

VILLAGE OWNED VACANT LOT COMMUNITY GARDEN APPLICATION

This is an annual application. Both new and returning individuals or Garden Groups are asked to complete the following application. (Each Garden Group will be required to designate one person as the official Garden Liaison.) The individual or Liaison will be responsible for ensuring all forms have been completed such as this application, the letter of commitment, the liability and release form and reimbursement forms.

Individual/Garden Group Name: _____

Garden Liaison: _____

For **new** individuals or Garden Groups: Please see the list of Village-owned lots on the Village website (<https://www.villageofparkforest.com/810/Gardening-on-Village-Owned-Vacant-Lots>) available for the Community Garden Program. Consider which sites would be best suited to your needs. On which lot would you prefer to garden?

First Choice: _____ Second Choice: _____

Please describe the general plan for your Community Garden this year. Who will be involved in your Garden? What will be the primary purpose of the Garden (to grow food, pollinator garden etc.)? If you will be growing food, who is it for (yourselves, neighborhood, food bank, etc.)?

For **returning** individuals or Garden Groups, please give a brief description of your Garden last year:

GRANT

Community Gardens on Village-owned parcels may qualify for a reimbursement of up to \$250 for costs directly associated with the Community Garden. Requests for reimbursement must follow the written procedures. This reimbursement allowance is available in 2020 and is not guaranteed for future years.

POLICY

- Reimbursement will only be made for expenses that directly and solely support the installation and maintenance of the Community Garden on Village-owned property.
- Examples of items for which expenses will be reimbursed include seeds, soil, mulch, materials for planting beds or shade structures, and rain barrels.
- Reimbursement will NOT be made for gardening tools.
- Garden Groups or individuals gardening on vacant lots affiliated with schools, houses of worship, or incorporated non-profits are also eligible to apply for an additional grant through the Park Forest Community Garden Grant Program. A maximum of 20 grants will be awarded each calendar year with a maximum of \$100 per grantee. To be considered for a grant through that program, please fill out the separate application form.

PROCEDURE

- All requests for reimbursement must be accompanied by receipts. Receipts must be dated after March 15th and before November 1st of the gardening year.
- Requests should be submitted only by the Individual or Designated Liaison for the Community Garden. Reimbursement checks will be made out to the Individual/Liaison, who will be responsible for disbursing funds to Garden Group members as appropriate.
- In order to receive reimbursement, the Individual/Designated Liaison must provide the Village with an [IRS Form 1099](#).
- A maximum of two (2) requests for reimbursement can be submitted by the Individual/Liaison per year, with a total yearly reimbursement not exceeding the maximum amount of \$250. Additional requests for reimbursement will only be made with pre-approval by the Park Forest Sustainability Office. However, in no case will the reimbursement exceed \$250 per Community Garden.
- Requests for reimbursement should be submitted to:

Carrie Malfeo
Sustainability Coordinator
226 Forest Boulevard
Park Forest, Illinois 60466
708-503-8153
cmalfeo@vopf.com

Letter of Commitment

Mission: The Park Forest Community Garden Program seeks to engage Community members in the transformation of land into productive Garden spaces while improving the overall quality of life for all residents through neighborhood beautification, community building, and greater access to affordable, nutritious, locally-produced foods.

This Letter of Commitment outlines the rules for participation in the Park Forest Community Garden Village-owned Vacant Lot Program. Please read this document carefully, making sure that all members of your group understand and agree to the terms listed below. The Garden Group's Designated Liaison, or the individual applying, must sign the Letter of Commitment formalizing your agreement with the Village of Park Forest and all members of the Garden Group must be listed and sign below.

New Community Gardens

New community gardens are required to notify surrounding property owners of their intent to create a garden, and document to the Sustainability Office that this notification occurred (how was notification conducted, to whom it was conducted, and responses from surrounding property owners).

Garden Plans, Structures, and Permanent Objects

Plans for your garden and any major improvements must be submitted before implementation to the Park Forest Sustainability Office for approval. Plans must include a layout of garden beds, rainwater harvesting systems, paths, compost piles, and any additional features of the garden. Structures such as fences, trellises, and tool storage areas may be permitted, as well as items intended to promote the enjoyment of the Garden such as benches and picnic tables. Please keep in mind that the lot is designated for temporary use for Gardening and all structures must be easily transportable. Permanent sizable plant material such as trees are NOT allowed.

