

## [Your school here!] Garden Proposal and Outline

This school garden program is intended to provide youth with the education and experience involved in growing and eating fresh, locally produced food. By participating in this program, students will learn about the importance of nutrition and have an opportunity to connect multiple subject areas to the experience of being in and around nature; they will learn work skills, growth in struggles and the feeling of success involved in developing personal interests and seeking out future career opportunities. All participants – students and community members alike – will learn the importance and appreciation of small-scale gardening and environmental and community stewardship.

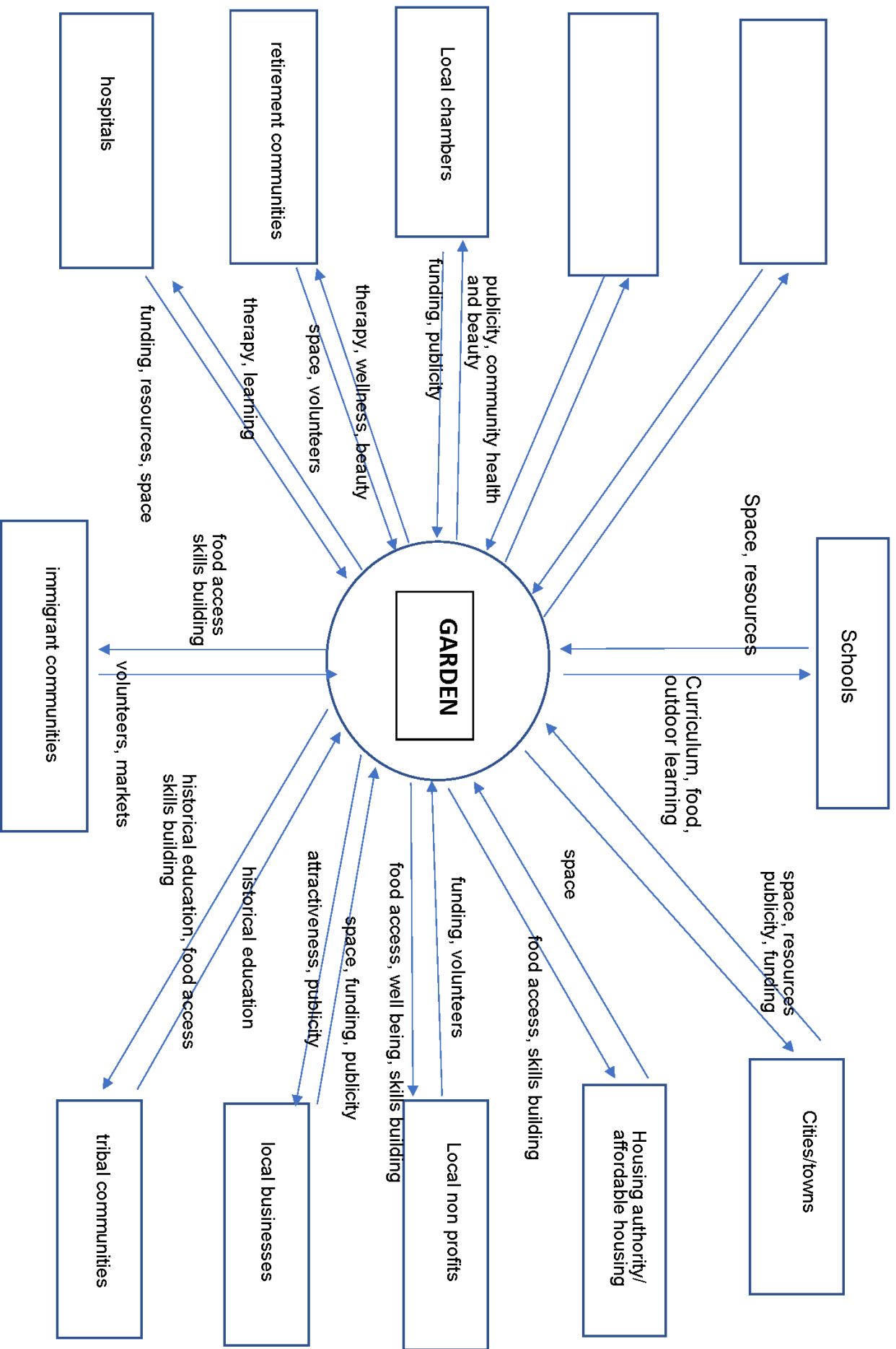
### Program Goals

1. The main goals relate largely to promoting local food gardening and teaching young children about growing food and learning about nature. I am also supporting a 7-acre garden with the Omaha Nation Public Schools in Nebraska, which is teaching students life skills with regard to entrepreneurship, general work skills, and providing fresh local produce to town residents.
2. Establishing the long-term support of the stakeholders (mostly schools, but also some residents) is going to be critical. To be sure, a lot goes in to planning for monetary support, but having a plan in place to maintain a space for learning also maintains a positive public perception.
3. A successful garden is the result of ongoing collaboration between all parties involved – project leaders, school staff, administrators, facilities managers, community members and neighbors – throughout the year. Students can learn principles of gardening and the environment during the school year (off-season); workdays and workshops can be scheduled throughout the summer so that students, families and community members can play a part in creating ongoing support. The biggest pushback with these types of projects tends to be making sure they don't become an overgrown, ugly mess – stakeholder awareness and involvement can help create and maintain a functional and recreational space for everyone.

### The Pitch

My name is ian peterson. I am the Extension Horticulture Educator for [x] county, and I am working with [x] to create a school garden program. This project gives students the ability to learn common concepts in a different environment while connecting to food gardening and being good stewards of their community. They will be able to learn how their food can be grown and the benefits of a healthy diet which includes fresh produce. I believe that your support can help show that this is an important experience for a lifetime of learning beyond what they would do in a classroom. Providing [money or materials] is another way to show your investment in the local community and its well-being. Everyone loves the idea of a community coming together for a common purpose, but it isn't always easy to make it happen in a concrete way. With more local partners like you, this can be a long-term accomplishment that helps multiple generations and can spread far beyond the school grounds. We would love to have to come to our next workday to see how involved the students and their families are - if you get your hands dirty, you can even share in some of the bounty for your supper that night. We also invite you to attend our planning meetings to see that we are dedicated to this project's future and to hear your input to help us come up with concrete, achievable goals using your support.

