape the garden moving forward?

Leadership

- If you choose a leadership team – what form will it take?
- Who is willing to serve on a garden leadership team?
- How will that leadership be replaced over time (and new leaders encouraged to come forward?)
- Who will do what? There are several difference roles that must be performed (some people can perform multiple roles)
 - Garden Coordinator (point person for entire garden)
 - Maintenance Coordinator (keeps an eye on overall garden site)
 - Plot assignment and management of a waiting list
 - Communication (keeping gardeners in the know about events, etc.)
 - Money management (collecting plot fees, managing budget)
 - Optional roles (you can come up with your own, too!)
 - Food bank plot coordinator
 - Education coordinator
 - Children's area coordinator
 - Outreach/Events coordinator
 - Compost coordinator

Participation (minimum levels of participation)/ Maintenance

- What level of participation do we expect from gardeners at both the Individual level (maintaining plots weed free) and the Communal level (participating in the maintenance of communal areas)
- How will we provide opportunities to participate (assign tasks, work parties)?
- How will we deal with it if people don't participate at the expected level?

Communication

- What is the best way for the group to stay in touch?
- When should meetings take place?
- How will other people and organizations know about the group and the

garden? How do we involve the neighbors that aren't here?

Conflict Resolution

- How will we handle issues where people do not agree?
- How we will ensure that our garden is a welcoming place for all to contribute ideas?
- How will we ensure that our decision making process is transparent?

Resources

- What are some of the additional resources in your neighborhood? Are there churches, Boys and Girls clubs, schools, local businesses, or other organizations that may want to be a part of the effort?
- How much gardening experience does the group have?
- Are there individuals or organizations willing to provide materials and expertise?
- Will there be a fee charged to cover expenses? Will there be a sliding scale?

Garden layout and plot assignment

Individual vs. Communal areas

- Will space be divided and gardened by individuals and families; will it be gardened collectively by the group, a combination of both? Something else?
- Which types of communal areas are desired (gathering areas, food bank plots, children's areas, etc.)?
- How big are individual plots? What do they look like (raised beds, type of material used, shape, height, etc.)?

Additional Design elements – for example...

- Boundary – fence (what size, what type?)
- Garden beds - location and size, raised beds? What type of material?
- Trees, shrubs, vegetation that will be kept
- Pathways
- Open spaces – gathering places
- Compost bins
- Location of water (hose bibs – how many and where? 1 for every 4 garden beds is a good rule of thumb)
- Communal areas such as flower/herb beds, food bank garden, children's area
- Garden sign/Garden name

Other considerations

- Water access/responsibility for water bill
- Insurance – is additional insurance necessary?
- Neighbors – consider those nearby and involve them to the extent possible
- ADA – while not officially required in all garden, consider making the garden as accessible as possible