

Please note: The community garden application is a competitive process. Not all applications for new gardens will be accepted.



Community Garden Application Packet

Grassroots Gardens WNY is a determined group of activists who educate and lead committed neighborhood gardeners. We collaboratively cultivate and manage more than 300,000 square feet (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 healthy food in unexpected places that previously had little value. A garden creates a shared sense of purpose that empowers a community, creates environmental awareness and improves public health.

Grassroots Gardens of Buffalo | 30C Essex Street | Buffalo, NY 14213

grassrootsgardens.org | director@grassrootsgardens.org | 716.783.9653

Please complete the Letter of Intent, Garden Narrative, and Garden Sustainability plan and submit them to Grassroots Gardens as soon as possible.

For Office Use Only:

Date Received: _____

Comments:

Accepted: _____

Incomplete: _____

Rejected: _____

Thank you for taking the first step in empowering your neighborhood! Community gardens are a powerful tool for citizen activism and energy. Grassroots Gardens WNY (GGWNY) is here to help you through the process of applying to set up a community garden, and if approved, its set up and maintenance.

In this packet:	Your Task:
1) Information Guide <i>...Pages 3-6</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information provided with your team of gardeners • Visit current community gardens for ideas • Ask GGWNY any questions you may have
2) Garden Plans <i>...Pages 7-11</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill out your own timeline using the template provided • Describe your vision and plans for the community garden
3) Community Garden Application <i>...Pages 12-17</i>	Return to Grassroots Gardens by <i>November 30, 2018</i>
4) Communication for Conflict Resolution <i>...Page 18</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore ways to resolve conflict in community gardens using nonviolent communication methods

Starting a Community Garden with Grassroots Gardens WNY Information Guide

What is a community garden? A community garden is a piece of land used communally by friends and neighbors for growing vegetables and flowers, and providing opportunities for positive social interactions and recreation. There are many different kinds of community gardens – plots can be divided up among neighbors, a garden could be a school-based garden, some gardens grow food for food pantries, while others are purely ornamental with space for block club meetings and neighborhood celebrations - the possibilities are endless.

Approved Community Garden projects will receive the following support from GGWNY:

- GGWNY provides materials such as topsoil, raised bed materials, plant material, and seeds. Quantities available to each garden are subject to availability each growing season. It is important to work with our staff during the winter months to plan for your upcoming seasonal needs, so that we can budget for expenses accordingly. **As your garden ages, its material needs will dwindle. Keep in mind that newer gardens will receive more initial material support in their first season and less in following seasons.**
- We hold plant distributions as soon as material becomes available, typically beginning in mid-May.
- We provide liability insurance for the garden parcel, which provides liability coverage for gardeners, volunteers and garden visitors. Structures (such as tool sheds and greenhouses) are not permitted.
- We hold workshops throughout the year – workshop topics include: building raised beds, approaching garden design, harvesting and preserving herbs, creating healthy soil, and more.
- If you need access to a fire hydrant for watering your garden, we can help you acquire a use permit from the City of Buffalo, Division of Water. We will supply you with a copy of the permit (for seasonal use from April – October), and we will retain a copy in our office. GGWNY will supply your garden’s initial hydrant wrench and adapter, but if they are lost, you are responsible for purchasing the replacement hardware needed to use the hydrant. We have information on where to purchase this hardware, as well as instructions on how to use a fire hydrant available for community gardeners.
- We have a limited number of tools available for use when you have larger work days. We do not have any power tools. Tools are accessed from the tool shed at the GGWNY office. For instructions on how to access the shed or sign out tools, simply contact any member of the GGWNY staff.
- At the end of each gardening season, community gardens are asked to submit an Annual Garden Plan for the next season. This plan is your tool to let GGWNY know what types of materials you

need for your gardening plans next season. If you fail to complete your garden plan, we cannot guarantee we will be able to provide you with materials.

Planning the garden:

We require that at least 5 people commit to the garden for 5 years to act as your Garden Team.

Of those we suggest that two people take on these roles and work together:

- Community Garden Contact: Primary point of contact for GGWNY, coordinates pickup of plant material and available donations at distributions, helps garden team keep in touch with each other via chosen method of communication, such as email, phone, weekly meetings, etc. deals with the mechanics of the garden - watering, building beds, how much topsoil they need, administrative issues, mowing, etc.
- Community Garden Coordinator: Leads garden maintenance, such as coordinating weeding, watering, and mowing tasks, bed building and repairs, etc.

These roles are suggestions – feel free to customize based on your neighborhood and your needs.

