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Growing in the City

Volunteer Coordinator

Grant Terms of Reference

2025

A. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this grant is to provide funding to eligible organizations responsible for managing community gardens and other eligible *Growing in the City* programs to hire a volunteer coordinator. The coordinator would be responsible for conducting outreach, coordinating volunteer activities, and promoting educational gardening and food-growing opportunities for the community. Eligible programming includes community gardening (as defined in the [City of Victoria Community Gardens Policy](#)), the Urban Food Tree Stewardship Program and Community Boulevard Gardening.

The *Growing in the City* Volunteer Coordinator Grant will provide funding up to \$15,000 annually per eligible organization, with a priority to serve at least one grant per neighbourhood.

B. OBJECTIVE:

The objectives of the *Growing in the City* Volunteer Coordinator Grant are to:

- Help remove barriers to the development of inclusive and accessible community gardens in all neighbourhoods in the City of Victoria
- Support the ongoing sustainability of existing and new community gardens
- Providing support for a diverse array of community gardening programs and activities
- Promote community gardening as a valuable community recreational activity that contributes to health and well-being, positive social interaction, neighbourhood building, food production, environmental education, habitat development, and connection to nature

C. DEFINITIONS:

Community Gardens

A community garden is a piece of land gardened collectively by members of the community, in partnership with a non-profit society.

In the City of Victoria, there are three types of community gardens:

- **Commons gardens** are communal areas maintained and managed by community volunteers – the harvest is available to the public
- **Allotment gardens** have individual garden plots that are rented, maintained and harvested by members of the garden
- **Community orchards** are groves of fruit or nut trees, and a community organization is responsible for the care, maintenance and harvesting of the trees – the harvest goes to the community

A community garden can be one of or a mix of these different types of gardens.

Community gardens can be built on public land (parks, green spaces, vacant lots) or private land. For more information, including eligible community garden activities, see the Community Garden Policy.

Community Boulevard Gardens

A community boulevard garden is a piece of boulevard (City land) gardened collectively by members of the community, in partnership with a registered non-profit society. Community gardening activities on boulevards are required to follow the [Boulevard Gardening Guidelines](#).

Community Orchards

Community orchards are food trees planted by the public on City land, either as a community garden or as a part of the requirements of the [Urban Food Tree Stewardship Program](#).

D. ELIGIBILITY:

Growing in the City Volunteer Coordinator Grants are available to registered non-profit organizations in good standing in B.C. or registered charitable organizations in good standing with the Canada Revenue Agency, that manage and maintain community gardens as defined in the City of Victoria's [Community Gardens Policy](#). This includes new and existing community gardens.

If the community garden is operating on City land, a licence of occupation agreement must be in place with the City of Victoria. If the community garden is operating on non-City land, a written agreement with the landowner must be provided as proof to the City of Victoria.

Eligibility also extends to registered non-profits in good standing that operate community gardening and food-growing projects made accessible by the City of Victoria such as the Urban Food Tree Stewardship Program and community boulevard gardening. Urban Food Tree Stewardship programs are eligible to receive volunteer coordinator funding with proof of a tree maintenance agreement with the City of Victoria. A community boulevard garden requires a letter of support from the adjacent property owner giving permission to the non-profit organization to maintain upkeep and ongoing responsibility of the boulevard garden.

E. ELIGIBLE EXPENSES:

- Funding for an individual to coordinate community gardening volunteers
- Up to 20 per cent of the grant can be used for gardening materials, equipment, and supplies
- Up to five per cent of the grant can cover the cost of hiring external workshop instructors (if the community garden volunteer coordinator does not have the expertise), as it is required that each grant recipient offer one workshop to the public annually

F. INELIGIBLE EXPENSES:

- Ongoing operating costs (e.g., water)

G. EVALUATION PROCESS

The intake period will occur annually, and applications will be accepted for the duration of six to ten weeks (mid-November to the end of January, annually). The City of Victoria will review all applications and evaluate them based on the eligibility requirements, technical details and meeting the grant program objectives.

H. EVALUATION CRITERIA**The capacity of Organizations to Deliver the Project (20 per cent):**

The project aligns and advances the organization's mission and mandate; the organization has the experience and/or capacity to undertake the project successfully.

Evidence of Need (30 per cent):

Provides evidence that demonstrates the need for the project; project aligns with the City of Victoria Strategic Plan and [Official Community Plan: Food Systems](#) (17)

The amount of funding will be awarded based on the following criteria:

- If criteria are met, awarding at least one grant per neighbourhood
- The number of eligible gardening projects managed by the organization
- The number of volunteer coordination hours required to manage priority areas, such as:
 - Starting up a new community garden or eligible gardening project
 - The maintenance and upkeep of existing gardening projects (e.g., work parties)
 - Communication and marketing of volunteer opportunities
 - Volunteer outreach, management, evaluation, and appreciation
 - Educational gardening and food-growing opportunities for garden members and the public including workshops



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Community Impact: Inclusion, Diversity and Social Equity (20 per cent)

The eligible gardening project(s) benefit a wide variety of stakeholders, with a priority to support communities who reside in rental or attached housing with limited access to gardening space.

Strategies will be or have been implemented to ensure:

- The proposed plans will involve appropriate partners/amplify impact through collaboration
- Inclusion, diversity, and social equity are integrated into the built environment, the social/ cultural environment, and methods of communication
- Mechanisms for addressing accessibility and social equity are intentional and thorough
- The applicant identifies appropriate methods for evaluating project results

Project Feasibility (30 per cent):

The work plan is detailed and includes achievable timelines; budget expenses are appropriate, and amounts are identified for proposed activities.

Each application will receive a score between one and ten in each category. Scores are then weighted according to the percentages above. Not all applicants meeting the eligibility requirements will necessarily receive a grant or the full funding requested. Grants are one-time approvals and are not an automatic ongoing source of annual funding.

I. AWARD:

Payment of the grant will be issued to the recipient(s) in the spring to align with the growing season.

J. EXPECTATIONS

Each grant recipient will be required to submit a final report. See the *Growing in the City* Volunteer Coordinator Final Report template on the [grant's webpage](#).

Final reports must be submitted within one year of receiving funding. If an applicant received funding in the previous year, their final report must be submitted before applying for funding again. Annual report due dates will be set at the discretion of City staff, and may align with the gardening season. If the grant is not used for the stated purpose or proof of required documentation cannot be submitted, the applicant must return the full amount to the City of Victoria. Time extensions are granted on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the grant review team. If the project is not completed at the conclusion of the extension period, the applicant must return the grant funds in full.

Questions regarding this grant can be directed to the Food Systems Coordinator, by emailing parks@victoria.ca