



Supporting information for application form

What is Growing Manchester?

The Growing Manchester programme is about supporting community food-growing projects to become more sustainable, ensuring that local people with the enthusiasm to grow food can access support to ensure their projects succeed.

We'd like to support some new or existing community food-growing projects. Maybe you're completely new to food-growing but have access to a growing space and a group of friends or neighbours who want to come together to grow. Knowing where to start could be a problem and that's what's great about this opportunity, as we'll take you through every stage. For those already involved in growing, it's a chance to take your project to the next level.

So what makes a successful community food-growing project? Is it people who can plan ahead? Is it committed and motivated group members who feel supported? Is it the sunny, well-drained site, or is it a supportive neighbourhood? What's clear is that each project is unique, with its own strengths, challenges, aspirations and goals.

Who supports Growing Manchester?

Growing Manchester is commissioned by Manchester City Council and is delivered by Sow the City, an award winning Social enterprise based in Manchester.

What support is on offer?

The programme is flexible so your group will be able to access training and support based on the specific needs and goals of your project. Below is a brief overview of the support available through joining the Growing Manchester programme:

Introduction to fruit and vegetable growing training: Practical and theory-based horticultural training for groups to aid skills and confidence on a range of topics, eg. planning your plot; soil types and testing; preparing a bed; practical growing skills such as seed sowing, pricking out and potting on; pests and diseases, plant care, and harvesting and storing. Courses can run at a variety of places, such as onsite at your growing plot, or at dedicated training centres and allotment sites across Manchester. Onsite courses will be prioritised for groups where it may not be appropriate for the group to travel to another location, for example where most of the group are children.

Site assessments and plans: Site assessments and plans are best suited to groups that are just starting to grow on a new site. Assessments comprise a site survey to determine site dimensions, soil type, growing conditions, existing vegetation, physical constraints, and drainage and security issues. Your group will receive advice on what to grow and how to improve the site, as well as a planting schedule and site plan.

Strong Roots workshop: This one-day workshop is designed to provide you with an understanding of the key elements that make a successful and sustainable food-growing project. It covers vision and planning, people, legalities and funding, land and design, sustainable growing and food. Informative, interactive and inspiring, the workshop will give you the confidence, skills and knowledge to develop your community food-growing project. All groups new to Growing Manchester are encouraged to attend the Strong Roots workshop, as it is essential to establish a group's needs.

Community development support: Advice and support is available for groups on a one-to-one, short-term basis to help you achieve clearly identified objectives. For example, you might need help with general capacity-building, service planning, marketing/promotions, organising events, applying for funding, developing policies and procedures, or need advice on becoming a social enterprise etc, which will enable you to become a sustainable and successful food-growing project.

Additional training courses: Additional courses are available for groups looking at expanding or developing their project and include topics such as fundraising, an introduction to beekeeping, an introduction to keeping chickens, carbon literacy, basic carpentry, composting, container growing, fruit tree maintenance, green roofs, wildlife gardening, advanced food-growing techniques, and cookery. Courses are subject to seasonality and minimum attendance from groups across the programme.

Sow the City will consult with groups to identify the level of interest in the above courses to help inform the programme offer and scheduling. Onsite courses will be prioritised for groups where it may not be appropriate for the group to travel to another location, for example where most of the group are children.

Who should apply?

Growing Manchester is aimed at supporting Manchester residents and communities with an enthusiasm to grow food. This includes groups and organisations already involved in food-growing or gardening who need support and advice (eg. community allotments or gardening groups), or groups and organisations that want to get involved in food-growing.

We're particularly keen to hear from community food-growing projects that are sympathetic to the wider benefits of food-growing in terms of improving health, confidence and self-esteem; protecting the local environment; helping to build new or strengthen existing links with local communities; increasing the access to and sourcing of local food; and above all the enjoyment of good food.

There are a wide range of groups currently on the programme, including community allotment holders, community and voluntary organisations, children's centres, schools, daycare centres, community centres, youth centres, neighbourhood care groups, residential homes, registered social landlords, housing trusts, and supported housing accommodation centres.

Project leads applying to the programme must be in a position to share information with their growing group about Growing Manchester.

Minimum criteria to join Growing Manchester

- The project must be based in Manchester
- You must have permission from the landowner to grow food
- At least five people must be involved
- The project must benefit the local or wider community
- The relevant public liability insurance must be in place for your growing activity (or you must be in a position to put this in place)
- You must help us to evaluate the programme by providing feedback and monitoring information as requested.

How to complete the application form

The information you provide in the application form is just the start of a discussion about your project, and the ways in which we may be able to support your work. If your application is successful, Sow the City will work with you to understand how we can support you within the resources available to us.

This supporting information is designed to help you understand more about the programme, determine if your project is eligible, and to help you complete the application form. We have only included information in this document on elements of the programme and application process we think would be helpful to expand upon.

Please fill in all sections of the application form; the information you provide is as much to help you review your needs as it is for us to identify how best we might be able to support you within the resources available to you. We know the support your group requires might change, and we are happy to work with you on this.

We are able to provide advice and guidance on the application process without this affecting the assessment process. If you have any queries about the application form or application process, or if you have any questions about anything that has not been covered, please contact Ciaran Mcloughlin or Kieron McGlasson at Sow the City (contact details below).

The application process

1. Applications are open throughout the year and review on a bimonthly basis.
2. Completed application forms should be returned to info@sowthecity.org
3. A panel will discuss all applications and make recommendations for support. Please note that we may need to consider the spread of the successful applications across the city.
4. Successful applications will be advised within two weeks of receiving their application
5. If your group is successful, we will then discuss with you what opportunities are available for training and support, based on the information provided in your application.
6. If your group is unsuccessful, we will be happy to discuss other food-growing initiatives in Manchester.

Please send your completed application form to:

Email: Info@sowthecity.org

Address: Boiler House, 9 Wilcock Street, Moss Side, M16 7DA

Telephone: 0161 465 6954

Growing Manchester website: www.manchester.gov.uk/growingmanchester

