



Community Garden Proposal Manual

Greetings!

Thank you for your interest in bringing a VINES Community Garden to your neighborhood.

Enclosed you will find a packet of information about VINES and how to start a community garden project. These materials include:

- Information on VINES, our history, programs, and list of current community gardens,
- Roles and responsibilities of Garden Advocates, Site Coordinators, and VINES in starting and running a community garden,
- Steps to starting a new community garden in your neighborhood,
- A list of criteria for Community Gardens that will be used to score the proposal.

Reviewing the New Community Garden Manual and looking at existing gardens for inspiration is a great first step. VINES will also hold an annual, mandatory training each winter to help prepare you for the proposal process. This training will go over the enclosed materials in greater detail to assist you with your proposal.

Once you've reviewed this information and attended the training, you will have the background and skills to complete the garden proposal. VINES will then assess proposal, with special consideration for the needs of the neighborhood and the criteria met. VINES will support selected proposals financially and with organizational support such and administrative duties and education.

VINES is anxious to meet our goal of 20 gardens by 2020, which requires building an additional eight gardens in three years. New gardens are eligible to receive up to \$10,000 per garden, thanks to generous funding received by The Conrad and Virginia Klee Foundation.

If you have any questions regarding VINES' Community Garden initiative, or this proposal process, please feel free to contact us at 607-205-8108. You can also email us at info@vinesgardens.org

We look forward to hearing from you!

Regards,

Amelia LoDolce
Executive Director



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About Volunteers Improving Neighborhood Environments

VINES Mission Statement

Volunteers Improving Neighborhood Environments, INC. (VINES) is an organization committed to developing a sustainable and just community food system. We do this by bringing together diverse groups of people, with a focus on youth development, to establish community gardens, urban agriculture and community green spaces. We strive to develop and beautify urban sites and empower community members of all ages and abilities.

Organizational Overview

The essence of VINES' work is captured in its simple motto: growing food, growing community. VINES empowers people to improve their lives and communities through urban gardening and connecting urban consumers to rural farmers. The organization formed as a volunteer-led project building community gardens in 2007 but quickly grew as demand for urban gardening space, garden-based education, and access to local food exploded. VINES became an independent nonprofit in 2010, and now manages programs including community gardens, the Binghamton Urban Farm (BUF), Grow Binghamton (a summer youth employment program), the Green Thumb Educational Workshop Series, and the Binghamton Farm Share program (Farm Share). Demand for VINES' programming continues to grow and the organization is working to expand its core programs both within and beyond Binghamton's urban core.



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About VINES' Community Garden Program

Community gardens are the root of VINES. In 2007, a group of dedicated volunteers came together to transform two vacant lots in downtown Binghamton into vibrant community gardens. This led to the creation of VINES, and just ten years later the organization had constructed 12 community gardens in The Greater Binghamton area. These gardens provide raised beds that residents can rent for an affordable fee (ranging from \$20-\$25 per growing season) to grow food for themselves and their families. Community gardens strengthen neighborhoods, as residents work together to make a change in their community. VINES aids in the process to enable, unite and empower people to produce their own food, beautify their neighborhoods, and share their passion for the value of growing wholesome food.

In 2017, VINES celebrated its 10th anniversary by launching a campaign to grow its community garden network to 20 gardens by the end of 2020. In connection with this expansion, VINES has created the proposal process outlined here for community members that are interested in building a community garden with VINES. While the first 11 of VINES' community gardens were built in the City of Binghamton, this expansion will embark into Johnson City, Vestal and beyond. Because of staffing and travel constraints, at this time, VINES will only be considering projects within Broome County.

Beginning in January 2018, residents can attend training with VINES on how to start a new community garden and apply to VINES for technical and financial assistance to support them in creating a garden in their neighborhood. After attending the 3 hour training session, you can decide whether to pursue the proposal. However, in order to be able to submit a proposal, at least one Garden Advocate must attend the mandatory training session prior to the submission of their community garden proposal.