Need/Issue/Situation	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
The goals of this program are to provide youth with fresh, locally grown produce; engage them with the practices of gardening and environmental stewardship; work skills and problem solving that will help them flourish as they grow	School / faculty provide space, potentially use of tools, water, hoses	In class, indoors, schoolyard, garden...	Students can eat food grown at the school	Students will gain an understanding of the worth of locally-grown food and home gardening practices	Community-wide involvement and expansion of home or community gardens within the district (eventually across a city)
Local communities are losing a connection with locally grown food. This project will provide a basis for education and, ideally, inspiration to expand these practices	Involvement of teachers/staff to develop curriculum around the space and potentially plan class time around using or managing the gardens	Potential projects: flower borders planted around beds and cut for a bouquet sale; pollinator habitat; pollinator hotel; bird houses; bat boxes.	School newsletter blasts, social media posts, engagement with local newspapers or radio stations to report on the project	Students will increase their understanding of the nutrient and food webs above and below ground	Increase in fresh produce percentage of diet, both home/locally grown or store-bought, of whole families in addition to students involved in projects
<b>Assumption:</b> Community members will engage with the trend toward locally grown food and want to share in the process	School families and school or district clubs, local 4H, FFA, etc. donating labor or tool/resources to help manage and harvest; adults, EMGVs, etc. teaching a topic during weekend work days	Monthly (or more) trips to nearby farms or other urban/community farms/gardens Twice monthly trips to the farmers market to see what is grown on commercial farms	Community programs held at the school garden to teach families and promote the success of the garden beds	School staff and community members will actively participate in education, work days, harvesting	Gardens and curriculum incorporated across district-associated [pre] K-12 buildings
<b>Assumption:</b> Students and faculty will be excited to engage in nature-based learning and create the potential to include student-grown food in snacks or meals	Dollar donations for tools, soil, compost, etc. Dollar donations for or material donations of seed.	[needs funding or donated by local farmers' market association] Booth at farmers' market once or twice during the growing season to showcase (posters/pictures) the progress of the garden, potential fundraising sale of flowers or produce	Increased place-based education outdoors in the garden and around the school grounds	Additional space dedicated to either/both food, conservation, pollinators	



