



GRASSROOTS GARDENS WNY COMMUNITY & SCHOOL 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 1,000,000ft²(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.”

Your Tasks:

In this packet:

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

- Share information provided with your team of neighbors, gardeners, & volunteers
- Visit current community gardens for ideas
- Volunteer at a community garden
- Ask GGWNY staff any questions that pop up
- Fill out your own timeline using the template provided
- 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@grassrootsgardens.org

*****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:

- *Land Access* - GGWNY holds a lease with the local municipality for gardens located on city-owned vacant lots within the city limits of Buffalo and Niagara Falls, NY. GGWNY will in partnership with the community obtain an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) from a private landowner for use for their vacant lot to become a community garden. GGWNY will facilitate the communication with/between the community and landowner(s) if concerns should arise.
- *Liability Insurance* - GGWNY's liability insurance will cover gardeners, volunteers, and visitors to the garden. Any structure such as sheds or greenhouses (including their contents) are NOT covered through this policy. Activities such as yoga and exercise classes may be covered but it is your responsibility to contact GGWNY before such programming occurs in the garden.
- *Education and Programming* - GGWNY collaborates with organizations to host an annual workshop series each year prior to the growing season. Topics include but not limited to: raised bed construction, garden design, community organizing, square foot gardening, seed starting. Our coordinators are available for any technical assistance and can either lead programming in your garden as their schedule allows or connect you to other local experts. Limited grant funding is available through GGWNY to support translation or ASL interpretation services if needed. Contact our office for more information.
- *Advocacy* - Grassroots Gardens will act as an advocate with local, state and federal government entities and funding sources to protect the interests of community and school gardens, including access to land, water, and safe growing environments.
- *Hydrant Access* - GGWNY works with the city of Buffalo to provide permits and hydrant access. Gardens are able to access water from the nearest fire hydrant, and will be provided ONE hydrant wrench and adapter. If lost/stolen, gardeners are responsible for replacement. You must make us aware of this request no later than the end of March each year. We will supply you with a copy of the permit (for use from April – November), and we will retain a copy in our office. Unfortunately, in the city of Niagara Falls, water is not available for free as hydrant water is metered by the Water Board. We recommend making arrangements with a neighbor for water. Contact our staff for more information on subsidizing water in your Niagara Falls community garden.

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Approved Community Garden Projects Will Receive the Following Support from GGWNY (cont.):

- *Plant Order* - GGWNY will provide a seedling order form (free of charge) which is expected to be delivered at the end of February/beginning of March long with the Annual Garden Plan by the lead gardener to guarantee that your community garden will receive material support. A garden's seedling order quantity is based on available growing space and the type of garden. Seedlings may need to be substituted with a similar type due to supplier availability. It is expected that over time, as gardens become more established and embedded in their community they will look to organize to start growing seedlings of their own, fundraise for garden improvements, and adopt efficient practices to sustain their gardens. GGWNY's free education workshops can assist with this transition.
- *Material Support* - Garden materials and donations such as topsoil, raised bed materials, plant material, wood chips, and seeds will be distributed (free of charge) by GGWNY in an equitable manner to allow all of our community and school gardens the same chance at success, and provided based on availability. Newer gardens will receive more material and technical support from our staff as they get established.
- *Tools & Equipment* - We have a number of hand tools available for use including trowels, shovels, rakes, etc. Our quantities come in handy when you have larger work days or volunteer events planned. We do not have many power tools at the office, however, we do have a membership with The Tool Library where we are able to borrow larger power tools. We request that you coordinate with our staff in advance of the work day to reserve tools and schedule a time for you to pick them up from our office.

GGWNY Expectations of Its Community Gardens & Helpful Planning Tips: Planning the Garden

- We require that AT LEAST FIVE people commit to steward the garden for 5 years acting as committee to coordinate maintenance and correspondence between GGWNY and your gardeners.
- We require AT LEAST ONE person to act as Lead Gardeners and suggest another to take on the role of Garden Coordinator to work together with the Lead Gardener:
 - Lead Gardener – primary point of contact for GGWNY, picks up plants, materials at distributions, helps gardeners to keep in contact with each other whether through regular meetings, emails, Facebook or other social media accounts. Clear communication is critical for gardeners to stay connected and involved.
- 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.
- We require that you visit and participate in AT LEAST ONE GGWNY community garden volunteer opportunity. This is to give you an idea of the type of work needed to maintain a community garden and organize volunteers. If you have enough lead time, it is ideal to do this before your application.
- 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:
 - Raised Vegetable Beds - How are the vegetable beds cared for? Are the beds a mix of vegetables or a single crop?
 - **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.**
 - Watering - How will you water (sprinklers, soaker hoses, hand-held hoses)? Who is responsible for watering? Is there a watering schedule?
 - 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?
 - 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.

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

GGWNY Expectations of Its Community Gardens & Helpful Planning Tips (cont.):

Preparation, Development, & Maintenance of the Garden

- This is when all of your plans come to fruition! 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.
 - 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 lead gardener to coordinate soil and lumber deliveries in the early spring (March - May) for raised bed construction. The lead gardener and/or another gardener is expected to coordinate with GGWNY staff appropriately.
- The seedling order will typically need to be picked up during the week of Memorial Day Weekend. Vegetables need to be planted in raised beds above ground that contain at least 12” of organic soil provided by GGWNY, and only with lumber provided by GGWNY as it cannot be pressured treated **(soil must be tested, and lumber must be chemical-free, which is why these materials should always come from GGWNY!)**
- Regular watering and work days with volunteers need to be organized to maintain the appearance of the garden. The garden is to be well cared for (i.e. not blighted or overgrown, unless intended for native ecosystems). If the lead gardener cannot be there, a neighborhood gardener should be on-site so that planned projects are honored.
 - Weekly weeding and harvesting is important to fully utilize the garden and is important to keeping up the aesthetics of the space. Schedule larger work days in Spring, Summer, and Fall to tackle larger projects such as building raised beds, creating pathways, and installing art and signage.
 - Be creative and plan activities and events that will involve neighbors with your garden. They might become your best volunteers.
 - 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. Please 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 Contact & Site Information Cont.	
Garden Design	
Neighborhood Support Sheet	
Letters of Support from Neighbors and/or Land Owner	
Volunteered with a GGWNY Community Garden	Name:

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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:

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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://paytax.erie.gov/webprop/index.asp>) or for Niagara Falls (<https://niagaracounty.prosgar.com/>). For Niagara Falls and Buffalo, GGWNY can provide a template Letter of Support.*

Garden Contact Information

Lead Gardeners / Primary Contact Name:

Organization / School: _____

Lead Gardener / Primary Contact Home Address: _____

Lead Gardener / Primary Contact Phone: _____

Lead Gardeners / 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: _____

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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:

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:

Garden Contact & Site Information cont.

List any donations you expect to receive or fundraisers you would like to host for the garden:

If you are applying to be a SCHOOL GARDEN, please fill out the following questions.

What is the school's address?

Do you have the support of the school's principal? _____

Principal Name: _____

Principal Number: _____

Principal Email: _____

Will a teacher be the primary contact during the school year? _____

Is there a different primary contact during the summer season? _____

If yes, please make sure their information is included as the secondary contact

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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?

_____ 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? _____

*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...). We don't expect you to be a Picasso, so give it your best effort!

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