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Current VINES Community Gardens (as of December 1, 2017)

Binghamton

- Columbus Park Community Garden (26 Columbus Park East), established 2007
- Corbett Ave Community Garden (26 Corbett Avenue), established 2009
- Front Street Community Garden (250 Front Street), established 2016
- Gregory Lane Community Garden (10 Gregory Lane), established 2012
- Laurel Ave Community Garden (128 Laurel Avenue), established 2009
- Liberty Street Community Garden (79 Liberty Street), established 2009
- Mather Street Community Garden (26 Mather Street), established 2012
- Park Street Community Garden (46 Park Street), established 2017
- Pine Street Community Garden (67 Pine Street), established 2009
- Phelps Park Community Garden (600 State Street), established 2014
- Salvation Army (North Side) Community Garden (530 State Street), established 2015

Johnson City

- Sherman Street Community Garden (52 Sherman Street), established 2017



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Roles and Responsibilities of Garden Leadership

	Garden Advocate	Site Coordinator	VINES
Description:	Person(s) championing the community garden project with extensive involvement in the proposal process. <i>This person may or may not be the same person as the "Site Coordinator".</i>	Person(s) (typically 2) coordinating the garden throughout the year. This is the liaison between VINES and community garden members. This person may or may not be the same person as the "Garden Advocate".	Primary Support Person is the Community Garden Manager, with additional assistance from VINES' Program Assistant.
During Development:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Champions the garden proposal Attends mandatory Garden Proposal Workshop Conducts Garden Outreach Assists with garden design process Coordinates community meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential Site Coordinators should be involved in the process as Garden Advocates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides educational trainings Provides assistance such as answering questions that may require previous community garden experience Serves as a liaison for higher needs, such as working with local municipalities Responsible for public affairs Provides VINES approved flyers, outreach materials, etc.
Ongoing Roles/Responsibilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Garden Advocate's role in the development process, outreach, etc. would make a great candidate for a Site Coordinator Optionally, assists Site Coordinator(s) as Site Coordinator sees fit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists with design process and coordination of community meetings Time commitment of approximately 4-8 hours per month during peak (Mar-Oct) and 1 hour per month (Nov-Feb) during the winter Attends quarterly trainings and meetings Responsible for communication to community garden members or interested community members See <i>Site Coordinator Job Description</i> for complete details on this role and expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides education and assistance Serves as a liaison for higher needs Responsible for public affairs Direct supervisor for Site Coordinator(s) Assists with garden member sign ups Handles financial logging of plot fees Provides VINES approved flyers, outreach materials, etc. Assists with garden outreach Coordinates volunteer groups for larger work days



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Steps to Building a Community Garden

A community garden typically takes two years to build from the time we process and approve a proposal to completion of all garden amenities. The following steps are to serve as a guide in the garden development process. Neighborhood energy and effort are the strongest factors for successful gardens. The more people that are involved in the development and implementation of the community garden, the easier and smoother the process becomes, and the faster their vision can become a reality.

FALL

Step 1: Identify a Site

Bringing a community garden to your neighborhood is most successful when you have a potential garden site in mind. However, community input is important, and reviewing proposal requirements and scoring details may change what site(s) you are thinking of.

Step 2: Review Community Garden Proposal and VINES Criteria

Review the proposal, and think critically of the existing VINES gardens and what makes those a success. Start brainstorming and reading through the process with an open mind. Become familiar with the roles and responsibilities of garden advocates, site coordinators, Community Garden Manager and VINES' supporting role through this process.

WINTER

Step 3: Attend Garden Proposal Workshop

To streamline the proposal process, VINES will hold a Mandatory Garden Proposal Workshop. This will explain the process of submitting a proposal in greater detail and give you an opportunity to ask questions regarding the process. This workshop will provide specific training on required steps to complete the proposal process, such as researching site details and conducting community outreach. The workshop is intended to support your role as a garden advocate and to help you produce a competitive proposal for you and your community.

SPRING

Step 4: Conduct Community Outreach and Engagement Efforts

Outreach entails going door-to-door in the immediate community of the garden site, posting flyers in nearby community spaces, and gathering general community input on the project. This sometimes may involve community meetings may also be less formal at this stage. Community engagement is a crucial component of community gardens and a key element of VINES' mission.



