

CGL2526 Course Syllabus

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Welcome to the Community Garden Leadership program. We are pleased that you are inspired to deepen your impact as leaders in your community through food-based gardening practices and community organizing efforts. Throughout this course, you will examine case studies, engage in reflective assignments and complete an independent study to hone your management skills and explore new levels of your leadership potential.

What to Expect

This online course will begin on September 29th, 2025 and end September 4th, 2026. For majority of the program, you will complete online learning modules asynchronously, at your own pace. Anyone enrolled in this course is expected to participate in all learning activities. For your own peace of mind and time management, submit all assignments by each deadline.

However, you will be enrolled in the program as part of a cohort and expected to engage with this learning group throughout the program via the discussion forums and periodic live zoom sessions. Your online presence through interactive discussion forum is essential. It provides an opportunity to ask questions while encouraging a network of state-wide community gardeners to learn and grow together. Please review the introduction module for more details on how to connect with the cohort and full participant group.

Plan to dedicate about 5 or more hours per topic for the online readings and assignments. On average, it takes 10 hours to complete the assignments, but this varies by participant. Should you take extra time to explore the optional topics and additional resources in each section, expect to add on another hour or two. Given the flexible nature of a distance learning environment, it is easy to fall behind and lose out on what could be a very valuable learning experience for you. Keeping yourself well organized and current with assignments will help you get the most out of this course.

Contact, Office Hours & Optional Zoom Sessions

Once the course begins, please contact the course instructor via messaging within Moodle. If you would like to meet with the instructor individually via Zoom, please reach out to set up a meeting.

Optional Zoom Q & A sessions: Cornell Garden-based Learning has found that students benefit from regular one-hour Zoom Q&A check-ins, where all students come together to review the course content, ask questions, and share ideas and progress. Dates and times are TBD, and take place on Tuesday or Thursday, alternating between 10am, 2pm and 7pm EST. Dates and times will be announced in the course in the Introductory Week. These sessions will mostly occur every other week and are recorded in case you miss them.

Course Schedule

Section	Dates	Module
1	September 29th – December 5th	Introduction
		Overview of Community Gardens
		Leadership Principles
		Communications and Marketing Strategy
		Building Partnerships
2	December 8 th – February 27th	Navigating Policy
		Sustainable Growing Practices
		Local Food Systems
		Dynamic Teaming and Volunteer Management
3	March 2 nd – May 29th	Financial Planning
		Forming Leadership Teams and Entities
		Sustainable Succession Planning
		Understanding Land Access
4	June 1 st – September 4 th	<i>Complete Independent Study Projects</i>
	September 4 th – September 18th	Independent Project Presentations and Resilient Garden Symposium

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, participants will:

- Understand the history, impact and opportunities for community gardens in NYS
- Explore and identify available resources, case studies, research, and successful community-based garden programs
- Develop strategic plan program inputs, activities, and desired outcomes
- Complete a community engagement project that is in alignment with community garden needs.
- Build a toolbox of resources and portfolio of program planning, deliverables, and strategies for sustainability.
- Utilize strategies to organize a community of volunteers and identify leadership

Course Content & Assessment

Weekly modules will open on a Monday and may contain the following components:

- A series of lessons that present each weekly topic
- Required readings from online resources, designed to reinforce or expand upon the material presented (there is no text to purchase)
- Activities and assignments that help develop your portfolio and toolbox of program planning
- Whole class forum with topics and questions for discussion, and a place to share ideas with others
- Opportunities for participants who enrolled in the course as a group to collaborate in group assignments and discussion

- Reflective writing that cultivates a thoughtful perspective and dialogue with the course instructor
- Additional readings, activities, and relevant resources

Journal Entries: Within each module you will be asked to submit a journal entry, where you will share your thoughts and ideas with your instructor who in turn will offer you constructive feedback throughout the course. Please keep in mind that this is a self-reflective activity, not a sounding board! Suggested writing prompts will be posted in Moodle, however you are free to explore your own topics if they relate to the course. The purpose of the journal is for you to reflect on something you have learned and take this knowledge to further your community garden mission. Instructions will be provided on how to upload journal documents into the Moodle platform.

Grading:

While there are no actual grades for this course, all assignments are designed to help keep you on track, develop a useful toolkit to jumpstart community garden operations and evaluate your understanding of the content. Assignments are expected to be completed on or before their due dates and will be evaluated on an Exemplary/Developing/ Emerging basis for you to track your progress.

- Exemplary: Student has submitted assigned task on time, referred to course materials to answer all questions and/or complete all assigned tasks
- Developing: Student submitted assigned task on time, referred to course materials to answer some of the questions and/or completed some assigned tasks
- Emerging: Student is just beginning to demonstrate learning in relation to the content, may or may not have referred to course materials to answer some of the questions and/or may or may not have completed some assigned tasks
- No grade: Did not submit the assignment by the end of the course. Supplies A computer with reliable high-speed Internet access (to view videos, view readings, submit assignments, and participate regularly in discussion forums).