

Raised Bed Garden Program



Overview - Chester County Food Bank (CCFB) mobilizes the community to ensure access to real, healthy food. The Raised Bed Garden (RBG) Program increases availability of fresh produce for households at risk of food insecurity by supporting garden installations at partner organizations, providing community education on growing your own food, and by fostering community around food and gardening. Partner gardens are located throughout Chester County at schools, food cupboards, and social service agencies.

Eligibility: Non-profit organizations in Chester County, PA that actively engage households at risk of food insecurity are encouraged to apply. Priority is given to sites that demonstrate engagement of food insecure households, promote food justice rather than charity, and have reliable staff/volunteer support. The number of garden sites built each year depends on availability of funding and resources. Sites that do not meet eligibility requirements are encouraged to build on their own using our "How-to" guides.

Application Process:

Applications are accepted May 15 - July 15 for fall builds only (September, October). All applications will be reviewed on July 15. Site visits will be scheduled with potential candidates in August. A site visit does not guarantee participation in the program. Upon approval, sites will submit a signed Partner Garden Agreement, make arrangements for purchasing lumber, and schedule a build date.

Prior to submitting an application, make sure you have a suitable garden location by assessing:

- Proximity to a reliable water source (an outdoor hose bibb or spigot within 50 feet)
- Sufficient sunlight. Minimum of 6 hours of full sunlight per day. Do trees/buildings cast shade?
- Sufficient area of flat, level ground for a minimum of 2 beds with 4 foot wide paths in between.

Review the program information below, complete the accompanying application and submit to:

Raina Ainslie rainslie@chestercountyfoodbank.org

Chester County Food Bank ATTN: Raised Bed Garden Program

650 Pennsylvania Drive, Exton, PA 19341

What we offer - Program staff can provide consultation for the following:

Site selection & planning: During a 1-hour site visit staff will guide your team on choosing a suitable location for your garden, and with planning the logistics of your build day.

Sourcing materials: Lumber is available for purchase from CCFB, and recommendations for soil vendors will be provided. (CCFB does not provide soil)

Build day: A staff person may be available to lead the build day for your group on a mutually agreeable date. Sites also have the option of building on their own.

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Plant material: Seeds and seedlings can be provided for 2 years.

Additional materials include row cover, trellis stakes, and planting guides. Plants/materials are available for pick up on designated distribution days in late April, mid-May, and early August.

Educational support & mentoring: Workshops are offered throughout the year. Garden Educators are available to lead planting days with students at school gardens.

Expected responsibilities for partner garden sites: Garden beds are property of the partner site. Sites are responsible for repairs, ensuring that crops are planted, watered, weeded, harvested, and delivered to local agencies, or used in youth/community programs.

Other responsibilities include:

- Commit to growing through 3 seasons: spring, summer, fall (April through November)
- Commit to using organic/chemical free practices
- Ensure sufficient workforce for weekly garden maintenance
- Adhere to program deadlines; Annual agreement form due in Jan, plant orders due in Feb, end of season survey due in Dec.
- Pick up plants on designated pickup days – Schools may schedule planting days with a Garden Educator who can provide seeds/seedlings
- Attend 1 workshop/event per year
- Donate 70% of harvest to hunger relief agencies, school programming, low income garden participants, or food insecure households
- Record pounds of produce donated, and send reports on June 15, and no later than Dec 15

Cost: There is no fee for consultation, plant materials, and educational support. Support is limited to 2 years. Continued material support after 2 years will be determined based on need and funding.

Untreated cypress lumber is available for purchase from CCFB. Hardware is included with purchase.

Beds measure 8 feet long, by 3 feet wide, by 12 inches high and cost \$100 plus tax.

Each bed holds approximately 0.75 cubic yards of soil. A minimum of 4 beds is recommended as the minimum soil delivery is 3 cubic yards.

