



GARDENS NETWORK MEMBERSHIP AND MICRO GRANTS

In 2014 Community Action Coalition transitioned from their role as the operations entity for Dane County community gardens. As a result, a partnership consisting of Community GroundWorks, Dane County UW Extension, and the City of Madison has formed the Gardens Network to support and sustain approximately 65 community gardens throughout the county.

The Gardens Network provides resources, support, and leadership development to community gardens throughout Dane County. Our mission is to connect people in Dane County with access to the space, education, and resources to create and sustain gardens that foster food, engagement, and opportunity. We envision diverse, productive, self-sustaining gardens that have strong leaders and communities connected by a shared purpose, by a sense of belonging, and by a deep socio-cultural understanding.

The Gardens Network is best equipped to work with gardens to provide targeted and efficient training, technical support, operational support, and services. Some of the gardens in our community are well established and stable, while others face more challenges. No matter where individual gardens fall on the continuum, we believe that being nimble enough to provide more assistance to some gardens is a benefit to the entire community and an important part of creating equity in the food system. To that end, the Gardens Network prioritizes resources to gardens needing help with sustainability, hands-on support, and leadership development. We believe that supporting community gardens contributes to a strong food system in Dane County and actively addresses food security, plus the fair and equitable distribution of healthy food in our community.

One of our primary goals is to assure community garden land security through offering lease negotiation, access to affordable liability insurance, and advocacy for sustainability, growth, and stability for community gardens into the future.

CONTRIBUTION LEVELS – Contributors are welcome to join at any level

GARDEN HERO - \$35 (\$15 for students, seniors, youth, low income).

Garden Heroes pay it forward and strive for equity. They are individuals who may or may not garden themselves, but they support food equity and community gardens in Dane County. Garden sustainability and self-sufficiency relies on community support and shared resources. Building and sustaining food equity in our community means soliciting support for the network and prioritizing resources to assure an equitable distribution of fresh, healthy food, as well as long term access to land.

Becoming a Hero means you:

- Are part of a growing network of community gardeners and social support structures
- Support gardeners and food equity across Dane County (“we’re all better off together”)
- Are a champion for land tenure, access to nature, multi-generational activities, getting kids outside, and fresh, locally grown food
- Help mobilize advocacy and policy efforts related to food system work, food policy, food safety, and access to a secure source of fresh food in our community.

COMMUNITY GARDEN LEVEL – The Gardens Network requests an annual contribution of 10% of plot fees annually. Plot fee contributions may range from \$50 - \$900, depending on garden size (number of plots) and the fees collected by the garden using the plot sliding fee scale.

For gardens that need assistance with lease and liability insurance coverage through Community GroundWorks, an additional \$100 will be charged annually. Gardens will be invoiced after garden registration every year.

Gardens requesting garden design and/or garden installation coordination from the Gardens Network may be negotiated and contracted on an individual project basis.

Unfortunately, Community GroundWorks does not have the capacity to function as fiscal agent for individual gardens.

Examples of other services available include, and are not limited to:

Advocacy/Consultation

- Working for funding allocations in county and municipal budgets
- Fostering partnerships and leveraging resources
- Increasing/securing land, negotiating MOUs, leases, and other agreements for gardens throughout the county (supporting land tenure), and assuring liability coverage for those spaces
- Actively working to educate policy makers and support policy changes to increase food equity, food security, and land tenure in Dane County.

Operations

- Assuring long term access to land (land tenure) through lease negotiations (CGW holds lease) and liability insurance coverage through CGW's policy
- Information, template forms, guidelines, and other resources related to plot fees, registration, garden managements, and leadership/engagement
- Coordination with Madison Water Utility for water billing
- Coordination and distribution of in kind donations (such as seeds, tools, plants)
- General information and samples to support grant writing, budgeting, and grant management
- Connecting volunteers/interns to gardens
- Coordinate Garden Coach program
- Support for garden problem-solving, counseling, liaison, negotiations

Education/Communications

- Gardening classes/training
- Leadership development training and consultation (best practices for communications, banking, conflict resolution, annual calendar, cross-cultural and intergenerational gardening)
- Water system training
- www.danegardens.net website
- Community Gardener Listserv
- Access to Master Gardener volunteers
- Collaboration with Garden Leaders Coalition
- Annual gardens network summit
- Neighborhood gatherings (mini-summits)

