Leon County Community Garden Application Package

Leon County's Community Garden Program
This application package is for citizens who wish to create gardens on County property. To be approved, these gardens must be operated and maintained by an organized group of a minimum of eight citizens. The food grown shall be for use by participating gardeners or distribution to non-profit entities and shall not be sold.

Those applying for support of a garden not on County property, please complete the appropriate Stakeholder application, both of which can be found at: www.GrowingGreen.org

Overview, Eligibility and Appropriate Sites
County community gardens shall be for use by Leon County residents. The garden should enhance the usefulness of the property to the public and improve neighborhood vitality. Sites must be approved by the County to ensure that they are free of land-use conflicts, environmental constraints, or safety concerns. If gardens are not properly maintained, the County has the right to revoke permission of individuals or groups to continue gardening on the County property.

Steps in Garden Application Process
1. Submit the completed application to Tessa Schreiner, including pledges from initial gardeners.
2. Upon receipt of the application package, the County will coordinate review with affected internal departments regarding site suitability and other considerations as stated in the application.
3. A site visit is mandatory prior to application approval. An agent from Leon County Cooperative Extension will be in contact to schedule the site visit, which should be completed within 10 business days of the submission of a completed application.
4. Within 30 days, the applicant will be notified of the status of the application.
5. If approved, Garden Organizers are strongly encouraged to hold an orientation session for gardeners. A consultation with Cooperative Extension is available upon request.
6. Construction on the garden will only begin upon approval by Office of Sustainability in consultation with County departments.
7. Update the County on garden progress by February 1 of each year. A template is available on the website.

If you have questions about the preparation of your application, please contact Tessa Schreiner at the above information.

Once application package is complete, send to:
Tessa Schreiner, Leon County Sustainability & Recycling Manager
E-mail: SchreinerT@leoncountyfl.gov
Phone: 850.606.1827
Fax: 850.606.1801
Mail: Office of Resource Stewardship
7550 Apalachee Parkway
Tallahassee, FL 32311

County Garden Application

ITEM 1. BASIC APPLICATION INFORMATION

1. Application Date: _____

2. Address of garden site (If unavailable, please provide nearest intersecting roads and/or parcel number.)

_____

3. Name of proposed community garden. (If located on an already named County facility, for the purpose of simplicity, the garden name should be the same.)

_____

4. Contact Information for Primary Garden Organizer

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number(s): _____

E-mail: _____

5. Contact Information for Assistant Garden Organizer

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number(s): _____

E-mail: _____

ITEM 2. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Benefits of community gardens include:
- Improve health and nutrition for those without easy access to fresh vegetables or space to garden
- Increase sense of community by having neighbors working side-by-side
- Promote techniques by fellow gardeners and educate community on the process of growing food
- Utilize public space in a productive and aesthetically appealing fashion
- Provide opportunities for recreation and intergenerational interaction
- Raise property values of surrounding neighborhood

Gardens may enable demonstrations about healthy cooking and nutrition. Overall, establishment of a community garden on a County site should enhance the usefulness of the property to the public and improve neighborhood vitality.

County Garden Application

In the space provided, or in an attached letter, please answer the follow questions to support your request to establish the garden.

1. What is the present land use at the proposed site, and how would the garden enhance the usefulness of the property to the public or improve the neighborhood?

_____

_____

2. What is the purpose of the proposed garden?

_____

_____

_____

_____

ITEM 3. SITE INFORMATION

Any County garden site proposed for a community garden must be free of land-use conflicts, environmental or safety concerns. Any unused land has the potential to be turned into a community support garden, but the following characteristics make the journey to success easier:

- Community support
- Proximity to neighborhoods with apartments and townhomes where space for personal gardens is lacking
- Located at or near existing community centers, libraries or other facilities that already serve as community gathering spaces
- Existing water sources in place
- Land that gets at least six hours of sunlight

The County may limit the establishment of a community garden due to the existence of environmentally sensitive areas on the property. For garden sites of a half-acre or larger, the site must be evaluated by Leon County Development Support and Environmental Management to determine whether an environmental permit is required.

1. Describe reasons this site is a good location for a garden.

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Provide a sketch of the proposed garden. Indicate the dimensions proposed for the garden site and how it is located relative to roads, fences, buildings or other structures, water spigots, trees, and other prominent features. Include a north arrow to indicate direction. Also indicate where gardeners will park vehicles.

ITEM 4. GARDEN OPERATION PLAN

Before establishment, the plan for a garden should be shared with the local Neighborhood Association, if one exists. Gardeners are encouraged to contact nearby residents in person to inform them of the plan and invite their participation. The County will assist in publicizing the garden site via signage or other outreach as needed.

This section asks you to describe in general terms your plan for garden establishment, operation, and maintenance. Prior to construction, agents from Cooperative Extension will come out to complete a site visit for your proposed garden and will cover these topics in more detail.

Please answer the following questions.