Garden/Plot Maintenance

The individual or Garden Group is responsible for the maintenance of its assigned Community Garden lot including the regular mowing of the **ENTIRE** lot. The Village of Park Forest will NOT do any maintenance within the Community Garden's lot itself. However, the Village shall periodically visit the Garden site to monitor Garden upkeep and ensure the lot is being properly maintained.

Soil Testing

Arrangements must be made to ensure soil safety. For food producing gardens, soil must be tested for the presence of unsafe levels of heavy metals, including lead. Soil testing information can be found at <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/soiltest/>. Alternatively, raised beds with a barrier (e.g. landscape fabric) to prevent roots from entering the site's soil can be used. If purchasing soil in bulk to fill raised beds, check with the supplier that the soil does not contain contaminants and is safe for growing food. Raised beds should be constructed with natural materials (e.g. non-pressure treated wood) to prevent leaching of unsafe chemicals into the soil.

Fertilizing and Pest Control Practices

In keeping with the Village of Park Forest's Sustainability Plan, and for the health and safety of all residents, organic Gardening practices are required. Compost is encouraged for use in place of chemical fertilizers. Soil and plants do not need to be organic; however, **NO CHEMICAL PEST CONTROL MEASURES OR FERTILIZERS** are permitted. The application of common chemicals such as Preen, Round-up and Miracle Gro are **prohibited**. For more information, consult the Village's Sustainable Pest Control and Pesticide Reduction Policy see

Water

A \$25 per month water bill credit is available to properties bordering the vacant lot that let the gardener use their outdoor spigot and hose as needed. The application for the credit is at the end of this document. For locations without a willing neighbor, the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Community Health will fill IBC totes or rain barrels for a fee of \$25 per delivery. Call 708-748-2005 to schedule a water drop off.

Composting

Composting of on-site garden waste is encouraged. No animal attracting foods such as meat, bones, processed starches, dairy or fats should be composted at the Community Garden. Also avoid large or thorny branches and diseased plant material. The compost must be contained in a manner approved by the Village of Park Forest, such as a tumbler or bin. Compost bins may not exceed 25 cubic yards.

Bird feeders

Bird feeders are NOT allowed. Use of native plants will provide natural food sources for birds such as berries and seed without attracting rodents.

Signage

The Village of Park Forest encourages all Garden Groups to post a sign displaying the Garden name, contact information, Garden rules, and Community Garden logo. Signs promote good relations with Garden neighbors and help make the Community aware of the Garden. One sign is allowed per street frontage, not exceeding five square feet in area and six feet in height. All signs must be located a minimum of five (5) feet inside the property line and may not obstruct the line of sight for traffic.

Adding New Members

The Garden Group shall ensure that new members of the Community Garden Group have read and signed this Letter of Commitment. New members must also sign a Waiver of Liability and Release [Link here](#) and provide it to the Sustainability Office. The Garden Group must follow a transparent membership process open to all. Anyone interested in joining the Garden Group is to be fairly considered.

Winter Clean-up

The Garden Group will be expected to ensure that the Community Garden is clean by November 1st, including the removal of overgrowth and cutting the grass. Failure to clear Garden plots and maintain the lot until November 1st may result in a Garden Group being denied a renewal of their application for a Community Garden the following year. If for any reason the Garden Group will not be returning to the Garden the following year, they must notify the Sustainability Coordinator. If another Garden Group is not identified to take over the space it is the responsibility of the Garden Group to deconstruct the Garden and donate supplies to other gardeners or otherwise properly dispose of them at the end of the season.

Communication with the Sustainability Office

The individual or designated Garden Group Liaison shall keep the Sustainability Office informed of any issues or problems that occur with the operations, patrons of the Community Garden, or neighbors. The Sustainability Office will assist in the resolution of any problems.

Photo Policy

The Village of Park Forest staff, contracted and volunteer photographers periodically take photos of program participants. Please be aware that these photos are for **Village of Park Forest use only** and may be used in future publications, websites and paid advertisements. If you do not give your permission, please inform the Sustainability Coordinator.

