

chicago park district



COMMUNITY GARDENS IN THE PARKS LETTER OF COMMITMENT

Congratulations! After agreeing to abide by the following Community Garden terms, your group will be accepted and ready to begin. Please read this document carefully, making sure that all members of your group understand and agree to the terms listed below. Finally, sign this Letter of Commitment formalizing your agreement with the Chicago Park District.

The most important aspect of successful community gardening in a park is ongoing community support and communication between the community and the Chicago Park District. Listed below are the responsibilities and guidelines the Group must adhere to, and the community must support.

GARDEN/PLOT MAINTENANCE

The Group is entirely responsible for the maintenance of the Community Garden. Keep in mind that the space allocated is on public land and must always be actively maintained. The Group is to provide the Chicago Park District with a schedule detailing routine maintenance procedures, spring prepping, and fall winterizing.

Pathways and areas between Garden Beds must be mulched and maintained by the group. The Park District will not do any maintenance within the Community Garden itself.

Through the Park District's independent observation, if the space is deemed unsightly, weedy or unkempt, the designated liaison will be given two separate warning notices both via two different means (for example, phone call and letter through the mail) each time. If the problem continues thereafter, the agreement will be revoked and the Group will be responsible for proposing a plan to restore the garden to parkland to the satisfaction of the Park District's Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

WATER

Please conserve water!!! The water supply is **ONLY** to be used by gardeners caring for their assigned areas. Washing of cars or other personal non-garden related activities is prohibited.

ORGANIC PRACTICES

It is strongly recommended that all cultivating practices be organic; to the extent possible only organic fertilizers should be applied in edibles gardens.

PEST & DISEASE CONTROL AND CHEMICALS

Only organic means of disease and pest control may be used. **NO CHEMICAL PEST CONTROL MEASURES MAY BE USED WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL FROM THE PARK DISTRICT'S DNR/ECSE DEPARTMENTS.**

COMPOSTING

Composting is encouraged, but only that which is organic and will decompose (e.g. plant material, fruit peels/cores). Avoid rodent-attracting foods such as rice, bread, meat, or grease. Inorganic or non-plant materials such as plastic, metal, kitty litter, feces, or any large or thorny branches are not suitable for compost. The compost must be contained in a manner approved by the Park District's DNR/ECSE departments such as a tumbler or open cage.

An alternative to a compost bin is bagged plant material waste which the Park District landscape crew will pick up upon notification.

STRUCTURES AND SIZABLE LANDSCAPE MATERIAL

Structures such as trellises, walls, and permanent fences, or sizable plant material such as trees are not allowed, unless approved by the Park District's DNR/ECSE departments.

GARDEN BORDERS

The garden boundaries must remain as submitted on the original design plans. Any proposed expansion must be reviewed and approved by the Park District's DNR/ECSE departments. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

MONITORING THE COMMUNITY GARDEN

The community, especially Group members, shall continually monitor the Community Garden for quality control and good management practices.

MANAGEMENT

Frequent communication with the Chicago Park District regarding management of the Community Garden is required. If problems occur with the operation or patrons of the Community Garden, the Chicago Park District should be informed and involved in the resolution of any problems.

NEW MEMBERS

The Group shall inform new members of the Community Garden rules and regulations; stressing the importance of ongoing maintenance. The group must follow a transparent membership process open to all. As a public agency, Park District policy requires inclusiveness; anyone interested in joining the Group is to be fairly considered.

LIABILITY

The Park District is not responsible for the garden itself; or to anything in or pertaining to the garden. Each member of the gardening group must sign a waiver of liability.

FUNDRAISING

The Group may organize fundraising events to finance needs of the Community Garden such as a compost bin, water hoses, plants, etc.

CLEAN-UP ACTIVITIES

The Group will be expected to participate in park clean-up days such as Earth Day (April), and Clean & Green (May & October) events, and those held in conjunction with the Friends of the Parks organization.

SIGNAGE

Each Community Garden will have a sign indicating the name of the Community Garden Group and other information as required by the Chicago Park District. Signage will be provided by the Park District.

VEHICLES

Park patrons are permitted to use motorized vehicles within a park **ONLY** on designated roadways, driveways and parking facilities. **The parking or driving of motorized vehicles by any park patron on walkways, restricted-access drives, lawn areas, under trees, or within landscaped areas is strictly forbidden.**

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

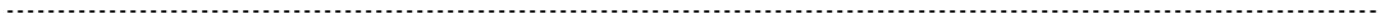
- **Littering, dumping, alcohol consumption** and other unlawful activities
- **Amplified sound**
- **Pets** are not allowed in the garden per the Code of the Chicago Park District
- **Ball playing** or other forms of active recreation
- **Vehicular traffic** inside the park

GARDEN TERMINATION

If the Group decides to no longer maintain their space, they must immediately notify the Park District’s DNR/ECSE departments and the Park Supervisor and Area Manager. Group will be responsible for proposing a plan to restore the garden to parkland to the satisfaction of the Park District’s Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

QUALITY ASSURANCE

A Chicago Park District representative may attend a neighborhood association and/or park Advisory Council meeting to review the successes or challenges experienced by the Community Gardeners. The Park District will take appropriate action based on that assessment. Failure by the Community Gardeners to provide the required operational and financial support will result in the removal of the garden by the Park District.



I _____ (*please print name*) am the official liaison of the Garden Group named _____.

Each current member of our Garden Group has read the above listed terms and agrees to abide by them and now enters into a commitment to maintain our Community Garden in _____ Park.

Liaison’s Signature: _____ Date: _____