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It is important that community members are on board with the project. Additionally, it's helpful to start building relationships with local organizations (churches, schools, groups, etc.), businesses and neighbors. Stroll the neighborhood thinking of partnerships that could provide either social or financial capital. **Note: Outreach Training will have been conducted with garden advocate(s) during the Garden Proposal Workshop**

Step 5: Determine Site Support and Community Support

Until outreach is completed and has resulted in positive feedback from the community, VINES cannot move forward with a project. If outreach goes well, move forward with garden proposal. If concerns or suggestions arise during outreach, be consistent with community input and explore other options to fit community needs.

Step 6: Submit Garden Proposal

At this point, after attending VINES' Community Garden Proposal Workshop and conducting outreach, you have the tools you need to submit your garden proposal. Proposals are due April of each year.

Step 7: Wait for Garden Proposal Decisions

Proposals will be reviewed and scored by a Community Garden Committee which consists of VINES staff, Current Community Gardeners, and Site Coordinators. A decision will be made in May.

Step 8: Meet with VINES

Upon proposal acceptance, VINES and Garden Advocate(s) will meet to discuss the proposal and any revisions that may need to be made. Dates for community meetings will be confirmed and the design process will begin in greater detail.

SUMMER

Step 9: Conduct and Coordinate Outreach Efforts

Upon proposal acceptance, Garden Advocates will be responsible for conducting additional outreach to support the upcoming Community Meeting where the garden design will be developed and refined. VINES will support this outreach campaign with flyers, documents and language to provide consistent messaging across community garden projects.

Step 10: Coordinate a Community Meeting

Together, VINES and neighborhood participants design the community garden. These meetings allow community members to build their garden with specific features and design elements they see fit. This usually requires several workshops to allow time to draw the design and revise as needed.



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Step 11: Develop a Timeline for Construction the Garden

VINES will work to define a timeline and build dates for garden construction. Throughout the next several months, additional community meetings will be held to finalize the design of the garden and begin recruiting potential volunteers and garden members.

Step 12: Identify Site Coordinator

A Garden Advocate is a likely choice for a Year One Site Coordinator. VINES recommends having two site coordinators at each garden. Amongst Garden Advocates, community members and supporters of the project, identify two potential site coordinators who will complete VINES' mandatory Site Coordinator Orientation.

Step 13: Engage and Inform Community Members

Complete additional outreach to invite community members to the garden build. Use previous outreach contacts, post flyers, etc. VINES will support this outreach campaign with flyers, documents, etc. This is a good time to reach out to local businesses for additional support. VINES will also assist in coordinating volunteers for the garden build.

FALL

Step 14: BUILD!

VINES will continue to work with volunteers and community members on organized workdays to install community garden amenities, such as entry gates, benches, murals by local artists, arbors, information boards, trees, shrubs, perennial beds, etc. VINES remains in a long-term support role by providing ongoing maintenance, Site Coordinator support and training, and public educational trainings and workshops.

Deadlines

Visit vinesgardens.org for specific, current year deadlines

Garden Proposal Workshop – February

Community Garden Proposal Due –April

Community Garden Proposal Decisions – May

Community Garden Acceptance Planning Meeting – May/June

Submitting a Competitive Garden Proposal

VINES is here to assist you in completing a competitive proposal.

Supportive documents, FAQ and more can be found at: vinesgardens.org



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Budget Proposal

Garden proposals are eligible to receive up to \$10,000 per garden, thanks to funding received by The Conrad and Virginia Klee Foundation. The amount awarded to each garden will depend greatly on the strength of the garden proposal and a modest budget.

CATEGORY	ITEM	COST	QTY	TOTAL
Basic Garden Infrastructure	Filled 10'x4' Garden Bed ¹	\$300	15 beds	\$4,500
	Fence ²			\$4,000
	Water Installation ³			\$0
	Tools and Storage ⁴	\$400		\$400
	Garden Signage	\$200		\$200
	Example: wheelbarrow	\$60		\$60
	Example: woodchips			
				SUBTOTAL
Design Elements	Example: Arbor	\$300		\$300
	Example: Bench			
	Example: Perennials			
				SUBTOTAL
Other	Outreach or Event Idea	\$150		\$150
				SUBTOTAL
GRAND TOTAL				\$9,610

¹ Garden beds are expected to cost approximately \$300, including lumber, soil and compost.

