

Helpful Information, Language, and Tips for Writing about Your Community Garden

About DUG:

- Denver Urban Gardens has worked with community members to build and support community gardens since 1985.
- DUG is an independent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our EIN/tax ID number and letter from the IRS confirming our status are available upon request.
- DUG's Mission: Together, we cultivate gardeners, grow food, and nourish community.



2015 Outcomes and Numbers about DUG:

- Your garden is one of 157 community gardens in the DUG network. These gardens have been established throughout the Denver metro area. The network includes 14,420 community gardeners and benefits an additional 28,840 individuals. In 2015, our community gardens grew approximately 1.2 million pounds (611 tons) of produce.
- Approximately 1/3 of DUG's community gardens are located on school property and with the cooperation of individual schools and school districts.
- DUG's 2016 annual operating budget is \$1.8 million. We are funded by federal and local governments, foundations, corporations, and individuals. We employ 11 full-time staff members.

On Denver Urban Gardens' Relationship with Your Garden

Denver Urban Gardens provides communities with the resources they need, as they work to create their own community gardens. DUG offers assistance in the initial organization, fundraising, design, construction, and programming for a garden, and provides ongoing support in the form of garden improvements, major maintenance projects, lease maintenance, leadership training and transition, program development, and communication with program partners and city agencies.

The day-to-day operations of each garden, including new gardener recruitment and orientation, garden maintenance, organization of garden events and volunteer workdays, produce donation programs, and much more, are managed by the volunteer garden leaders of each garden. Gardeners are also responsible for fundraising for garden programs and improvement projects, and community support is crucial to the success of each garden. Contributions to the [INSERT GARDEN NAME HERE] are greatly appreciated, and make a direct, positive community impact at the neighborhood level.

Community Benefits of Gardens

- Gardens produce healthy food and lifestyles, and provide beautiful community gathering spaces in urban environments.
- Community gardens are public spaces where individuals of all ages and backgrounds can gather to grow, learn, eat, share, and celebrate together.
- Community gardens act as catalysts for long-term, positive fundamental change in neighborhoods, increasing volunteerism and community leadership, and helping neighborhoods achieve food security.
- The average DUG community garden produces 5,000 pounds of produce during a growing season. Gardeners typically donate 10% of the produce they grow to local families in need, or to nearby food pantries.

- *Also see:* Research on the proven benefits of gardens at www.dug.org/research

Tips

- Unless you are sure that a potential donor or funder is familiar with community gardens already, don't forget to explain what a community garden is, and where the produce goes.
- When writing about programs or projects you hope to get funded, frame your language in the context of how the community will benefit. For example, the following description does not directly address how the broader community would benefit from the grant award:
 - "We are requesting \$1,500 to improve the common areas of the Acme Community Garden by adding a shade arbor, perennial herb beds, and a picnic table. Our garden is in its second year, and we believe that these additions will make our garden more beautiful and inviting."

This description makes the community benefit the focus of the request:

- "We are requesting \$1,500 to improve the common areas of the Acme Community Garden by adding a shade arbor, perennial herb beds, and a picnic table. In our second year of gardening, our goal is to ensure that the community views our garden as a neighborhood space for gathering, learning, and sharing fresh, healthy food, and we believe that a new and improved common area, combined with our outreach efforts, will facilitate community involvement in our garden. "
- When writing your narrative, explain how funding your project addresses the priorities of the donor or funder.
- DUG is always happy to review your proposal. Please let us know as soon as possible if you would like us to review, and at least two weeks before the deadline to do the review itself. Rebecca Andruszka, DUG's Director of Development and Communications, can be reached at 303.292.990 or at rebecca@dug.org.

You can access this and other resources for garden leaders at www.dug.org/gl and discuss with your fellow garden leaders at www.dug.org/forums.