



# GRASSROOTS GARDENS WNY

## COMMUNITY GARDEN

### APPLICATION

“Grassroots Gardens WNY is a determined group of activists who educate and lead committed neighborhood gardeners. We collaboratively cultivate and manage more than 1,000,000ft<sup>2</sup>(and growing!) of green space in Buffalo and Niagara Falls. Our work is rooted in the belief that a garden has the power to transform an urban neighborhood. Gardens deliver beauty and escape and produce food in unexpected places. A garden creates a shared sense of purpose that empowers a community, creates environmental awareness and improves public health.”

In this packet:

- 1) Information Guide [Pages 2-3]
- 2) Garden Planning & Narrative [Pages 5-6]
- 3) Garden Contact & Site Information [Pages 7-9]
- 4) Neighborhood Support Sheet [Page 10]
- 5) Garden tips and considerations [Page 11]

Your Tasks:

- Share information provided with your team of neighbors, gardeners, & volunteers
- Send at least one gardener to attend a new gardener onboarding session in the spring
- Ask GGWNY staff any questions that pop up
- Fill out your own timeline using the template provided
- Visit current community gardens for ideas
- Return to Grassroots Gardens by mail or email by November 30th

**\*\*\*The application deadline is November 30th.\*\*\***

For Office Use Only: Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: Accepted: \_\_\_\_\_ Incomplete: \_\_\_\_\_ Rejected: \_\_\_\_\_

Grassroots Gardens WNY  
389 Broadway | Buffalo, NY 14204  
grassrootsgardens.org | 716.783.9653  
grgbuffalo@gmail.com

**\*\*\*By applying you are committing to steward the community garden for AT LEAST 5 years.\*\*\***

***Thank you for taking the first step in beautifying your neighborhood!***

*Grassroots Gardens WNY (GGWNY) is here to assist you through the process of applying to set up a community garden. If you ever have questions about the application please feel free to call or email us at your convenience.*

**The application deadline is November 30th.**

**What is a community garden?**

*A community garden is a piece of land used communally by friends and neighbors for growing vegetables, fruits, and flowers that creates a space for positive social interactions and recreation. There are many different kinds of community gardens – some operate as small farms where each bed is designated a single crop for food pantries; in others, raised beds are cared for and harvested by neighbors; plots can be divided up among neighbors with some plots being openly planted for community harvest. Alternatively, the community garden can be a school-based garden or purely an ornamental space for block club meetings and neighborhood celebrations - the possibilities are endless!*

**Approved Community Garden Projects Will Receive the Following Support from GGWNY:**

- Support to access land if needed
- Limited liability insurance for regular garden activities
- Education and programming support from dedicated staff
- Hydrant or water access in relevant situations (unfortunately, this benefit is limited to the City of Buffalo)
- Free vegetable seedlings annually
- Up to four (4) 4'x8' raised beds free of charge. More beds may be added after the first season depending on garden caretaking and growing capacity and community need. Exceptions may be made for groups that demonstrate particularly strong community interest.
- Free soil: up to 4 yards of soil, compost, or mulch, guaranteed for the first two years.
- Tools and equipment borrowing privileges from our supply, or access to our Tool Library membership
- **If you are applying on behalf of an organization (e.g. community center, youth program, church etc.) please read below:**
  - If you are seeking support for an incorporated organization, GGWNY reserves the right to reduce material support after the first year of garden creation. Though we will make every effort to meet your organizational garden's needs, a primary priority for us in resource sharing is an equitable approach, meaning groups of neighbors without a budget and established fundraising mechanism will receive priority before established nonprofit organizations.
  - We strongly encourage your organization to budget costs into your annual budget as possible (approximately \$200 for soil/compost is a great starting point for most gardens); offsetting costs for Grassroots Gardens helps us pass on these resources to community groups who have limited or no fundraising capacity. Thank you for your understanding!
  - **For organizations with an annual revenue of over \$2,000,000, there is a one-time fee of \$200 to join the GGWNY network.**
  - **For organizations with significant or primary programming centered around gardening and/or vacant lot transformation, please contact our Executive Director directly at [director@grassrootsgardens.org](mailto:director@grassrootsgardens.org) to discuss collaborative opportunities.**

\*\*\*By applying you are committing to steward the community garden for AT LEAST 5 years.\*\*\*

## Community Garden Expectations and Requirements

Please Read this page carefully, it is crucial that you and your fellow gardeners understand what is stated below

This is a brief and not comprehensive summary of what will be required of community gardens that join our network. These actions and standards must be met by the community garden or the garden will be subject to decommissioning. For a more comprehensive list of policies and guidelines, please review our Gardener Code of Conduct and Policies document. **The requirements listed below are the responsibility of the community garden and not of GGWNY staff.**