Infrastructure

- Assistance with infrastructure development for site (water, fencing, etc.)
- Consultation on site adaptations (expansion, accessibility)
- Enhancements for placemaking

Goods and Services

- Access to free seeds and plants
- Free, delivered wood chips (City of Madison)
- Reduced bulk rates for compost and marsh hay
- Eligibility to access benefits of Garden Fund

Consultation/Technical Support

- Consultation on collaborative community development (i.e., meetings with municipalities/gardeners to establish new or expanded gardens)
- Community orchards, edible landscaping, and pollinator gardens
- Food pantry gardens, plots, rows (connections to pantries)
- Placemaking - fostering connections between people and the public places they share
- Best practices consultation (no till, composting, invasive management, safety/security, etc.)

COMMUNITY- BASED AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION LEVEL – churches, community centers, senior centers, schools – Contribution will be negotiated

The Gardens Network will work to cater to the needs of public schools, non-profits, low income housing sites, community centers and other similar locations by assisting with needs assessment, project scope, potential partners, funding plan, and other tasks to assist in creating a successful and sustainable garden project.

BUSINESS LEVEL – businesses, apartment management, corporate sites - \$500 - \$10,000 based on project size, services requested

Support to businesses is dictated by needs, scope of plan, infrastructure (water, fencing, soil) available, volunteer/gardener engagement, and other factors.

Other services may include, but are not limited to:

- Communication and engagement strategies
- Infrastructure (design oversight, adaptation)
- Consultation/technical support
- Sustainability goals
- Garden leadership development
- Operations (how to run a garden: applications, plot fees, registration, etc.)
- Garden Coach (30 weeks, 6 hours per week) hired, trained, and managed by Community GroundWorks

Costs for garden design and/or coordination of garden installation can be negotiated and contracted on a project basis.

MUNICIPAL LEVEL – Municipal membership will be negotiated and documented by a MOU or other formal agreement

The Gardens Network considers engagement and building partnerships with local municipalities as a proactive role related directly to our mission and advocacy goals. Securing land, land tenure, funding, in-kind support (consultation with Parks staff, mowing, water systems, etc.)

Services available to municipalities may include, but are not limited to:

- Development of operational framework with garden leaders (plot fees, registration, policies/procedures, etc.)
- Resources and consultation to develop a process for community engagement
- Coordination between gardeners, garden leaders, municipal staff
- Point of contact for information, problem-solving
- Function as advocate for gardeners and liaison with municipal staff
- Provide support for addressing interpersonal issues
- Planning/surveying (people), garden and orchard design
- Supporting implementation for gardens – recruitment of gardeners, cultivate garden leadership, coordinate tasks
- Assisting staff and gardeners with process navigation
- Consultation on food policy, equity, accessibility, efficient urban design, and other garden-related issues
- Connection to the community food systems network

Costs for garden design and/or coordination of garden installation can be negotiated and contracted on a project basis.

GARDEN FUND MICRO-GRANT PROGRAM

Madison Community Foundation (MCF) holds a pass-through garden fund account that is administered by Community GroundWorks, Inc. The garden fund has historically been supported by individual community gardens choosing to contribute 10% of their plot fees to the garden fund.

Beginning in 2016, the garden fund will be a micro grant fund overseen by Community GroundWorks and the Gardens Network Advisory Team. The team will set annual financial goals, solicit and review grant applications, and approve awards, which will be paid out by Community GroundWorks in concert with MCF.

Community gardens will continue to be asked to contribute 10% of their plot fees in order to support the Gardens Network. The Advisory Team will review the annual balance of the garden fund account to determine what amount will be allocated to the micro grant program. The balance of any other income will be used to support the operations and implementation of the community gardens program in Dane County.

Contributions by check can be **made out to Community GroundWorks** and mailed to:

Gardens Network Garden Fund
Community GroundWorks, Inc.
3601 Memorial Dr., Suite 4
Madison, WI 53704

Electronic contributions can be made online at: www.danegardens.net