### Garden Site Checklist

- Location / Space availability
  - Proximity to an accessible door – easy to get to from, but especially back into the building (knowing how school doors are set up)
  - Near a sidewalk or a playground, at least to start, but with room to expand
  - Accessible from an ADA perspective
  - Easy access to water
  - Access to a location to store tools
  - Establish a location for 2- or 3-bin composting system near the garden space (ideally in the shade)
  - Full sun growing space
  - Protected break space
  - Signs to inform about the project
- The Growing
  - **Soil test**
  - Depending on the results of the test:
    - Contact local supplier of bulk soil and compost
    - Generate fundraising plan to purchase lumber for raised beds
  - Identify classroom space to start seeds
    - Generate fundraising or donation plan for seed starting supplies
  - Caging/fencing to protect plants from animals
  - Cheap, free or donated materials for staking or other vertical growing strategies
  - Baskets or tubs for harvest

### Evaluation Plan

- For long-term nutrition outcome:
  - Pre- and post- evaluation where participants can list (or, for kids, draw) the foods they eat the most, and separately list the foods they think they can grow that they like to eat – *administered by me/garden educator in the classroom*
- For short-term outcome of understanding nutrient and food webs:
  - Ongoing journal where participants describe or draw the different bugs, animals, birds and plants (including weeds!) that they see on a daily or weekly basis. Could include use of technology to take pictures and make a digital journal.
  - Experiment journal that tracks the difference between treatments of plants on their overall health and yield with fertilizer, compost, or no treatment. With older participants (teens+) could incorporate soil test data
  - Final reflection or “quiz” about the effects of plant/animal biodiversity and ‘regenerative’ practices on the health of the plants and garden ecosystem – *administered by teacher*
- For long-term outcome of integrating with curriculum
  - Work with teachers to develop quizzes or projects, eventually units based on garden-based learning

# Garden Curriculum Map (elementary model)

The Big Idea	Content	Processes/Activities	Processes/Activities	Assessment	Other, such as timeline, special considerations...
<p>What should students know, understand, be able to do?</p> <p><b>Science</b></p> <p>Students will identify and compare the factors which contribute to healthy plant growth</p>	<p>Connections to learning standards, curriculum objectives, etc.</p> <p>scientific method; experimental design; basic nutrients that plants need to survive</p>	<p>Lessons, hands-on activities, other experiences in and around the garden.</p> <p>Students will predict how 3 fertilizer treatments, plus control will affect plant growth</p>	<p>Lessons, hands-on activities, other experiences in and around the garden.</p> <p>Students will compare how 4 light-level treatments affect plant growth</p>	<p>Evidence of learning, opportunities for reflection for teacher and students.</p> <p>Students will use information they learned about plant growth requirements to describe the results of the experiments</p>	<p>Time needed to develop a proper experiment with hypothesis and some background information on plants</p>
<p><b>Math</b></p> <p>Students will classify the wildlife of the garden using a table and a bar graph</p>	<p>creating/labeling rows and columns correctly in a table; identifying and labeling the axes of a bar graph and quantifying data collected</p>	<p>Students will survey the types of wildlife they observe in the garden</p>	<p>Students will create a table listing the types of each group of wildlife they observe (i.e. birds, insects, arthropods, mammals)</p>	<p>Students will create a bar graph classifying how many of different types of wildlife (birds, wasps, bees, beetles, etc)</p>	<p>Observations will be ongoing throughout a unit</p>
<p><b>Language Arts</b></p> <p>Students will use literary structure to create nature-based writing samples</p>	<p>short story construction (plot, details, descriptions); poem types and construction</p>	<p>Students will write down the observed behavior of animals in the garden</p>	<p>Students will journal about how "sitting sessions" in the garden make them feel</p>	<p>Students will create a short story or series of 3-4 poems based on their garden experiences and observations</p>	<p>Each day in the garden, students should write a one-sentence "exit ticket" about something they observed</p>
<p><b>Social Studies</b></p> <p>Students will describe historical non-food uses of plants by regional Indigenous peoples</p>	<p>local history; tribal histories; historical resource use</p>	<p>Students will research historical uses of plants generally (food and non) by native and settled people in the region</p>	<p>Students will identify plants in/around the garden and their neighborhoods that they learned about in their research</p>	<p>Students will create a product (essay, visual display, slideshow) summarizing the historical uses of 5 non-food plants</p>	<p>A pre-unit activity could include students learning about modern-day materials and medicines that use plants</p>