² The average cost of fencing, with installation, is \$25 per foot for chain-link and \$55 per foot for aluminum. This pricing is an approximate figure for small runs of fencing with 1 gate.

³ There is no cost in the City of Binghamton. An estimated cost of opening an existing water line is \$300.

⁴ Tools and Storage include: Deck box, 100 foot hose, 1 short-handled shovel, 2 long-handled shovels, 1 short-handled spade fork, 1 stone rake, 2 two-prong garden hoes, 2 garden hand tool kits and 1 hose nozzle.



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Community Garden Proposal Criteria and Scoring System

****For reference only, do not complete this section****

Please use the following criteria as a reference when completing your Community Garden Proposal. Each garden presents its own unique challenges and strengths; this criterion is to act as a guide to model an ideal community garden.

COMMUNITY GARDEN REQUIREMENTS	YES	NO
<i>Because of the funding available and the mission of VINES, the following are requirements for Community Garden Proposals.</i>		
Water: Has water service installed onsite or readily available?		
Sun Exposure: Minimum 6 hours full sun on majority of site.		

CRITERIA	Scoring Details
SITE CONTROL	TOTAL : 4 POINTS
Site Control: VINES requires site control to make financial and social investments, including implementing a new community garden. Lot ownership changes the ability to get public utilities, depending on municipality or private sites. It is preferred that lots be owned by a municipality (with a minimum lease of 5 years), a partner non-profit, or lots that are owned by VINES or will be donated to VINES.	3 POINTS <i>0 = Did not demonstrate</i> <i>3 = Lot owned by a municipality (with minimum lease of 5 years), Partner non-profit, is owned by VINES or will be donated to VINES.</i>
Lot Ownership: Private property with an owner willing to lease for a minimum of 5 years.	1 POINT <i>0= Lacking</i> <i>1 = Has support to lease property or meets other ownership requirements listed above</i>
DEMONSTRATED LEADERSHIP	TOTAL : 3 POINTS
Demonstrated Leadership: Proposal shows sufficient support from Garden Advocate, has identified a Site Coordinator(s), champions of the project extend beyond individual capacity (ex: local business partnerships).	3 POINTS <i>0 = Did not demonstrate</i> <i>1 = Lacking</i> <i>2 = Average</i> <i>3 = Exceptional</i>



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NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORT	TOTAL : 3 POINTS
Neighborhood Support: Outreach was conducted with positive feedback. Interest sheet submitted with proposal.	3 POINTS <i>0 = Did not demonstrate</i> <i>1 = Lacking</i> <i>2 = Average</i> <i>3 = Exceptional</i>
COMMUNITY NEED	TOTAL : 7 POINTS
Community Need or Food Security: Demonstrates a community need or access to food. Ex: Is it a food desert or does the site sit within the low-income census tracts where a significant number or share of residents is more than 1/2 mile (urban) or 10 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket.	2 POINTS <i>0 = Did not demonstrate community need</i> <i>1 = Average</i> <i>2 = Exceptional</i>
Neighborhood Demand: Residences in the neighborhood do not have sufficient space for gardens at home, the neighborhood has multi-family housing and need for additional greenspace.	2 POINTS <i>0 = Did not demonstrate community need</i> <i>1 = Average</i> <i>2 = Exceptional</i>
Accessibility: Walking proximity or short commute for majority of garden members.	2 POINTS <i>0 = Is not in close proximity for garden members</i> <i>1 = Average</i> <i>2 = Exceptional</i>
Accessibility: On-street parking or lot parking within 30 feet.	1 POINT <i>0 = Lacking</i> <i>1 = Has on-street parking or lot parking within 30 feet</i>
COST OF BUILDING THE GARDEN	TOTAL : 3 POINTS
Garden Cost: Total Cost, Lot size vs. proposed number of garden beds, number of people served, total budget cost, fundraising capacity.	3 POINTS <i>0 = Did not demonstrate or lacks capacity</i> <i>1 = Lacking</i> <i>2 = Average</i> <i>3 = Budget in relation to size of garden, number of garden members served and accessibility is fair, with demonstrated fundraising capacity</i>
TOTAL SCORE	TOTAL : 20 POINTS