

Community Garden Resource Sheet

There are a lot of issues to consider when setting up a community garden. There are important questions to answer when getting started,

Getting Started: What should I know about set-up?

- ✓ *Water Source* - Do you have an adequate, predictable water source? Do you have a way to pay for it? What relationships do you need to build to ensure a consistent, affordable water supply?
- ✓ *Liability Insurance* - Have you explored your liability insurance needs? Are you covered by an umbrella policy of an existing organization (e.g. a church whose land is being used for the garden)? Do you need to obtain a liability insurance policy? Is someone advising you on insurance issues? Do you have sustainable resources to pay for liability insurance?
- ✓ *Land Use/Identifying Space* - Do you lease or have a long-term arrangement spelled out for land use? Is the plot located on privately held or public land? What ordinances or zoning questions relate to land use? What assurances do you have that the land will be available for the long-term? (*Note: this can have implications for the health of the soil and the productivity of the gardens*)
- ✓ *Land Location* – Is the garden easy to get to? Is the land located near a bus stop, public transit, or sidewalks? Is the land located in low-income neighborhoods where people have food access issues?
- ✓ *Gardening Plot Assignment* – How big will your plots be? What process have you developed to assign plots? Lottery? What decision have you made about how to include newcomers, if plots do not 'free up' very often? How many plots will be made available at one time to an individual gardener?
- ✓ *Publicizing the Garden* - What initial and ongoing plans do you have to publicize the garden? What resources do you have to do this? Who will you provide intentional outreach to in order to reach audiences who may have food access issues?

How Does Your Garden Grow: What needs to be in place for growing food?

- ✓ *Preparing for the Growing Season* – Will some entity be in charge of tilling the land at the beginning of the season? If so, how will it be funded – this year and beyond? Do you want to provide gardening equipment for gardeners (e.g. shovels, wheelbarrows, watering cans, hoes, rakes, etc) or a storage space for gardener equipment – if so, where will you store it? How do you create and fund a storage space? Will it be locked or secured? How will gardeners access it?

- ✓ *Composting* - Are you going to have a shared spot for composting? Do people using the plots have training in compost management, so that it is working well? What process have you put in place to ensure that composting is managed well and correctly?
- ✓ *Gardening Practices* - How do you address people's preference for different types of gardening practices (e.g. organic with pest invasion, use of chemicals and no clear way to ensure people are using them appropriately)? Have you considered this? Is there a way to address this in terms of how plots are assigned?
- ✓ *Education* – Have you identified related educational opportunities like gardening, composting, or food preservation classes? Who will offer these? Will they be offered on an annual basis? How will they be publicized to gardeners using the community garden plots or the broader public? How will they be funded or supported?

Making It Work Over Time: Why ongoing oversight is the magic ingredient to long-term success of community gardens.

- ✓ *Oversight Process* - Do you have a community-based volunteer committee to provide oversight? Who are they? Have roles and responsibilities been developed and affirmed? Have you identified what types of expertise and engagement would be helpful? How will you sustain the engagement of this group over time? How often will they meet? What is expected involvement of gardeners in this group? Is it a self-governance model for each garden? Is there an umbrella group that oversees multiple gardens?
- ✓ *Training Resource* - Are you affiliated to another organization that addresses community gardens issues? Have you identified helpful capacity building and training resources at a national, state and local level that help you create a strong, lasting garden?
- ✓ *Targeting Audience* - Have you thought about your primary audience? Who are you trying to provide access to with your garden – are you clear? Is it youth? Gardening-savvy early adopters? Families or individuals with food access issues? How are they involved in the agenda-setting of the garden?
- ✓ *Managing the Garden* - How will you handle people neglecting their plots? What is the process that you will develop at the beginning to address this? What will the policy be?
- ✓ *Establishing Agreements* – What will you ask gardeners to agree to when they take on a plot? Is there a written policy that they sign and agree to?
- ✓ *Policies for Plot Use* - What are you going to do about people interested in using plots for commercial production/sales?