

Fundraising Strategies for Established Community Gardens

Grants

Grants are competitive funding opportunities offered by foundations or businesses. Applying for a grant typically involves submitting a proposal describing what the awarded funds will be used for, and what the impact or outcome will be for the community. You may also need to report on what you did with grant funding. You can find a list of potential grant opportunities at www.dug.org/gl.

What to keep in mind:

- **If you are considering applying for a grant for your garden, DUG needs to know!**

Here's why:

- When a potential funder contacts DUG to learn more about your garden, we want to be able to be able to advocate for you! The more we know, the better we can do that.
 - Many funders require that a tax-exempt nonprofit organization act as the fiscal agent and/or steward of the grant funds. If you would like DUG to serve in that role, we need to be aware of the grant guidelines before you submit, so that we can be sure to fulfill those obligations.
 - Even if DUG is not your fiscal agent for the purposes of this grant, as the leaseholder, insurance holder, and major program partner for your garden, we need to be in the loop on any potential grant requirements, to ensure that those requirements are both feasible and allowable with our agreement with landowners and other funders and program partners.
 - Finally, significant portion of DUG's general operating funding comes from competitive grants, so we are in a great position to assist you with both the content of your proposal, and the relationship with your potential funder. We want to help!
- **Submitting a grant proposal does not guarantee that a project will be funded at the full amount of your request, or funded at all.** When writing grants for garden programs or improvement projects, be sure to consider the timing of the grant cycle (when proposals are due, when awards will be announced, and when funds will be dispersed), and how you might fund or delay your project if your proposal is not successful.
 - **Grants are usually made for significant amounts.** Therefore, consider the real costs of any project for which you are seeking funds. Grant money is not intended to sit in your garden account for a rainy day (or dry season!).
 - **If your proposal is for garden infrastructure or improvements (arbors, picnic tables, raised beds, fruit trees, beehives, etc.), you should first check with DUG to make sure those improvements are approved and allowable.** DUG maintains the lease agreements and relationships with landowners, and is often required to first seek landowner approval before making changes. We also may be able to offer a less expensive or higher quality option for your improvement, and can help you work through the potential cost of your project, as well as how to get it built.



- **It is important to gain whole-garden consensus for any new garden programs or projects.** Communication and inclusiveness are key to a happy and productive community of gardeners.
- **Many funders require follow-up reports** to describe how the funds were used, and the outcome of the program, project, or event that was funded. Before you submit your proposal or application, you should review the reporting requirements (if any), and determine who will be responsible for that reporting.
- **Occasionally, grant funding is only available on a reimbursement basis**, meaning that to receive your award, you must first purchase the materials or services necessary for the program or project, and then submit receipts to the grantor. If this is the case, check to make sure your garden has the funds to cover up-front expenses, or that DUG is able to cover those costs until reimbursement.
- **A strong grant proposal addresses the priorities and guidelines of the funder, and focuses on how the program or project being funded will serve the community.**
- **Be sure to use DUG's Garden Grants Checklist when applying for any new funding opportunity.** You can find the following resources (and more!) at www.dug.org/gl
 - Garden Grants Checklist
 - Useful language and information for your proposal
 - Potential funding opportunities

Goods and Events

Offering goods and events to your community is a great way to raise funds for your garden, while engaging more deeply with and providing valuable outreach to your neighbors.

Opportunities include:

- **Garden or harvest festivals**, where attendees are encouraged to donate to the garden in exchange for admission, and are able to donate more in exchange for goods like produce or art, or activities like music, face painting, or games
- **Farm stands**, where gardens offer produce to neighbors in exchange for a suggested donation
- **Community concerts, or theater or dance performances**, where musicians, actors, or dancers in your garden or in your community volunteer their time, and the public makes a donation in exchange for admission
- **Community art shows**, where gardeners or local artists provide the art, and the proceeds go to the garden
- **Garden-wide yard sales**, where all proceeds go to the garden

What to keep in mind:

- **Any time you are asking for a donation, it must be just that- a donation!** Any signage or communication must make it clear that any money given in exchange for goods or admission to an event is a suggested donation, and not a fixed price. (Bonus: This encourages people to give more!)
- **All proceeds of any goods or events must go directly to supporting the garden, and not to individuals.**
- **Your fundraising efforts are likely to be more successful if you communicate what the funds will be used for.** Community members may not immediately understand why a garden would need to fundraise. Tell people about your exciting new program or project, and you may inspire them to give a little more, or even volunteer!

- **DUG can help you promote your event!** The sooner we have the details, the better. We are happy to help promote your event via our website, social media pages, and the The Underground News if the timing is right.

Business Sponsorships and Partnerships

Local businesses can be great resources for funding specific programs or projects within your garden. A garden can benefit from the in-kind or cash resources of the business, and the business can feel good about making an impact on a local scale, and enjoy recognition from the community.

Opportunities include:

- **Percent days**, where a business donates a percentage of their daily sales to your garden. 5 or 10% is typical.
- **Special goods or menu items** whose sales benefit your garden
- **Special events**, where a restaurant or bar hosts an event and the proceeds benefit your garden
- **Garden sponsorships**, where a business donates money, goods, or services to the garden in exchange for recognition on signage, newsletters, social media, or in other ways

What to keep in mind:

- **Before soliciting a business sponsorship, it is important to check in with DUG to make see if we already have a relationship with the business.**
- **If Denver Urban Gardens is your garden's fiscal agent, payments must be made to DUG.** If DUG is the steward of the funds, a business's donation is tax-deductible. Be sure to get the best contact information to DUG so that we can issue a thank you letter and tax receipt to the donor.
- **Businesses may be much more likely to donate if they understand what the funds will be used for, and how their donation will affect the community in a positive way.**

Online Fundraisers

With more and more people feeling comfortable on the internet, online fundraising continues to grow year after year. In particular, crowdfunding (a group of donors giving small amounts of money for one large goal) and peer-to-peer fundraising (a group of fundraisers seeking small amounts of money from their contacts for one large goal) and new and effective ways of raising money for your gardens.

Opportunities include:

- **DUG's new donation portal:** DUG is now working with Classy, a platform that allows supporters to create their own fundraising and peer-to-peer campaigns for a nonprofit. You will be able to set-up a campaign for your garden, invite your gardeners to set up individual pages, and then invite your friends and family to give. Contact Rebecca if you'd like to learn more.

- **In Our Back Yards (www.ioby.org):** This crowdfunding site features an array of neighborhood-based projects seeking funding. It offers you a national platform and community of different projects from across the country.

What to keep in mind:

- **Are you technically savvy?** Although DUG staff can assist you with any issues faced on our platform, your donors will probably go to you first with any questions. It's always good for you to have a basic understanding in case there's an issue over the weekend or in the evening when DUG staff is unavailable.
- **Is your main audience technically savvy?** If your donors are skeptical of giving online, an online campaign is not going to be very popular with them. Even if they do give, they are less likely to share information about your campaign on social media, persuading more people to give.
- Keep in mind that **fees** are deducted every donation. On DUG's site, there are approximately 5% and are taken by the payment processor, not DUG.

Questions? Concerns? See something missing from this resource? Contact us! We are here to help:

- Lara Fahnstock, Director of Garden Support, @dug.org
- Rebecca Andruszka, Director of Development & Communications, rebecca@dug.org

You can access this and other resources for garden leaders at www.dug.org/gl and learn more from your peers at www.dug.org/forums.