

Community Garden Program Template

Introduction: A community garden can help improve food security for participants by increasing physical and economic access to healthy food. Community gardens provide health, economic, educational, social, and environmental benefits to participants and the community at large.



Goals:

- To learn basic gardening skills, from sowing seeds to harvesting, storing and composting.
- To provide fresh, healthy, low-cost food that can substitute for otherwise expensive food purchases.
- To better understand the food system and gain valuable food literacy skills and knowledge.
- To provide a welcoming space for participants to build self-confidence, wellness, and personal skills.
- To create a social gathering place for the community and encourage the sharing of intergenerational knowledge.
- To encourage physical activity for all age groups in the community.
- To help improve the local environment by preserving and growing green spaces, reducing organic waste, supporting biodiversity and by encouraging people to act as local stewards.

Program Development (See list of resource people on page 3)

- Identify interest by hosting community meetings. Let people know about the plan to have a community garden and gauge the level of interest, support and commitment from potential gardeners and other stakeholders.
- Form a garden committee and establish roles and responsibilities. Specify a primary vision for the community garden including who will be using the garden, assisting with the garden maintenance and if a fee structure will be applied for garden users.
- Establish partnerships with key stakeholders who have skills/experience in gardening, education and landscaping to assist in the planning, development and ongoing maintenance of the garden. Let nearby residents, businesses and community groups know that a garden is joining the neighborhood.
- Select a suitable and accessible site for the garden taking into consideration the following:
 - Physical accessibility for gardeners of all ages and abilities and highly visible centralized within the community;
 - Environmental components (soil/ground quality, daily sunshine/shade/wind, native plants, etc.); and
 - Surroundings (access to water, washrooms, seating areas and storage).
- Look for possible funding or sponsorship opportunities from local businesses, government grants and/or national organizations.
- Consult with other groups that already have community gardens to learn from their experiences and find opportunities to share resources.

Community Garden Program Template

- Develop garden guidelines such as volunteer and participant responsibilities; safe handling of tools, materials, and chemicals; garden procedures; important dates and contacts, etc. and clearly communicate those guidelines to participants.
- Market and promote the community garden in ways that are locally successful (e.g. community newsletters and bulletins, municipal/community website(s), social media, via local businesses and community groups with established networks, etc.)
- Keep some plots that are considered “communal”. Communal plots are useful for growing plants to share that take up a lot of space but that many people enjoy (e.g. potatoes, cabbages, pumpkins) and growing perennial plants that don’t need to be replanted each year and can be collectively tended and harvested from (e.g. herbs, berries). Communal plots can also be used to provide for special activities like a healthy fall harvest meal for all growers, or a donation to a local charity at the end of the season. Consult with gardeners and possible donor agencies to plan the communal plots together.
- Consider ways to make the garden intergenerational where children and youth can socialize and learn alongside seniors and other adults. This is beneficial for all involved. It can be accomplished by partnering with organizations that serve children and youth (i.e. schools and after-school programs, daycares, community youth networks, family resource centres, boys & girls clubs, 4H, scouts and girl guides, recreation associations, etc.)
- Contact local businesses for donations of items such as lumber, soil, tools, seeds, etc.

Sample Budget:

Budgets for developing a community garden can vary significantly based on a number of variables. For example choosing a different type of lumber can change the budget by hundreds of dollars. Below is an approximate associated cost with the building of ten (4’ width x 8’ length x 2’ - 4’ height maximum) raised wooden garden beds for your consideration:

Item	Approximate Cost
Coordinator	\$12.00/ hr. X 10 hrs/week X 5 months = \$2,400.00
Materials	
- Lumber	\$1,200.00
- Garden Tools	\$450.00
- Soil/Fertilizer/Compost	\$700.00
- Storage shed	\$1,200.00
- Water/Irrigation system/Hose/Rain barrels	\$200.00
- Seeds/plants/trees	\$800.00
- Signage	\$400.00
Other: Educational Workshop on Community Gardens to committee from Food First NL	\$650.00
Total	\$8,000.00

Community Garden Program Template

Budget Considerations:

- For an allotment style garden, typically a plot fee is charged as a condition of membership. These fees can help with the costs of starting and maintaining the garden and can be used for collective purchases such as tools, storage, seating areas and landscaping plants.

Grant Funding Level Consideration: Up to \$10,000.00

Key Supports:

Key Stakeholder/Group	Resources	Contact Person
Food First NL (http://www.foodfirstnl.ca/)	A Comprehensive Community Garden Tool Kit Resource http://www.foodsecuritynews.com/Publications/Community_Garden_Best_Practices_Toolkit.pdf	Kristie Jameson Executive Director info@foodfirstnl.ca (709) 237-4026
Multi Materials Stewardship Board (MMSB)	Composting Workshops & Pre-School/Enviro-Kids Programs http://mmsb.nl.ca/	inquiries@mmsb.nl.ca (709) 753-0948
Regional Health Authority	Community Wellness Grants http://www.swsd.gov.nl.ca/healthyliving/wellness_coalitions.html	Eastern Health (709) 752-4912 (709) 466-6316 Central Health (709) 651-6477 Western Health (709) 637-5060 Labrador Grenfell Health (709) 897-2137
MUN Botanical Gardens	Gardening in NL http://www.mun.ca/botgarden/	bgprograms@mun.ca (709) 864-8590

- Local gardening experts/farmers/ landscaping companies can provide education and understanding on best practices for your garden.