- Using the site plan of the garden you submitted to GGWNY with your application, you will need to decide what materials you will need and where to source them. When laying out the garden 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 some rules/guidelines for the garden - are the beds going to be communal or is everyone going to have their own bed? How will you water (sprinklers, soaker hoses, drip irrigation, handheld hoses)? Who is responsible for watering? What is the protocol for putting the beds to rest in the fall? How often do people have to work in the garden (if people have their own raised beds do they have to put in hours working in the communal areas)? Try researching community gardens online to find some different examples of how a garden might be managed. These are just a few suggestions. It is helpful to make the rules collaboratively as a team and set the rules in writing before starting the garden.

Preparing and developing the site:

- This is when all of your plans come to fruition! Work days and volunteers need to be organized. If both the community garden contact and community garden coordinator cannot be there, another member of your garden team should be on-site so that they can help lead the projects and ensure the garden plans are followed.
- It is good to have a garden workday for cleanup and preparation before starting large projects.
- Vegetables need to be planted in beds that are at least 10" high. A good first project is to develop the beds and paths. Usually, all of the garden plans cannot be executed in one year. If

you are doing vegetable beds this would be a good first project so that the veggies can be planted and you can have produce your first year.

- Be ready for new gardeners to join! Once the groundwork is laid more community members may be interested in joining the garden. The larger your garden team, the more your space will grow and thrive!

Things to consider when starting a community garden:

- Community engagement – Be creative and plan activities and events that will involve neighbors with your garden, such as potlucks, art in the garden activities, live music, or movie nights. This is a great way to recruit new gardeners/volunteers from your neighborhood.
- Gardener organization and management – Community gardens are source of diversity, and sometimes there will be disagreements. Be prepared to address conflicts quickly, before they escalate, and always try to use empathetic communication styles. One good example is Nonviolent Communication-see Appendix 1 at the end of this packet for basic guidelines on using the Nonviolent Communication Process for conflict resolution.
- Soil health—To combat poor soil, you might add cover crops or organic matter. **All food crops are required by GGWNY to be grown in raised beds containing fresh topsoil brought into the garden, not soil found in the garden.** This is due to the risk of lead contamination in Buffalo soils. You may grow ornamental plants in-ground but GGWNY strongly recommends wearing gloves.
- Garden maintenance— Gardens must be kept regularly mowed and trimmed in order to maintain a neat appearance for the surrounding community. Weekly weeding and harvesting is important to fully utilize the garden and is also important in maintaining the appearance of the space. Schedule larger work days in the throughout the season beginning in spring to tackle larger projects that you may need additional help with such as installing pathways, art installations, and building raised beds.
- Vandalism/theft – Sometimes your produce just looks too good to refuse. Minimize vandalism with signage, vigilance, and community outreach. You might consider designating one bed the “Community” bed or “Free” bed, and clearly label it as such, so that visitors in the garden know they are allowed to help themselves to a bit of free produce.

Ready to apply? Make sure you have completed and submitted the following to ensure a complete application:

Form	Submitted
Letter of intent to apply, Garden Narrative, and Garden Sustainability Plan (pages 8-10)	
Garden sketch (page 11)	
Garden application form (pages 12-14)	
Neighborhood support sheet (page 15)	
Letters of support from neighbors adjacent to the garden (page 16)	
“Before” photo of the garden site (page 17)	

Start Planning Your Garden

Winter	
Spring	
Summer	
Fall	

Please complete the Letter of Intent and Garden Narrative and submit them to Grassroots Gardens WNY as soon as possible.