1. What is the expected number of initial plot holders? _____

2. What is your plan for garden construction?

_____

_____

_____

3. What is your plan for outreach to adjacent property owners and neighbors?

_____

_____

_____

4. Do you plan to conduct an orientation session? ☐ yes ☐ no

5. How will common areas shared by all the gardeners, such as garden paths, be maintained?

_____

_____

_____

6. Will you have regular work days? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Will there be a deadline set for planting at the start of the season and for clean-up at the end of the season?

_____

_____

_____

8. What is the planned use of produce not consumed by plot holders?

_____

_____

_____

9. Do you plan to have educational or outreach events? ☐ yes ☐ no

ITEM 5. LISTING OF OTHER SUPPORT

1. Describe the support (in-kind and financial) you are receiving or expect to receive from other sources. (Note: other sources of funding are not required to receive the mini-grant.)

_____

_____

_____

2. What will happen with your garden project if this funding is not received? How will the garden be monetarily sustained over time?

_____

_____

_____

ITEM 6. REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

Assistance may be available for County gardens whose applications are approved by the County Administrator or his designee in the form of the following resources:

Material Support

- Soil amendments (coarse and fine mulch), available from Solid Waste
- Assistance from Public Works for installation of fencing or water supply/plumbing

Grant Funds

County garden groups may apply for a grant not to exceed $500. Grant funds are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis and are therefore contingent upon the availability of funds. All receipts must be kept and made available to the County upon request.

The following are allowable expenditures with grant funds:

- Enhancement of water supply
- Fencing materials
- Lumber and other materials for construction of garden beds (green, pressure-treated wood, concrete blocks, or other non-toxic materials)
- Purchase of soils amendments including topsoil or compost

Grant funds *shall not* be used for construction of accessory structures such as benches, tables and storage sheds.

Technical Support

A consultation from experts at Cooperative Extension, in which an agent will be available to review best practices and tailor the garden plan to meet site conditions, is available throughout the year. It is strongly encouraged that an orientation session by held for all garden participants before the initial planting season, and a consultation could be arranged in conjunction with such an orientation. Please contact Cooperative Extension after the approval of your application if you wish to arrange a consultation.

If your group wishes to apply, specify your request for assistance below.

Material Support

_____

_____

_____

Grant Funding

Amount requested (not to exceed $500): _____

Describe end use(s) for request. (You will be required to retain receipts for all items purchased.)

_____

_____

ITEM 7. GARDEN RULES AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

Community garden groups are encouraged to independently develop bylaws and guidelines, and are permitted to collect garden club dues. Gardens are intended to be open to any Leon County citizen who expresses interest in joining. If the garden is full, names of people wishing to join should be taken and new members added on a first-come, first-serve basis. Resources for help with forming garden clubs are included at the end of this application.

Community Gardens on Leon County property must abide by the rules and practices outlined below.

1. Gardening Best Practices

Gardens supported by the County should follow sustainable gardening practices. Following these practices avoids overuse of water, storm-water runoff, and pollution from agricultural chemicals.

- Organic soil amendments are the preferred source of plant nutrients.
- Any application of manufactured fertilizer shall be consistent with label instructions.
- Use of inorganic weed killers (herbicides) is prohibited on garden plots, weeding should be performed to keep plots and walkways tidy.
- Organic methods are the preferred manner of dealing with pests and diseases, but any use of pesticides shall be consistent with label instructions and must follow best practices as put forth by Leon County Cooperative Extension (http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/).
- Composting of on-site garden waste is strongly encouraged. Compost must be contained in a functional and aesthetically pleasing manner, such as a plastic bin, tumbler, or framed wooden structure.
- Gardeners shall conserve water. Water should not be left running in a gardener's absence.
- The garden layout should prevent erosion and storm-water runoff.

2. Garden Maintenance

Individuals and/or groups seeking use of County property for gardens shall agree to maintain a tidy garden.

- The garden should be kept free of invasive/exotic plants or vines that spread beyond the garden area.
- Garden paths should be mulched or otherwise be kept free of weeds.
- Plots should be kept tidy and the soil stabilized at all times, including after harvest.
- Tools, hoses and other gardening equipment should be removed from the site when not in use.
- Gardeners consent to weed or otherwise clean up garden plots upon request from the County.

3. Prohibited Activities

Activities that are not permitted in County community gardens include but are not limited to:

- Pets
- Unsupervised children
- Playing of loud, amplified music
- Smoking
- Littering or dumping
- Alcohol consumption or illegal drug use

- Sale of garden produce
- Sampling of produce from other gardeners' plots without express permission
- Application of agricultural chemicals including fertilizer, pesticides, insecticides, or herbicides in a manner that is not consistent with label instructions or with Florida law
- Installation of permanent structures at garden sites
- Expansion of the garden without explicit County approval
- Illegal activities

4. Annual Report and Listing on County Websites

The garden group shall submit a brief annual update each year by February 1st that reports the number of participants, how the produce was used and any special educational or other activities held at the garden. Photos are invited. A sample one page form is available on the website, but creativity is encouraged. The garden pictures or updates may be listed on County websites.

