

Plant and Nurture Together (PlaNT) Partnership Agreement

Purpose

The purpose of this partnership agreement is to define the roles, responsibilities and expectations of people and organizations that are working together to improve the health and wellbeing of the community through promotion of safe residential vegetable gardening through the Plant and Nurture Together (PlaNT) Partnership.

Participation

Conversations began in 2010, initially focused on studying the potential for lead exposure in children and families via residential vegetable gardening in the Lindsay Heights and Kinnickinnick River Corridor neighborhoods, with a goal of developing mitigation strategies to promote safe residential vegetable gardening. Founding members of PlaNT are the following:

- Walnut Way Conservation Corp (Milwaukee, Wisconsin)
- Sixteenth Street Community Health Center (Milwaukee, Wisconsin)
- Medical College of Wisconsin (Milwaukee, Wisconsin)

New organizational and individual members can contribute to achieving the purpose, goals and objectives of the PlaNT partnership and may join and be added by consensus of the current members. Whenever possible, contractual relationships should reflect the principles contained in the Partnership Agreement.

Current members may decide to end involvement. If no contracted services are in place, members may inform the group of the decision to end participation.

Common Objectives

Participants are committed to collecting and analyzing data, disseminating results, and identifying strategies to promote safe residential vegetable gardening in order to build community, generate neighborhood investment, expand food source options and grow healthy, safe, affordable produce for individuals, families and communities. Improving the health of the community is the ultimate goal. By working together, valuing the input and expertise of every member of the team, and by seeking to engage community residents in all phases of the work, we anticipate success.

Expectations of the Participants

Participants are expected to:

- Establish right relations that are respectful, honest and transparent, fostering trust.
- Operate from abundance to share resources and a passion for common good.
- Prepare for tasks by building consensus and producing a clearly articulated plan.
- Perform based on respect of self and others to achieve goals.
- Understand the call for collective action with results that build community capacity and sustainability.

Specifically, each individual and partner organization will contribute to the work according to their specific expertise and talent, and in ways that meet community identified needs and contribute benefit to the community. Each established and new partner (organization or individual) will submit a description of what they will contribute to the partnership. These statements will be incorporated into the partnership agreement document.

Furthermore, members have a responsibility to participate in the business of the partnership. Participation is indicated through attendance at meetings, following through on action items, and/or following up on the content and action items of meetings when not in attendance. Active participation in meetings is currently the best way to participate in the business of the partnership, although this may change as the partnership evolves.

MCW will:

- Seek to leverage resources from the academic medicine enterprise at MCW, including additional funding and resources (i.e. students, faculty, facilities), as agreed upon by the partnership, to pursue further research, programs and policy advocacy aimed at the goal of promoting safe residential vegetable gardening in urban neighborhoods.
- Share the findings and processes from the partnership through mutually agreed upon venues including community events, neighborhood publications, peer-reviewed academic publications and in preparation for future community-based research projects.
- Promote an atmosphere of bidirectional learning between participants from academia, community-based organizations, residents, environmental remediation experts and others who may be invited to share knowledge and perspective.

SSCHC will:

- Provide expertise it has developed through its Department of Environmental Health's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program and Sustainable Development Program to help guide the efforts of the PlaNT Partnership.
- Leverage its understanding of Milwaukee's south side communities, including socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic characteristics, to help successfully engage community members in the work of the GHSHC Partnership.
- Leverage the relationships it has developed and maintained with public health agencies and community development entities to add value to the work of the GHSHC Partnership.
- Contribute to the PlaNT Partnership's efforts to disseminate findings of its work and to seek additional financial, technical, staff and facility resources as those needs are identified in the future.

WWCC will:

- Actively participate, provide input and guidance based upon our experience in urban agriculture. We will promote authentic discussion and continuously work to give voice to Lindsay Heights community members.

