



Feeding our community since 1972

Bellingham Food Bank • Alternatives to Hunger

GARDEN PROJECT

Growing more than vegetables

Dear Potential Garden Mentor,

Thank you for expressing interest in Bellingham Food Bank's Garden Project. This project improves food security and community health by increasing access for organic home gardening. We connect community members to the source of their food and facilitate empowering relationships.

Each year, the Garden Project builds 25 4' x 8' raised-bed gardens at the homes of low income Bellingham residents, free of charge. To participate knowing how to garden is not necessary – just the desire to learn and to eat freshly grown produce. The wonderful benefits of tending and eating from the garden all belong to the garden recipient. We provide the necessary materials such as healthy soil, organic seeds and plant starts, basic tools, an informational growing guide, monthly newsletters and educational workshops. Furthermore, recipients receive support and tangible resources for two years. Garden recipients commit to tend their garden organically for the growing season and to attend educational workshops. *Garden recipients also have the choice to have a garden mentor.* The role of the mentor is to educate and support new gardeners, some who have no prior gardening experience. A garden mentor has a powerful influence on the recipients' success.

A mentor is someone who imparts knowledge and shares enthusiasm to a less experienced individual to foster empowerment. Garden mentors are expected to have passion and knowledge about organic gardening and possess the ability to teach and provide gentle, constructive guidance. This can be an opportunity to learn alongside your mentee, and you don't have to be an expert. Mentors provide information and resources, allowing the participant to make their own decisions and feel ownership in their garden. Participants may have unique situations that mentors need to understand so both parties will be comfortable. There may be language barriers, significant cultural differences, dissimilar work ethics, and/or different mores around home maintenance. For the relationship to succeed, personal lifestyle differences cannot interfere. We ask that our mentors are friendly, open and accepting towards participants.

The Garden Project is currently recruiting for community members that will be enthusiastic about their mentoring role. We require a commitment to the position for the whole growing season, from March to October. Throughout the season, regular contact each month is expected for meeting with your mentee at their garden site for an average of one hour. We aim to support gardeners as they want to be supported. As a result, the meeting time between the mentor and the gardener will vary from once a week to once a month. The schedule is flexible and to be arranged based upon your and the gardener's availability and needs. Mentors and garden participants will be paired together based on experience levels, interests and where they live.

In the spring, there are two workshops that we ask the mentors to attend. One is a training is exclusively for the mentors and the other is a kick-off event to bring the Garden Project community together. At the kick off, mentors and mentees will participate in rapport building exercises and gardening plans will begin to take form alongside these new relationships. We hope to create a network of support and a space for gardeners to come together and thrive. To promote a sense of connection for all project participants, there are monthly newsletters and a series of educational workshops, including a fall celebratory gathering. Also, throughout the growing season, the project coordinator will check in with all participants to keep lines of communication open.

Thank you so much for your time. Please feel free to contact me for further information you have any questions.

Julia Elizabeth Raider
Garden Project Coordinator
gardenproject@bellinghamfoodbank.org
(360)393-2838

Bellingham



Feeding our community since 1972

Bellingham Food Bank • Alternatives to Hunger

GARDEN PROJECT

Growing more than vegetables

Mentor Application 2014

Name _____ Legal name: _____

Address _____

Email: _____ Telephone: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Do you speak any languages in addition English? _____

The Garden Project serves participants at their home. As a result, Bellingham Food Bank runs a background check for all garden mentors. While some criminal convictions will not affect your eligibility to participate as a mentor, others may be a barrier. In order to do this, we need your full legal name and date of birth.

What Bellingham neighborhoods would be convenient for you to visit to mentor a garden participant?

Please share why you're interested in being a Garden Project garden mentor:

Please describe your experience growing vegetables and with the principles of organic gardening.

Please see reverse side.

Please describe any experience you have mentoring or teaching.

Are there any reasons, personal or logistical, that being a garden mentor may be challenging for you? Please explain.

I, _____, agree to the following requirements for mentoring a garden recipient of Bellingham Food Bank's Garden Project.

_____ Attend the Mentor Orientation on **Thursday, April 17th at 7 p.m.** at Bellingham Food Bank.

_____ Attend my mentee's garden build, if my schedule permits.
This is a great time to begin building rapport with your mentee and collaborate with the Garden Project.

_____ Attend the Garden Project Kick Off event at RESources on **Saturday, April 26th at 2-4 p.m.**
This will bring the garden community together.

_____ Arrange regular meetings with my mentee at his or her garden throughout the growing season. The frequency of these meetings will depend on how the gardener wants to be supported by a mentor. Garden meetings may range from once a week to once a month.

_____ Support, educate and guide my mentee to the best of my ability.

_____ Be available and dependable for my mentee. Ideally, mentors won't be away for more than three weeks from April through October. If so, I will contact the project coordinator who will find a replacement during my absence.

_____ Advocate the practice of organic gardening.

_____ Enjoy the experience of sharing my passion with a community member while having fun.

_____ Communicate with the project coordinator if challenges arise with my mentee or if the pairing just isn't a good fit.

_____ Complete a post-project evaluation.

Signed _____ Date _____