



Introducing the “Commonwealth Garden” a new initiative of the Governor’s Garden Program

Deadline for Submission March 3, 2014

In 2009, Kentucky’s First Lady, Jane Beshear, launched the Governor’s Garden Initiative to promote home and community gardening across the Commonwealth. By creating gardens in various locations across Kentucky, Ms. Beshear is leading a new conversation about fresh produce, locally grown food, healthy eating and active outdoor living.

While continuing to operate gardens in selected locations for demonstration purposes, the First Lady, in conjunction with the Governor’s Office of Agricultural Policy (GOAP), is offering a new partnership opportunity, as part of the Governor’s Garden Program, for selected schools, organizations, associations and parks (*and potentially others who will be determined by the selection committee*). The newly created **Commonwealth Garden Initiative** is seeking applicants who would like to begin the process of having their own garden to encourage healthy eating and locally grown food within their own community.

The Commonwealth Garden Initiative will:

- 1) Provide to the approved applicant a limited variety of seeds necessary for starting a garden of up to 1500 square feet (applications for larger gardens will be considered) (these seeds (and possibly transplants) may include sweet corn, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, sunflowers, radishes, broccoli, gourds, cabbage, beans, squash, zucchini, and others);
- 2) Provide regular, as needed, e-mail updates offering planting information, cultural tips, and pest management advice;
- 3) Provide one or more site visits from the garden project manager to discuss and consult with your team;
- 4) Provide signage to identify your garden as a Commonwealth Garden;
- 5) Promote partners in good standing on the GOAP website at agpolicy.ky.gov.

If your application is approved by the selection committee you will be expected to follow a limited number of specific guidelines and will be encouraged to follow some general principles of home and community gardening.

Specific Guidelines

Approved Applicants must:

- 1) Obtain a soil sample prior to planting and have that sample evaluated by their county's Cooperative Extension Service;
- 2) Agree to engage their local cooperative extension service, agriculture or horticulture agent for at least one consultation to review garden site selection for soil quality, drainage, shade, etc.;
- 3) Have at least one of their active volunteers participate in good agriculture practices training (GAP) through their extension office;
- 4) At all times, make a reasonable effort to follow cultural practices which protect the integrity of the Commonwealth Garden Initiative part of the Governor's Garden Program;
- 5) Complete an end-of-season report documenting levels of success in production, participation, a plan for the garden to be sustainable in the future, etc. (see attached).
- 6) Have a specific plan for donating a portion of the produce from the garden to an appropriate charitable entity associated with food security, nutrition, and healthy eating;
- 7) Submit a letter of support from the local charitable entity chosen to receive a portion of the produce as well as end of season documentation of donated/received produce.

General Principles

Approved Applicants should consider:

- 1) Engaging in an organizational plan that maximizes student, volunteer, and community participation;
- 2) Creating a practical system for irrigating the garden site, either manually or automatically, in a manner that maximizes water conservation while promoting maximum productivity;
- 3) Following modern cultural practices including soil fertility management, pest management, and utilization of the most productive vegetable varieties;
- 4) A weed management plan that includes mulching, ground cover and provisions for tilling, hoeing, and removal of undesirable plants;
- 5) Engaging all or part of their volunteer group in continuing education which would include utilizing regular e-mail advisories from the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy's Governor's Garden Program, local extension resources, internet resources, and publications dedicated to productive gardening;

- 6) Having at least one qualified volunteer receive pesticide certification so that a more extensive range of crop protection products can be used to manage the garden site.