## Ongoing Sustainability Plan

### Getting Organized:

1. Who is taking the lead/overseeing the garden: volunteers, teachers, parents, staff, and maintenance?  
*Ideally, there will be a teacher at the school who is willing to check in on the garden once or twice each week. A plan or checklist can be written so they have an idea of what to check for, especially if they are unfamiliar with gardening. This can be as simple as noticing if it is getting weedy or if there is produce ready to harvest. There would also be a master gardener volunteer co-leading the project who they can coordinate with to organize work events.*
2. Garden Committee Chairperson or co-chairs  
*As above, a school employee and a community volunteer (read: parent) or EMGV co-leading the project*
3. Sub committees
  - a) Fundraising  
*school administrator in terms of finding dollars available to the school through district, city or community club initiatives; parent or other community member experienced in fundraising efforts*
  - b) Volunteer coordinator  
*Me, as MGV coordinator and potentially a heavily involved MGV*
  - c) Documentation/ handbook (to update to hand down to future volunteers/staff)  
*Collaboration with me, volunteer coordinator, lead teacher and administrator*
  - d) In-service & Education  
*Me and others involved knowledgeable about gardening*
  - e) other  
*Teacher and/or parent involved in extra-curricular planning to help guide students with potential fundraising ideas and efforts*
4. Do you have funding? If yes, where is the funding from?  
*Look into local business grants or campaigns, possibly district funding/grants, PTA/community club dollars; material donations from local businesses or community members*

### Keeping the Garden Growing Year after Year

#### Volunteer Retention

1. Volunteer Plan- who will coordinate this?  
*Myself as EMGV coordinator in collaboration with teacher/administrator for non-Extension volunteers*
2. How will you recruit more people, teachers, volunteers, etc. for each school year?  
*This could be done through social media campaigns, school newsletter blasts, bringing in multiple grade levels to include more students and their families*

## Participation

3. Volunteers  
*EMGVs, community families, local youth organizations including scouts or 4H*
4. How could or will the garden be used in the summer or by after-hours staff programming?  
*Any time there is planting, weeding or harvesting, a workday can be used as an educational program; families will be invited to spend time working, be allowed to harvest to take home and recipe/nutrition programming can be done in conjunction*

## Maintenance

5. Yearly Maintenance plan- who will create and implement this?  
*Myself, grounds/maintenance staff and EMGV/teacher leader*
6. Summer Maintenance Plan- who will care for the garden?  
*See "Participation"*
7. What kind of documentation or handbook will be written, who will create it? If it's an ongoing process, who will oversee it?  
*See #7. Monthly or seasonal plans can be created for one-time or ongoing jobs and expectations; a map of the grounds can be created to establish "job zones" if there are multiple types of food, flowers or other landscaping so volunteers and youth can choose where they would most like to be involved based on interest; review annually with garden leaders and revise as needed.*

## Funding & the Future

8. Future funding sources  
*See #3e – create volunteer and student groups who are motivated to create interesting and unique funding campaigns or who have a willingness to reach out to local business for money, seed or other material donations as needed.*
9. Future projects- expansion of the garden  
*Have educational programming based on multiple types of food gardening and native landscaping. Create a living list of ideas for how to add to the garden; hold planning events where participants can vote on the next logical (or most desired) project; brainstorm fundraising efforts and required labor to determine how realistic the proposed project is – re-vote if it is too large of an undertaking at the time.*

