



# THE GARDENWORKS PROJECT

## GARDEN COACH HANDBOOK





Dear GardenWorks Coach,

Thank you for participating as a coach with The GardenWorks Project. I started as a volunteer for the organization, and there is something special not only about the work we do, but about the community of volunteers that come together every year to work towards our goal of reducing food insecurity in western Chicagoland.

We have an exciting year ahead. We hope to build 90 gardens this year, and we hope to walk these clients through the gardening season with dignity, joy, and hope. What you will be doing in just about a month from now is laying the foundation of a skill that may bud into a greater love for gardening and growing one's own food. This is important work, and we are so grateful for your participation! I hope this handbook will answer many of the questions you may have about our spring build season, but please contact us if you have any additional questions.

It takes courageous clients, dedicated volunteers, generous donors, and caring corporations to fulfill our mission. Thank you for helping us fight hunger from the ground up.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeannie Iseman', is positioned to the left of the typed name.

Jeannie Iseman  
Executive Director  
The GardenWorks Project  
[jeannie@gardenworksproject.org](mailto:jeannie@gardenworksproject.org)



# The Role of the Garden Coach

At The GardenWorks Project we enjoy involving everyone in the gardening process. The Garden Coach shares their enthusiasm for gardening with their assigned client gardener(s) and any family members present, including kids. Your role is not to instruct, but more to guide and mentor throughout the growing season. Just as a good gardener responds to a variety of situations in their home garden, so a garden coach responds to the needs of their gardener.

As a coach you'll work one-on-one with our clients, offering knowledge and support to foster the development of vegetable gardening skills and confidence. Coaches support one or more gardeners throughout the growing season through site visits, by telephone, by email, and at workshops or in other ways possible and practical to both parties.

We expect that our coaches commit to coaching a family for the full gardening season (May-October). We want your coaching experience to be positive and fulfilling, so we will do our best to provide you with all of the information and support needed to help ensure your gardener's success. You'll also have ample opportunity to be involved with The GardenWorks Project and feel empowered to make suggestions and help the program grow.

## **Client Confidentiality**

As a GardenWorks Project Coach you are expected to maintain the confidentiality of all information known to you about any individual, family or child. All our participating Gardeners come from food pantry partner sites and have faced varied economic challenges and situations. We do not ask clients for income verification- the fact that a family needed to turn to a food pantry is proof enough of need. Be conscientious and mindful when speaking with your Gardeners.

To further protect our Gardeners' confidentiality, and out of courtesy to them, The GardenWorks Project retains absolute rights over any photographs. Coaches are not to use photographs for their personal use; they may not have printed images, or keep digital copies on a photo card, phone, flash drive, computer or CD. The GardenWorks Project must have permission in writing from any adult individual, and in the case of a child, their parent, before a photograph may be taken. We respect the right of all our Gardeners to refuse to be photographed or identified in a photograph. You will receive information about each client prior in regards to their consent on photography.

# Communicating with Clients

As the Coach, you play a key role in supporting the gardener throughout the season, whether they are experienced or novice. We ask that you maintain contact with your gardener monthly during the season to provide individual guidance, help establish priorities and goals, and monitor progress throughout the growing season. Your support, motivation, encouragement and individual attention are some of the factors that make The GardenWorks Project's gardeners so successful.

It is important to track progress throughout the gardening process and from year to year. The GardenWorks Project encourages you to take notes and check-in with us with any concerns. We use this information to get an accurate picture of an individual Gardener's needs so that we can provide additional information, or advanced materials as necessary. At the end of the season we will ask our client gardeners to complete an evaluation so that we can assess the success of the project. We may ask for your help in the collection of this evaluation data.

Let us know how things are going. If you or your Gardener experience any challenges, please contact us. We are here to help you and want you to have a rewarding experience as a coach. If you can't reach your gardener, let us know. If your gardener has moved, becomes ill or simply stopped gardening, please let us know. As always, the key to a good relationship is communication!

## When meeting a client for the first time:

1. **Determine the preferred method of communication throughout the summer months (phone/email, time of day, etc.)**
2. **What is their gardening level?**
3. **Coach with dignity, respect, and joy for experience of building this new relationship!**



# Coaching Schedule

We encourage both Coaches and Gardeners to contact each other whenever they feel the need, but realize that having a suggested schedule to aid this process is beneficial. You are also welcome to reach out to our Programs and Operations Manager, Robin Augustine, on topics to discuss with clients, and any coaching-related questions or concerns.