- Share the findings and processes from partnership through mutually agreed upon venues including community events, neighborhood publications, and in preparation for future community-based research projects.
- Assist with future resource development, as agreed upon by the partnership, to pursue further research, programs and policy advocacy aimed at promoting safe residential vegetable gardening in urban neighborhoods.
- Be a champion for community health. Work from an asset-based perspective, continuously uncovering and acknowledging community expertise, while recognizing challenges as they emerge.

Administration

As the PlaNT partnership grows, new ideas, directions and emphases will emerge from various members. In order to determine the way in which the group moves forward, the PlaNT partnership will utilize consensus based decision making. Consensus is achieved when each organizational or individual member of the partnership affirmatively indicates that s/he is at a level (A-D (not level E or F) of the following levels of consensus:

A: I can say an unqualified “yes” to the decision. I am satisfied that the decision is an expression of the wisdom of the group.

B. I find the decision perfectly acceptable. It is the best of the real options we have available to us.

C. I can live with the decision; however, I’m not especially enthusiastic about it.

D. I do not fully agree with the decision and need to register my view about it; however, I do not block the decision and will stand aside. I am willing to support the decision because I trust the wisdom of the group.

E. I do not agree with the decision and feel the need to block the decision from being accepted as consensus.

F: I feel that we have no clear sense of agreement in the group regarding this decision. We need to do more work before consensus can be achieved.

When an organizational or individual member of the partnership indicates he/she is at a level E or F, s/he assumes responsibility to clearly articulate the concern and make every effort to provide a constructive alternative for the group to consider. The group in turn must find ways to resolve the concern.

If an organizational or individual member of the partnership is not present when a major decision is made, their opinion/vote will be obtained in a timely manner. If the opinion/vote of the absent member conflicts with the previously obtained consensus, the issue will be readdressed.

Use of Materials and Concepts

The PlaNT Partnership is the custodian of materials developed via the partnership (i.e. information pamphlets, data collection instruments, raw data), unless otherwise specified in contractual arrangements. Members will have input, via the consensus process outlined, into how these materials are accessed and disseminated. In order to avoid the

potential for stigmatizing a neighborhood or its residents, identifiable neighborhood names (i.e. Lindsay Heights, Kinnickinic, etc.) will not be used in dissemination, unless approved by the partnership members; though on occasion, general publically available demographic information may be used to describe a project area. Individual members of the partnership, who wish to utilize materials from the PlaNT partnership will make a request to the entire partnership and gain access via consensus decision. Specific publication and authorship protocols will be developed and will be followed.

Resources

As the PlaNT partnership continues, new members may join, and will augment available resources. New members will be approved by consensus. Members may pursue related projects with other individuals and organizations as well. In adherence to expectations previously outlined, members will be honest and transparent about other opportunities that are pursued.

As the PlaNT partnership continues, voluntary resources from each of the participating organizations and individuals is expected in order to achieve the goal of improved health and well-being for individuals, families and communities through promotion of safe residential vegetable gardening. These voluntary resources will vary in amount and type and cannot be pre-calculated. Examples may be non-monetary in nature and could include activities such as: participating in health careers opportunity programs sponsored by the community based organizations, joining residents in neighborhood clean-up efforts, or participating in presentations/seminars for medical and graduate students interested in public and community health.

Review and Revision Arrangements

Participants in the PlaNT will review the partnership itself through partnership evaluation tools administered anonymously, with Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and informed consent of the participants. The partnership evaluation is intended to monitor and improve the quality of the collective effort, as well as contribute to the sustainability of the partnership.

The partnership agreement may be modified, via the consensus process outlined above. It will remain in effect until terminated by agreement of all of the participants.

Membership

Addition of New Members

New organizational and individual members can contribute to achieving the purpose, goals and objectives of the PlaNT partnership and may join and be added by consensus of the current members.

Upon joining the partnership, new members will develop a statement regarding their contributions to the partnership. With consensus of current members new members will be added and their contributions will be reflected in the *Expectations* section of the Partnership Agreement.

Removal of Existing Members

Members of the partnership may be removed by consensus of their peers. Upon consensus of current members to remove an existing member, the statements of their contributions will be removed from the Partnership Agreement.