Letter of Intent

Your Name: _____

Home Address: _____

Garden Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

How many neighbors have expressed interest in the garden? _____

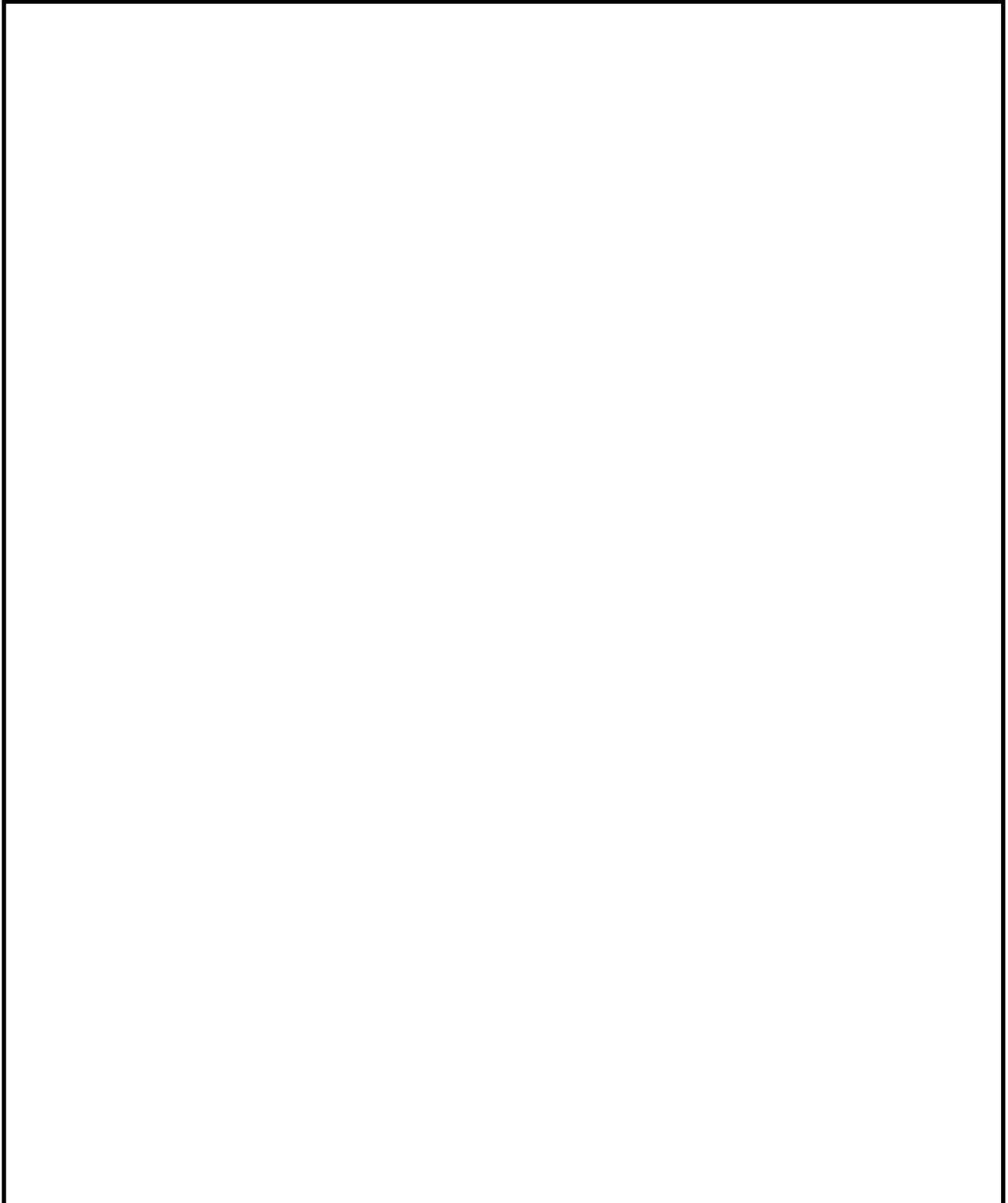
Additional Comments: _____

Garden Sustainability Plan

How do you and your fellow gardeners plan to maintain the garden over time? That is, who will take care of the garden if garden members move away, lose interest, etc.? What is your long-term plan to sustain the garden? Attach extra pages if needed.

Garden Sketch

Sketch proposed landscape plan for prospective community garden here.



Grassroots Gardens WNY Community Garden Application

By applying you are committed to the garden for AT LEAST 5 years

Location of Proposed Garden (with zip code):
Garden / Organization Name:
Garden Contact
Name:
Address:
Phone Number:
Email:
Names and Numbers/Emails of 5 People who are Committed to Working in the Garden:
1. Garden Contact (primary contact):
2.
3.
4.
5.

Site Information

Landowner Name:

(Note: For City of Buffalo applicants, you can determine landowner info via the OAR search engine:
<http://www.buffalo.oarsystem.com/SearchOARS.aspx>)

If land is privately owned, you must attach a copy of a letter from the landowner granting your group permission to use the lot for the purpose of establishing / maintaining a community garden.

How far away is the garden from the garden contact/garden coordinator's homes or your organization's office?

What are the approximate dimensions and location (corner, between two houses, etc). of the lot?

What will be the water source?

What is the street address of the nearest fire hydrant?

Support

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:

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

If you are an organization, 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*

How did you hear about Grassroots Gardens WNY?

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.