### **You and your fellow gardeners are required to do the following:**

- Grass must be mowed regularly throughout the season.
- Garden beds including vegetable beds and flower beds must be weeded throughout the season.
- Vegetables must be properly cared for and watered regularly.
- The garden area must be kept clear of trash and debris.
- Seedlings and plants that you receive from our yearly seedling order must be planted in the community garden in a timely manner. Failure to do so may lead to reduced material support in the future.
- Grassroots gardens must be notified of any attempts to purchase the lot that the garden is on.
- Fires are not allowed in the garden, though grilling is allowed.
- No tires of any sort are allowed to be placed in the garden either as a form of decoration or structure.
- By mid-November of each year, gardens are expected to be tidy with any non-winter gardening equipment, tools, or plants to be properly stored or maintained.
- We require that **AT LEAST FIVE** people commit to steward the garden for 5 years acting as a committee to coordinate maintenance and correspondence between GGWNY and your gardeners. It is necessary that you find five people from the community who will commit to helping care for the garden including tasks such as regular weeding, watering, and mowing of the grass in addition to other gardening related needs.
- We require **AT LEAST ONE** person to act as a primary contact with GGWNY and suggest coordination between gardeners to reduce the burden on one person:
  - Gardeners are responsible for self-organizing to pick up plants and materials at distributions, and help gardeners to keep in contact with each other whether through regular meetings, emails, Facebook or other social media accounts.
- We require that at least two people from your garden visit and participate in **AT LEAST ONE** GGWNY community garden orientation. This is to give you an idea of the type of work needed to maintain a community garden, meet other community gardeners, and organize volunteers. We will reach out in late winter to gardeners whose application we accept regarding orientation dates.

If GGWNY receives complaints or feels that a garden is not adhering to being good stewards of the land or to the community, the community garden will be subject to be decommissioned if the problem is not addressed.

In the following pages you will find the Community Garden Application. Take your time in filling out the required information and contact our staff at our office if you have any questions, thank you!

Ready to apply? Make sure you have completed and submitted the following:	Complete or Incomplete?
Seasonal Plan for Garden	
Garden Narrative / Letter of Intent	
Garden Contact & Site Information	
Garden Design	
Neighborhood Support Sheet	
Letters of Support from Neighbors and/or Land Owner	
Commit to attending an orientation session	Name:

**\*\*\*By applying you are committing to steward the community garden for AT LEAST 5 years.\*\*\***

## **Seasonal Plan for Garden**

*Let us know how you'll be spending your time in the garden during the seasons (planting vegetables in spring, building bird houses in summer, hosting community harvest events in fall, closing down the garden for winter, etc...). Use words and pictures to provide us with as much detail as possible.*

*Spring:*

*Summer:*

*Fall:*

*Winter:*

## Garden Narrative / Letter of Intent

How many neighbors have expressed interest in the garden? \_\_\_\_\_

Before you fill out our application we would like to learn more about your community. What are your motivations for creating a community garden? How do you envision your community garden changing the neighborhood or school? How do you plan on getting community members involved in the project?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## Garden Contact & Site Information

### Garden Site Information

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

Location of Proposed Garden (Full Address + Zip code): \_\_\_\_\_

\*Landowner: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Approximate Area of Lot: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*If you seek a garden on a private vacant lot, you must attach a copy of a Letter of Support (LOS) from the landowner granting your group permission to use the lot for the purpose of establishing / maintaining a community garden. The landowner information can be obtained from City of Buffalo <https://property.spataleest.com/ny/buffalo#/>) or for Niagara Falls (<https://niagaracounty.prosgar.com/>). For Niagara Falls and Buffalo, GGWNY can provide a template Letter of Support.*

### Garden Contact Information

Primary Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Contact Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Contact Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Secondary Contact Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Names and phone numbers/emails (if available) of 5 people who are committed to working in the garden:

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\*By applying you are committing to steward the community garden for AT LEAST 5 years.\*\*\***

Are there any other organizations in your neighborhood (or near the proposed garden site) that you have or are forming partnerships with to help with the establishment and upkeep of the community garden? Please list them:

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List sources of funding, in-kind services (supplies, professional advice, plants & materials, volunteers) that your organization plans to put toward creating and maintaining your garden. Include fundraising ideas if possible:

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Is your organization a Block Club? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, are you aware of an existing block club in the neighborhood, and has your organization reached out to the block club for support of this project? We strongly recommend doing so in order to avoid future miscommunication with neighbors. \_\_\_\_\_

Are the gardeners open to corporate sponsorship opportunities if they become available? This often involves some level of sponsorship signage being installed at the garden entrance and/or by raised beds, and can help fund larger renovations and improvements. \_\_\_\_\_

**If you are an ORGANIZATION OR BLOCK CLUB, please fill out the following questions.**

How long has your organization been in existence? \_\_\_\_\_

How many volunteers / members are in your organization? \_\_\_\_\_

Is your organization registered with the IRS as an official 501c (3) nonprofit? \_\_\_\_\_