Throughout the season you can check in by phone, email, or in person at to see how they are doing and if they need any specific help. Near the end of the season, schedule another meeting to see the garden in person, take a photo, and discuss wrapping up the garden season and the evaluation. The evaluation can also be given over the phone if an in person meeting can't be arranged. These evaluations are important to the program and help us know how to improve from year to year.

<b>April</b>	Attend the Volunteer Kick-off event on April 18th, and meet many of the volunteers, board members, and staff that will participate in Garden Builds 2018.
<b>May</b>	Attend the garden builds for each of your clients, and get acquainted with their gardens. Also, determine the best way of communicating over the season.
<b>June</b>	Check in with your clients consistently (depending on interest and need). Discuss challenges and successes, and share stories/photos of your garden!
<b>July</b>	Continue to check in with clients, and assist with harvest and food preparation. Consult with GardenWorks staff if you need recommendations or support.
<b>August</b>	Encourage clients to participate in the fall refresh (date TBD), and assist as needed. Guidance is key to empowerment and sustainability!
<b>September and beyond</b>	Continue to check in and advise clients on winterizing for the season. Attend Food Growers Network meetings together to learn more and participate as a greater food-growing community.

Please don't hesitate to call or email us at The GardenWorks Project. We are all here to help! And thank you for being a garden coach and sharing your passion with others in our community.

# How to get involved with GardenWorks

The GardenWorks Project builds gardens in the spring, but we are working hard all year long to educate our community on the value of growing one's own food. Please join us in this mission to serve a greater good towards health, wellness, and self-sufficiency.

## **Board of Directors**

Our board of directors is a dedicated group of individuals dedicated to the organization's mission and to expanding the project to help more families facing hunger.

## **Photographer/Videographer/Graphics Designer**

Do you have a gift of the arts? We always welcome support on documenting our programs and services, and providing the visual display for our supporters and network.

## **Committees and Special Projects**

We routinely need volunteers to work on special projects like mailings, evaluations, grant writing, research projects, special events, and more.

How to contact us for more information: [info@gardenworksproject.org](mailto:info@gardenworksproject.org), or 630.791.3033

To stay involved with The GardenWorks Project throughout the year, sign up for our e-newsletter and visit our website or social sites.

### **The GardenWorks Project**

PO Box 615, West Chicago, 60186

630.791.3033

[www.gardenworksproject.org](http://www.gardenworksproject.org)

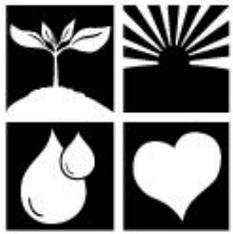
[info@gardenworksproject.com](mailto:info@gardenworksproject.com)

### **Visit us at our Resource Center**

103 W. Washington Ave, West Chicago, 60185

**Follow us on social media!**





# The GARDENWORKS PROJECT

*everyone deserves fresh produce*

## VOLUNTEER WAIVER AND AGREEMENT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address, City, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact (name/phone): \_\_\_\_\_

- I give permission for my addresses to be added to The GardenWorks Project mailing list.
- I understand that images of me volunteering may appear in GardenWorks Project communications.

### **VOLUNTEER WAIVER, RELEASE, HOLD HARMLESS AND INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT**

I have agreed to serve as a volunteer for The GardenWorks Project, and I recognize that my volunteer participation is a privilege afforded to me by The GardenWorks Project. I fully understand, appreciate and assume all risks associated with my volunteer duties. In exchange for my participation, I hereby agree to the following:

- a) I voluntarily waive, release, and hold harmless The GardenWorks Project, Board of Directors, volunteers, clients, and client's landlords, from any and all claims, causes of action and damages for bodily injury or death that I may suffer as a result of, or in any manner connected with, directly or indirectly, my participation as a GardenWorks Project volunteer. I understand that this waiver and release precludes my right to recovery of damages in the event I am injured in the course of my volunteer duties.
- b) I shall defend, hold harmless and indemnify The GardenWorks Project, Board of Directors, volunteers, clients, and client's landlords, from and against all damages, claims, liabilities, causes of action, judgments, settlements, costs and expenses (including, but not limited to, reasonable expert witness and attorney fees) that may at any time arise or be claimed by any person as a result of bodily injury, death or property damage, or as a result of any other claim or cause of action of any nature whatsoever, arising from or in any manner connected with, directly or indirectly, my negligent or intentional acts or omissions in performing my volunteer duties.

I have read, fully understand and agree to the assumption of risk, release, hold harmless, and indemnification terms set forth above.

Participant Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_