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Developing a School Garden or School Greening Project Road Map

Center for Urban Resilience

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Guidelines for Developing a School Garden or School Greening Project A Road-Map for Parents, Teachers, and Community Members



Getting Started:

- Congratulations! You want to initiate a garden at your school site. Use this website to research examples of gardens and how they are accomplished.
- Visit the school principal's office. You will need the principal's support for the garden. Once you have the support from the principal you can move forward. Ask your principal who your Complex Project Manager (CPM) is and how to contact the CPM.
- PLEASE ASK YOUR PRINCIPAL OR LOCAL DISTRICT FOR A LETTER OF SUPPORT.



Community Engagement:



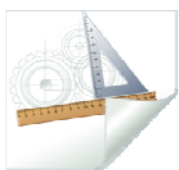
- Develop your support network, including your project team, which should include the CPM and representatives from the school. Others to engage at this time include: faculty, the M&O staff, other parents, community members and students. This is an opportunity for input from others and to gain support for the project.
- As you develop and nurture your support network, initiate visits to other school gardens to gain an idea of what other schools have developed.
- Remember to engage non-profits, local businesses and neighbors.
- Always bear in mind that these projects can serve as community building exercises to support your school.

Instructional Opportunities:

- If possible, use the development of the garden as an instructional tool.
- Work with teachers to find out how they would like to use the garden.
- Ask teachers to lead students in planning, site analysis and design.
- Think about focusing your garden around an instructional element such as science, nutrition, language arts, history, math, or art.
- Establishing links to instruction to ensure that the garden is used and cared by the school community at large.
- As you develop your plan consider placement of your garden spaces and how these spaces can be used as outdoor teaching areas.



Garden Design:



- Once you know what type of garden fits the needs of your school site and community start the design process.
- Depending on the scope and size of the project you may need to engage a landscape architect. Contact the LAUSD Environmental Ombudsman or your CPM to find out the best way to go about designing the project.
- Consult the "Community Initiated Projects Manual" (Landscaping Section), specifically the District Review and Approval Phase and General Requirements.
- Consider pursuing a 'greening' master plan for your campus. The 'greening' master plan may provide multiple projects that can be incrementally implemented as funding is secured.
- Think about the types of plantings that you'd like to pursue. Know the requirements for sun exposure, site drainage and make sure that water is readily accessible.
- Start by implementing a smaller greening project to garner support, enthusiasm and commitment to help implement the larger projects.
- Work with your support network, including the CPM, Principal and LAUSD Environmental Ombudsman to finalize design, develop a project budget estimate and funding strategy. Remember there are many resources available to help develop a garden including volunteer labor.
- Once the scope, design, and budget estimates have been completed, evaluate how your school will help fund the project.

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Environment:

- Consider engaging a local environmental group to inform the project in terms of groundwater conservation, air quality improvement, and temperature reduction.
- STOP! Contact the Office of Environmental Health and Safety to find out if your project is subject to any testing requirements.
- Have understanding of the soils condition and select plants appropriately, remember healthy soil is the key to success.



Funding:

- Search for grants, volunteer labor and other resources. Some of this information is listed under our *Funding/Resources* tab.
- Remember to check in with the Facilities Grants and Funding Office to check for potential grants and contact the Joint Use Development Group to assess whether there are any joint use bond funds available for your project.
- Leverage the school's donation account to hold any funding earmarked for the garden.
- You may also consider starting a non-profit or leveraging an existing non-profit to help support the efforts of your school garden.

Sustainability & Implementation:



- Once you are 'shovel ready' and have the required approvals and design in place, organize a workday to get things going. Your volunteer community is one of your most valuable resources.
 - Consider the maintenance plan for your project. How will you ensure the longevity of the project?
 - Implement monthly community service days, establish a volunteer calendar or work with local garden groups to support the maintenance of the garden.
 - The sustainability of a project is also dependent on the support of the school's teaching staff and engaging the students.
- Celebrate the completion of your garden. Invite your local administration, school board member, local representatives and support network to a grand opening.
 - Share what you have learned with another school in your community.

Quick Tips:

- CPM—Complex Project Manager—this is the person from the local district in charge of the facilities portion of your school site.
- Document, document, document! Keep track of your process, meetings and deliverables. Take photos of your projects before, during and after construction. This will help keep you organized and may be a helpful resource to someone trying to create a similar project elsewhere.
- Also keep documentation of your fundraising efforts.
- Ask your CPM for copies of your school plot plan and irrigation plan.
- Find out what other garden project have been implemented or are underway within your local district.
- Maximize your workforce by leveraging local service agencies designated workdays such as Big Sunday, Mayor's Day of Service, or other groups. Think about planning your ground-breaking to coincide with one of these service days.
- Ask your CPM for a copy of the "Community Initiated Projects Manual." A copy of this document is also posted under our "Funding/Resources" tab.