Email and Phone List

If any gardeners would like to be included in a Community Garden email group, please have the Liaison share their phone number and email address with the Sustainability Coordinator. **The phone and email list will be used for this purpose only** and will not be sold or shared with outside organizations.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES IN THE GARDEN

- Littering, dumping, alcohol consumption and other unlawful activities
- Excessively amplified sound
- Pets are not allowed in the Community Garden

Right to Remove/Relocate the Community Garden

The Village of Park Forest reserves the right to remove the Community Garden at any time for gross violations of the provisions in the Letter of Commitment. It is further understood by the individual and all members of the Garden Group that the Community Gardens are located on Village-owned parcels that are intended for future sale and development. Therefore, the Village also reserves the right to relocate a Community Garden should the property be sold. In this case, the Village will make every effort to provide notification prior to relocation and select a mutually agreeable alternative gardening location and do our best to wait until the end of the growing season to relocate the garden.

Survey

To assist the Village in measuring the impact of the Community Garden Program, I agree to fill out the survey that will be sent out at the end of the growing season.

Liability

EACH MEMBER OF THE GARDEN GROUP SHALL SIGN A WAIVER OF LIABILITY FORM.

The Village of Park Forest is not responsible for the Community Garden, or anything in or pertaining to the Garden.

CERTIFICATION

I, _____ (please print name) am the official Liaison of the Garden Group. Each current member of our Garden Group listed below has read the above terms and agrees to abide by them and now enter into a commitment to maintain our Community Garden located at

Individual/Liaison's signature: _____

Individual/Liaison's Phone Number: _____

Individual/Liaison's Email Address: _____

Date: _____

_____ (initials) I give permission for the Village of Park Forest to use my photo. (See photo policy)

WAIVER OF LIABILITY AND RELEASE
VILLAGE OWNED VACANT LOTS

As a condition of being permitted to voluntarily participate in the Village of Park Forest's Community Garden Program ("Program"), by signing below, I agree to release and hold harmless the Village of Park Forest, its officers, employees, agents, and volunteers, from any and all personal injuries (including death), property damages, losses, suits costs (including reasonable attorney's fees), claims, damages, expenses, judgments, liabilities, or liens, arising directly or indirectly from my participation in the Program during any applicable period that I participate in the Program, from the conduct or management of the Program or my participation therein, or from any landscaping, gardening, planting, preparation or other work or labor performed by myself or others at the site of the Program, unless the above mentioned injuries, damages, or losses are the result of a willful or wanton act or conduct by the Village of Park Forest.

I agree to comply with all Village of Park Forest guidelines, rules, orders, directions, instructions and regulations regarding my participation in the Program and I waive any and all claims and causes of action resulting from my failure to follow said rules, orders, directions, instructions, and regulations.

I have carefully read and understand this Waiver of Liability and Release.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

_____ (Initials) I give permission for the Village of Park Forest to use my photo. (See photo policy)

NEIGHBOR WATER CREDIT PROGRAM

Eligibility

The nearest adjacent properties to the Village-owned Vacant Lot Community Garden are eligible for the credit. The Community Gardener must have a current, approved Village-owned Vacant Lot Community Garden application on file.

Terms

The Neighbor must allow access to their outdoor water spigot for the Community Garden as needed. Access to a hose, times of use, etc. will be worked out between the Neighbor and the Community Gardener.

During the growing season (March – October), the Neighbor will receive a credit of \$25 per month on their water bill regardless of the amount of water used by the Community Garden.

The credit will apply for the month the application is received if it is received before the 12th of the month. If it is received after the 12th, the credit will start the following month.

This application and agreement must be renewed annually at the beginning of the growing season.

Village-owned Vacant Lot Community Garden Information:

Contact Name: _____
Gardener Email: _____
Garden Address: _____
Garden Start Month: _____ End Month: _____
Signature: _____

Neighbor Information:

Name: _____
Address: _____
Water bill account number: _____
Signature: _____

Office Use:
Verified Garden/Neighbor: _____
Date received: _____
Date approved: _____