## Fundraising Plan/Checklist

The following can be used to create an outline for initial proposal to stakeholders, lists of needs and participant roles:

- The Volunteer Roles document helps establish who will take on which jobs and can be used to specify who will approach each institution
- The Partnership Map will help individualize the approach to each institution with regard to their role and outlining mutual benefits
- The logic model can be used to show proposed outputs and outcomes from involvement

- The materials list can be categorized to narrow what is being requested of each institution for donation
- The curriculum map can be used to approach teachers and youth organizations to represent learning outcomes
- The Sustainability Plan organizes roles in terms of who would be involved in each type of fun- or materials – raising; the “future projects” idea (Sustainability Plan #10) can be used to address how to approach different institutions or partners to support and be involved in proposed future ideas

### **Development List & Timeline**

#### **Beginning Phases:**

- Interest assessment: administrators, teachers, students, facilities, parents/neighbors
- Siting: see associated Criteria Checklist for growing requirements, accessibility, water/tool access, etc.
- Role assignments: staff, students, EMGVs, community/neighbors
- Goals assessment: food, pollinators, donation, nutrition, curriculum, etc.

#### **Winter (pre-garden)**

- Garden design activity for each class involved: shape, pathways, food, flowers
- Soil tests to determine need for raised beds, soil amendments, etc.
- Fundraising plan for raised bed materials (ideal for accessibility); determine possibility/need for compost area; student-assisted flier/newsletter for seeking out potential partnerships/sponsors
- Seed starting activities (and associated material sourcing/donation)
- Evaluate Criteria Checklist for other materials to be obtained through donation, purchase, scrounging

#### **Spring**

- Community work weekends to construct and fill raised beds
- Direct sowing
- [Late spring/early summer] plant warm-season foods and flowers (pre-started or purchased/donated)
- Develop plan for bi-weekly or monthly newsletter to school, community, partners; includes summer scheduling
- Classroom activities about plant health requirements, role of flowers and pollinators in growing food; role of beneficial bugs and other insects in nature
- Develop plan for ongoing summer maintenance - bi-weekly workdays, weed/water sign-up sheet, harvest parties, etc.

#### **Summer**

- Ongoing work schedule and maintenance (includes documenting harvest amounts)
- Community workshops (taught by volunteers, teachers, etc.)
- Begin planning and fundraising or donation outreach for fall crop seed

#### **Fall**

- Evaluate success of summer scheduling - what worked/didn't; frequency; more/less work time, workshops, etc.

- Begin outdoor curriculum early to take advantage of the last two-3 months of growing time
- Develop plans with teachers and administrators regarding availability for class time, after school, weekend maintenance work for weeding, harvesting, eventual fall clean-up chores
- Use fall for nutrition curriculum and having students taste produce from the garden

## Winter

- Based on fall nutrition/tasting curriculum, survey students and community members about what was grown and what to plan for next year
- Evaluate first year successes/struggles
- Begin seed sourcing, evaluating seed starting setup, planning for starting seeds
- Hold meetings to discuss future maintenance plans and sustaining or expansion goals

## Goals

1. **Perennial Pollinator Habitat:** (Assuming year 1 is focused on vegetable gardening) During the winter after the first growing season, students and community members will learn about native pollinators and habitats. A meeting will be held to determine desired plant species to include and feasibility of obtaining plants. Evaluate initial expansion phase regarding flowering borders versus a standalone pollinator plot.
2. **Irrigation:** Evaluate the success of the water maintenance schedule. Investigate: methods of automatic irrigation and the affordability/feasibility of installing a system - style, size (whole garden or certain beds); who will install (professional versus workshop opportunity); new maintenance schedule and observation record for maintaining and evaluating effectiveness throughout the season.
3. **Donation/Farm to School:** Collaborate with nutrition services to learn about the meal-planning process and amounts of different fresh foods needed to supply school lunch. Use the previous season(s') harvest data to determine which crops could be used as-is or scaled up to provide a menu ingredient. This could be once per month, bi-weekly; evaluate success of spring crops for end-of-year lunches, harvest period of warm season crops (tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, etc.), and success or feasibility of summer-sown fall crops.