5. Termination of the Garden

- The County reserves the right to revoke permission to individuals or groups to garden on a County site based on observations of poor maintenance or the inability of the garden group to meet the standards set forth here.
- If the group decides to no longer maintain the garden, the primary contact should immediately notify the County. The gardeners will be responsible for restoring the garden to a vegetated and stabilized condition with non-invasive, non-exotic plants.
- The County reserves the right to end use of the property for gardening due to unforeseen reasons. In such a case, the County would provide notice as far in advance as possible and would attempt to suggest an alternative location.
- If the number of gardeners/plot holders falls below specified threshold for a period of 30 days, the County has the right to revoke the usage of the land.

ITEM 8. GARDEN LEADERSHIP

Although each member of a community garden is responsible for the construction and proper maintenance of the garden, the leadership of Garden Organizers is also necessary. In addition to overall coordination of garden activities, the Organizers serve as the point of contact between the County and the gardener, with the Garden Organizer serving as the primary contact and the Assistant Garden Organizer as an alternate to fill in when the Garden Organizer is not available.

The Garden Organizer and Assistant Garden Organizer are in charge of the following duties (this does not preclude delegating some duties to other garden club members):

- Acting as a liaison to the County and to the public
- Informing all participating gardeners of the Garden Rules and Operating Procedures as outlined in Item 7
- Abiding by and enforcing the Garden Rules and Operating Procedures
- Ensuring that all gardeners have signed the gardener pledge and Special Use Permit
- Assigning garden plots as needed
- Maintaining up-to-date roster of participating gardeners and a waiting list for interested gardeners

- Submitting a revised roster of garden members to the County within two weeks of a change in participants
- Issuing warnings to gardeners whose plots are neglected
- Coordinating work days for maintaining garden as a whole
- Supervising the completion of the brief annual report to the County
- In the event the group wishes to terminate this agreement: notifying the County Garden Program Administrator, Tessa Schreiner.
- In the event either of you can no longer fulfill your role: finding a replacement, notifying the County Garden Program Administrator, Tessa Schreiner, of the change in leadership.

Pledge: By signing below, I agree to fulfill my duties as Garden Organizer or Assistant Garden Organizer as outline above. In addition, I pledge to participate in the garden as a plot holder, which entails taking responsibility for a garden plot within the garden; using my plot only for personal, non-commercial purposes; and keeping my plot and the garden as a whole safe, usable and attractive.

1) Primary Garden Organizer

Printed Name:_____

Signature _____

2) Assistant Garden Organizer

Printed Name:_____

Signature _____

ITEM 9. ROSTER OF GARDENERS AND PLEDGES OF COMMITMENT

A successful garden requires a commitment from a group of gardeners to maintain the garden over an extended period of time. A minimum two-year commitment from a total of at least eight (8) gardeners is strongly suggested, but applications will be considered if justification for the number of starting plot holders is deemed sufficient by the County.

Please provide contact information and signatures of those pledging a two-year commitment. In addition to the organizer and assistant organizer, the participation of at least six more gardeners is suggested.

County Garden Application

Pledge: By signing below, I formally pledge to be an active participant in the creation and maintenance of the community garden for which this application is being made for the next two years. My participation entails taking responsibility for a garden plot within the garden; abiding by the County's Garden Rules and Operating Procedures as have been outlined by the Garden Organizers; using my plot only for personal, non-commercial purposes; and keeping my plot and the garden as a whole safe, usable, and attractive. I agree to complete the portion of garden upkeep decided as appropriate by the group for each plot holder in the event I wish to discontinue gardening. I agree to promptly notify the Garden Organizers in the event I wish to discontinue gardening. It is also my duty to provide the Garden Organizers with updated information if my contact information changes.

1. Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number(s): _____

E-mail: _____

Signature _____

2. Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number(s): _____

E-mail: _____

Signature _____

3. Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number(s): _____

E-mail: _____

Signature _____

County Garden Application

4. Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number(s): _____

E-mail: _____

Signature _____

5. Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number(s): _____

E-mail: _____

Signature _____

6. Printed Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number(s): _____

E-mail: _____

Signature _____

Information for additional gardeners can be included below or on an attached sheet.

ITEM 10. PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT AND WAIVER OF LIABLITY
Special Restricted-Use Permits will be provided with your approved application. A completed permit for each participant must be on file with the County before garden construction can start. Gardeners who start after the initial garden formation must also sign a permit before taking part in garden activities.

County Garden Application

RESOURCES
Fort Braden Community Garden Website
http://www.fortbradengarden.org/

Tallahassee Food Network
http://tallahasseefoodnetwork.blogspot.com/

American Community Gardening Association
http://www.communitygarden.org/learn/starting-a-community-garden.php

Once application package is complete, send to:
Tessa Schreiner, Leon County Sustainability & Recycling Manager
E-mail: SchreinerT@leoncountyfl.gov
Phone: 850.606.1827
Fax: 850.606.1801
Mail: Office of Resource Stewardship
7550 Apalachee Parkway
Tallahassee, FL 32311

Reset Form Print Form Email Form

Thank you for your application.
You will be contacted upon receipt of all materials.

Note: Starting one calendar year after recieiving initial support from Leon County, you may be eligible for additional support, depending on the availability of funds. Applications from gardens who have previously recieved grant funds will be accepted after August 1 of any given year.