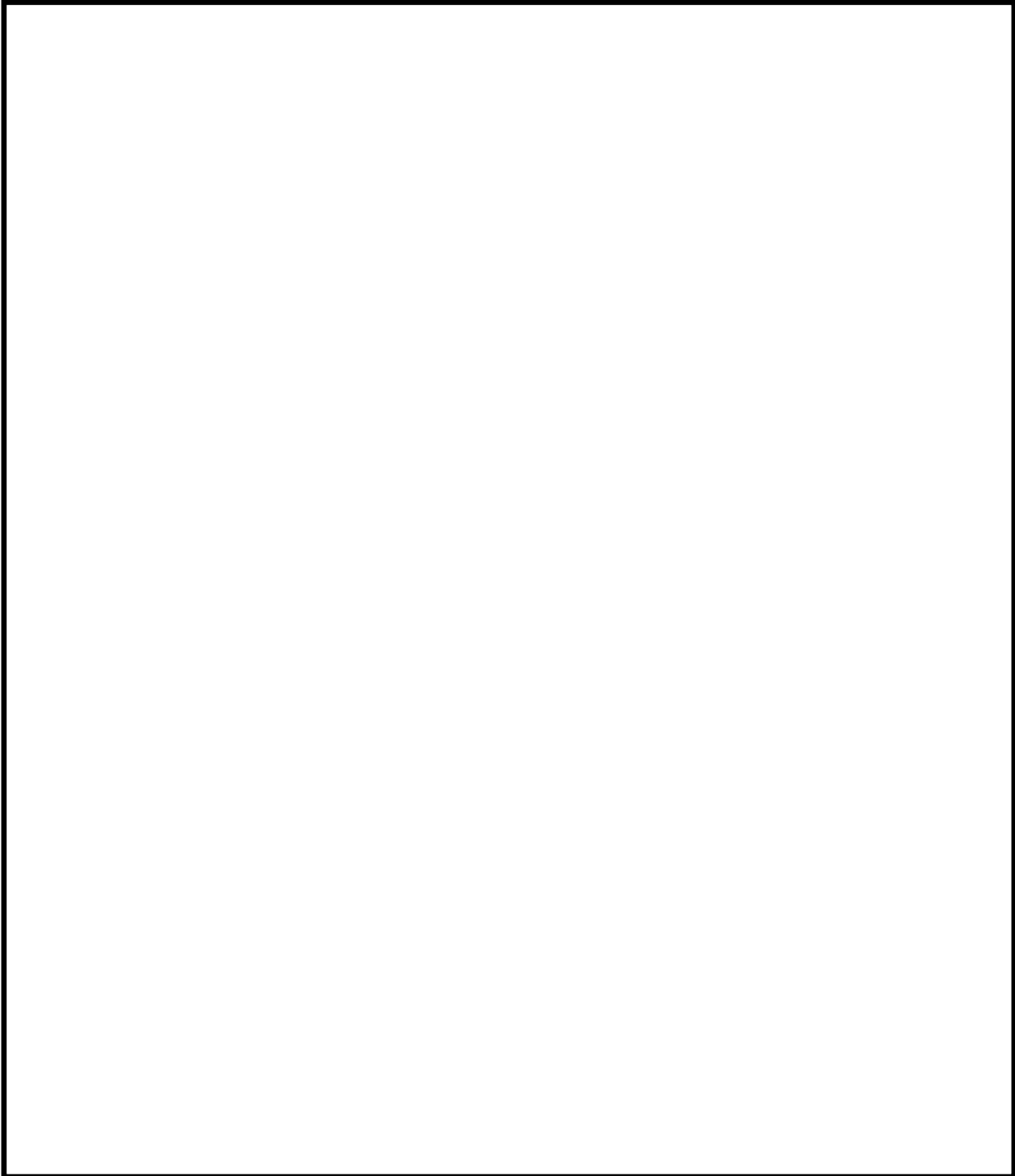
Name	Address	Support? (Y/N)

Optional Letters of Support

Use this space to attach any letters of support you have gathered from neighbors or organizations in support of the proposed community garden. If you are submitting your application electronically, feel free to leave this page blank and attach the letters as separate attachments.

“Before” Picture of Garden Site

Use this space to attach at least one photo of the proposed garden site as it currently looks. If you are submitting your application electronically, feel free to leave this page blank and attach your photo(s) as separate attachments when you submit the application.



Appendix 1: Nonviolent Communication Basics for Conflict Resolution

How You Can Use the NVC Process



Clearly expressing
how **I am**
without blaming
or criticizing

Empathically receiving
how **you are**
without hearing
blame or criticism

OBSERVATIONS

1. What I observe (*see, hear, remember, imagine, free from my evaluations*) that does or does not contribute to my well-being:
“When I (*see, hear*) . . . ”

1. What you observe (*see, hear, remember, imagine, free from your evaluations*) that does or does not contribute to your well-being:
“When you *see/hear* . . . ”
(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)

FEELINGS

2. How I feel (*emotion or sensation rather than thought*) in relation to what I observe:
“I feel . . . ”

2. How you feel (*emotion or sensation rather than thought*) in relation to what you observe:
“You feel . . . ”

NEEDS

3. What I need or value (*rather than a preference, or a specific action*) that causes my feelings:
“. . . because I need/value . . . ”

3. What you need or value (*rather than a preference, or a specific action*) that causes your feelings:
“. . . because you need/value . . . ”

Clearly requesting that
which would enrich **my**
life without demanding

Empathically receiving that
which would enrich **your** life
without hearing any demand

REQUESTS

4. The concrete actions I would like taken:
“Would you be willing to . . . ?”

4. The concrete actions you would like taken:
“Would you like . . . ?”
(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)



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