\*For a list of all Buffalo block clubs and contact information, please contact the Board of Block Clubs at 716- 851-6500\*\*



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## **Garden Design**

*Draw your garden. Give us an idea of how your garden is going to look once finished! Use the space below to draw the layout of your future community garden (i.e where the raised beds will go, trees, shrubs, perennial beds, etc...). Please consider important elements like water accessibility and shade. We don't expect you to be a Picasso, so give it your best effort! We strongly recommend completing this with your neighbors; the more buy-in, the more long-term engagement you build to support the space!*

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## Neighborhood Support Sheet

Your neighbors are interested in establishing a community garden on your block. Please let us know if you support this proposed project, thank you!

**Per the request of the City of Buffalo Real Estate Division, evidence of at least one community meeting where a community garden is discussed is required for City approval if they hold the land of your proposed community garden. Photo or video documentation of meetings or individual videos of neighbors expressing support are being requested by City Hall prior to leasing consideration.** Please reach out to our staff for more information on how to submit this information. Gardens in Niagara Falls and on private land do not need to adhere to this requirement, but we nonetheless encourage planning meetings prior to submitting this application.

**Name**

**Address**

**Signature for support**


## GGWNY Helpful Planning Tips: Planning the Garden

- When laying out the *Garden Design* (reference page 8) think about leaving plenty of room for getting materials in and out, including a place for trucks to deliver large materials, such as topsoil.
- It is also important to set up rules or guidelines for the garden which are written down before starting the garden. These are just a few important topics to consider:
  - o Raised Vegetable Beds - How are the vegetable beds cared for? Are the beds a mix of vegetables or a single crop?
  - o **Harvesting - Gardeners are encouraged to harvest first, but communities play a large part in our gardens and might also pick produce. While this may be frustrating, know that your vegetable was used by someone in need.** Consider which crops you choose to plant; we encourage the establishment of communal beds and reaching out to GGWNY for assistance in signage support.
  - o Watering - How will you water (sprinklers, soaker hoses, hand-held hoses)? Who is responsible for watering? Is there a watering schedule? Where is the closest water source?
  - o Garden Workdays - How often do people have to work in the garden? Are there regularly scheduled volunteer days? What is the protocol for opening and closing the beds for the season? Are people responsible for certain areas?
  - o Neighborhood Relationships - Community gardens are source of diversity. Think about how your community garden interacts with its neighborhood and how you handle concerns about your community garden. If any issues arise, we require notification to our staff and subject to follow our Gardener Conflict Policy.
- We recommend a day of cleanup and preparation before installation of the raised beds, and also a spring workday to open the garden in preparation for the seedling order and a fall workday to close up the garden for the season.
  - o A good first project is to prepare your site before installing raised beds, and to plan where the beds and pathways between them will go. This way you have enough time for a harvest in your first year.
- GGWNY will contact the primary garden contact to coordinate soil and lumber deliveries in the early spring (March - May) for raised bed construction. The primary garden contact and/or another gardener is expected to coordinate with GGWNY staff appropriately. Inconsistent communication will directly lead to the delay of GGWNY being able to offer you support.
- The seedling order will typically need to be picked up mid to late May, depending on seasonal temperatures. Vegetables need to be planted in raised beds above ground that contain at least 10" of organic soil provided by GGWNY, and only with lumber provided by GGWNY as it cannot be pressure treated. Store-bought bagged soil and compost is typically safe, but please do not solicit donations from unknown sources due to contamination risks.

**\*\*\*By applying you are committing to steward the community garden for AT LEAST 5 years.\*\*\***

**Applicants must read and put their initials by each of the following signifying an understanding of each expectation:**

Garden space must regularly mowed: \_\_\_\_\_

Garden space shall be clear of trash and debris: \_\_\_\_\_

Garden beds and flower beds will be weeded and watered regularly: \_\_\_\_\_

Community garden shall maintain regular contact with GGWNY Staff : \_\_\_\_\_

At least 2 members of the community garden will attend Gardener Orientation in Spring: \_\_\_\_\_

At least 2 members of the garden will be present and participate in the initial garden build with GGWNY \_\_\_\_\_

Policies and regulations of GGWNY shall be followed: \_\_\_\_\_

I have thoroughly read and understand the expectations and responsibilities listed in this application for community gardens in the GGWNY garden network: \_\_\_\_\_

**For incorporated organizations only:**

We commit to working towards incorporating a garden budget in our organizational planning: \_\_\_\_\_

We commit to including garden budgeting needs in applicable grants if/when we apply to them: \_\_\_\_\_

We understand that even a small step towards independently funding our garden helps GGWNY offer more resources to communities with less fundraising capacity and ability: \_\_\_\_\_