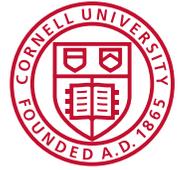


# Cornell Cooperative Extension

## Cornell Garden-Based Learning



### **NYS Seed to Supper Program: Roles and Responsibilities**

Building communities and relationships is the core of the NYS Seed to Supper (S2S) program.

A comprehensive beginning gardening course experience focused on low budget strategies is our springboard for making connections among community program partners and between program participants. The beginning gardening course gives novice gardeners the tools they need to connect with others in community, grow in confidence, and successfully grow a portion of their own food on a limited budget.

Since the language of S2S roles is particular to our program, we encourage those wishing to join our network to take the time to understand and seek clarification on our roles and responsibilities summarized here.

#### **Program Participants**

The target audience for S2S is low income adults who are interested in learning to garden on a limited budget. Program participants agree to attend the 5 to 6 initial sessions for the comprehensive beginning gardening course. No fee can be charged to the participants and each is provided a print copy of the NYS version of *Seed to Supper: A beginner's guide to low-cost vegetable gardening* in either English or Spanish.

#### **Garden Educators**

S2S relies on a multiplier approach in which volunteer garden educator teams (sometimes referred to as facilitators) lead classes/experiences with program participants at community host sites such as Cooperative Extension offices, emergency food pantries, public libraries, YMCA, affordable housing units, schools, and faith-based organizations. Garden educators must engage in an initial comprehensive period of preparation. Often preparation is set up as an intensive day-long experience with follow up meetings though the specific approach taken by individual counties can vary based on local needs. Regardless of the training format, the aim is to build garden educators skills in working in teams to effectively engaging diverse adult audiences and using the S2S comprehensive beginning gardening course curriculum and resources. A volunteer job description for the S2S Garden Educator provides further details and can be customize for each county from the state template.

#### **Host Agencies**

Host agencies are responsible for securing community sites for the beginning gardening course experience. They may include community garden organizations, emergency food pantries, public libraries, YMCA, affordable housing units, schools, and faith-based organizations. Host agencies may also play a critical role in recruitment of garden educators and or program participants especially if they have established relationships with volunteers and or the target audiences. A host agency information packet provides further details and we suggest customizing our host agency agreement template to further clarify responsibilities with each host agency.

#### **Satellite Partners**

This is the term for the organization(s) who is responsible for local, county-based S2S programs. In NYS our satellite partner leaders are typically educators in the county Cornell Cooperative Extension Association horticulture and nutrition programs though also include a leadership

partnership across organizations. These local leaders review and complete the exercises in the *Getting Ready* packet, before signing an agreement indicating their understanding of and commitment to follow through with S2S program guidelines. Satellite partners' responsibilities include recruiting and preparing the garden educators. When available satellite partners may collaborate with the students in the Cornell University Seed to Supper course or with other satellite partners in their region on providing the initial garden educator intensive preparation. Matching prepared volunteers with classes of participants and providing on-going supervision and mentoring of volunteers may be the responsibility of the satellite partner or shared with one or more host agency. A host agency agreement should be established to clarify roles. Satellite partners must provide to the NYS S2S program coordinator a summary of all efforts in their county region (including with host agencies) and any pre- & post- participant data.



### State Satellite Partnership with Oregon

S2S began at the Oregon Food Bank and then expanded to partner with Oregon State University Extension Master Gardener Program to be offered in collaboration with community-based host agencies throughout the state of Oregon. Understandably, Oregon S2S communicates extensively with each statewide hosting agency to maintain program quality. In NYS this is Cornell Garden-Based Learning. The NYS S2S coordinator signed the memorandum of understanding with Oregon Food Bank agreeing to adhere to Oregon S2S principles and practices, such as ensuring that participants are not charged a fee; that the participants are low income audiences; and that there is a commitment to quality preparation/training of garden educator/facilitators. The state satellite partner coordinates activities with Oregon S2S and other state S2S programs, as well as communicating regularly with our NYS satellite partner programs.

Our NYS S2S program is a joint effort among leaders in the Cornell Garden-Based Learning program, and the Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) educators with whom we work closely to launch the program. It is necessary to form program partnerships to reach low income audiences. As such, partnerships in CCE between educators involved in horticulture and Eat Smart/SNAP Ed are an important foundation. Together, through the S2S course they assist participants in forming community connections, growing fresh produce, preparing nutritious foods and learning new life skills. The course book is also available in Spanish to meet the needs of Latino communities.

### Back to the Program Participants

*Example:* Satellite partners at the county level work with host agencies to recruit and prepare garden educators, who in turn work in teams to lead the beginning gardening course which meet for about two hours weekly for six weeks during the late spring and early summer. They gather in a local community center with a community garden. On rainy days participants may meet indoors for brief presentations with discussions and reflective activities; many of the sessions are informal, outdoors, and joyfully hands-on, with family members stopping by. During the first week's class, participants are provided a gardening booklet, theirs to keep. At the completion of classes, participants may also be provided seeds and/or transplants to take home. During the six weeks participants learn about building healthy soil; planning, planting, and caring for their garden; and harvesting and using their bounty. They enjoy some wonderful recipes together. The garden educators ask participants to complete a pre-survey and post-survey to get a pulse on the experience. Survey results go to the host agency or directly to county satellite partner then NYS then Oregon.

**Question to the Satellite Partners:** How do you imagine the roles of those in your region to best suit your needs while fitting within this framework? And who is it necessary to engage in this planning conversation?



### *Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities*

Diversity and Inclusion are a part of Cornell University's heritage. We are a recognized employer and educator valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities.