

Community Gardens Grant

The City of Kitchener is a strong supporter of community gardens. Community gardens provide access to fresh vegetables, connect neighbours, provide a sense of belonging and improve the look of neighbourhoods.

In addition to this grant, you can find a step by step guide for starting a community garden at lovelyhood.ca. It is a good idea to communicate with city staff before submitting a grant application, to help you understand the process involved and do an initial screening of your proposed locations.

The volunteer-driven Community Garden Council of Waterloo Region has a wealth of resources and mentoring or networking opportunities. Visit community-gardens.ca.

1. Definition of a community garden

Community gardens are defined as places where people come together to grow vegetables, herbs, fruits and flowers in designated plots, on a volunteer-driven, non-commercial basis.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this grant is to provide financial and in-kind support for starting new community gardens in Kitchener. This is a one-time grant and does not support on-going operations of a community garden.

3. Grant amount

On city owned lands, new community gardens are eligible for:

- Up to \$1,000 towards one-time capital and/or equipment costs, such as plot construction, fencing, signage, storage shed, tools, accessibility features, etc.
- In-kind services including water connection costs, locates, soil testing and preparation of the garden.

On non-city owned lands, new community gardens are eligible for:

- Up to \$1,000 towards one-time capital and/or equipment costs, such as plot construction, fencing, signage, storage shed, tools, accessibility features, etc.

4. Who can apply

Applications from residents or community groups in Kitchener will be accepted, including:

- Residents who form a committee/group for the purpose of starting a community garden.
- Neighbourhood-based or community groups already formed (such as non-profit organizations, neighbourhood associations, hobby or special interest groups, etc.).

5. Grant eligibility

The proposed community garden must:

- Be located in the City of Kitchener.
- Be primarily led, planned and administered by residents or community groups.
- Be open and inclusive to the wider neighbourhood and encourage diverse involvement in garden committees and plot assignments.
- Include accessible and barrier free garden plot options

6. How to apply

Applications will be accepted annually on **June 1st of the preceding year** the community garden is to be installed.

To be considered for this grant, the applicant must submit the following details in the form of a proposal or complete an online application form at lovemyhood.ca, including:

- Organizational structure of group or organization leading the community garden.
- Key contact names of individual(s) that will lead the community garden.
- Description of 4-6 suggested locations for the community garden.
- Identify how the garden can have a positive neighbourhood impact, as outlined in the Grant Criteria in Section 7:A.

7. Grant criteria

A. Neighbourhood impact

Applicants must demonstrate their proposed community garden has a positive neighbourhood impact, in the following ways:

- Demand for a community garden (such as a list of interested gardeners or waiting list), with high preference for neighbourhoods without community gardens nearby.

- Potential to address neighbourhood challenges or opportunities (examples might include food security, gathering spaces for the public, educational programming, inclusion of people needing a sense of belonging, safety/crime prevention, etc.).
- Initial support from the neighbourhood, such as community partnerships or endorsements.

To ensure an equitable distribution of grants, priority is given to new or emerging neighbourhood groups who will benefit the most from funding support.

B. Technical viability

City staff will confirm the technical viability and financial feasibility of the suggested locations, according to the following criteria:

- Accessibility
- Visibility
- Soil condition and quality
- Underground services
- Water access
- Adequate sunlight
- Storage space
- Existing and/or potential use of the site

8. Selection committee

Applications will be reviewed and approved by representatives from City of Kitchener staff and the Community Garden Council.

9. Key responsibilities

Applicants are expected to:

- Be open to partnerships with other community groups, neighbourhood associations or not-for-profit organizations, to leverage additional funds/resources.
- Have a bank account with at least two people who are named as “signatories.”
- Provide an accurate accounting of all funds, including proof of purchases, in a final report at the completion of the project.
- Complete an agreement between your group and the city. For community gardens on city-owned land, this will clearly define roles and responsibilities related to the installation and

on-going maintenance and oversight of the community garden. This may include any safety measures that can be put in place to ensure the safety of all users and participants.

- Recognize the contribution of the City of Kitchener in the form of a plaque or other means and at public openings or events.

10. Important considerations

- While the City of Kitchener's contribution is substantial, it will not cover the full start-up costs of a new community garden. Applicants should be prepared to seek other funding opportunities in addition to this grant.
- Applicants are encouraged to create a sustainable plan for the on-going upkeep and maintenance costs of gardens.
- Community gardens on city-owned land are expected to have adequate liability insurance, which will be arranged through city staff.
- While existing community gardens cannot apply to this grant for upgrades or enhancements, certain projects may be eligible through the Neighbourhood Matching Grant or Neighbourhood Placemaking Challenge. Visit lovelyhood.ca for more information.
- The city is actively working together with the Community Garden Council and other partners to create tools and resources on how to fundraise and access other grants to ensure the long-term sustainability of a garden.

11. Contact information

For more information about this grant, contact:

Neighbourhood Development Office

lovelyhood@kitchener.ca

519-741-2200 ext. HOOD

This information is available in accessible formats upon request.

Please call 519-741-2200 ext. 7083 or TTY 1-866-969-9994 for assistance.