



Public Housing Community Gardens

APPLICATION & INDUCTION PROCESS



Business for good

What are the Public Housing Community Gardens (PHCG)?

PHCG are built on Crown land or land leased by Victorian Government and Homes Victoria under the Residential Tenancy Act. Cultivating Community has a service agreement with Homes Victoria to manage and support PHCG.



113,000

Public Housing renters in 2023



20

Community Garden locations covered by our agreement in 2023



830

Allocated individual spaces for renters in 2023



153

People on the current waiting list for a space in 2023

These numbers show that access to a garden space is something to be valued and respected.

Cultivating Community is a value based nonprofit organisation that wants to help and support our community of gardeners. We want everyone to enjoy gardens. Our role in the PHCG is to keep the gardens clean, safe and fair for everyone to use. Our responsibilities are:

- ✓ attend to general maintenance, repairs and green waste management
- ✓ manage the waiting list, plot allocation and induction process
- ✓ ensure garden standards are maintained, rules and responsibilities are followed
- ✓ support the amenity in an engaging and consultative manner for all public housing renters, neighbouring agencies and community
- ✓ apply any requirements requested by State or Federal Government and representative officials in timely manner

Part of being able to do this is with clear processes, standards, rules and responsibilities.

Who can have access to a garden space in priority order?

1. Public housing renters living where the garden is located who have no garden space at their residence.
2. Public housing renters who have a garden space at their residence.
3. Agencies / Community Groups working on the local precinct that can show a proven benefit to the local community eg. Community Health Groups, Neighbourhood Houses.
4. Other Non-Profits, Social Enterprises operating within the local precinct that can show a proven benefit to the local community eg. Cultural Catering Groups, Social Enterprise Cafes.

How do you get a space in the garden?

Your decision to apply for a garden space should be intentional and discussed with family and friends. Having a garden space requires you to visit the garden and maintain it regularly, at least once a week. There are also ongoing costs of plants, seeds, fertiliser, and fees that you need to consider in your decision to apply for a garden.

Applicants should notify us if they will be away for over one month in case a garden space becomes available! Only one space will be allocated per household!

Friendship Garden Space

Cultivating Community will consider applications for a shared space between two single occupied households when there are long waiting lists, as this is an opportunity for more people to have access to the gardens. This will be subject to reference and compliance checks and be called 'Friendship Space'.



STEP 1

Application

The PHCG are popular and many of our 21 gardens are full. Depending on the location we may not have a garden space available. When this happens, our process is to add your name to a waiting list. This is managed fairly by the date you apply.

Complete the application form and return to Cultivating Community.

- ✓ The application form will ask for your consent as a renter for Cultivating Community to contact the local Office of Housing for a reference.
 - This reference will ask about any current character or behaviour challenges or any reasons why they believe the applicant should not have access to a garden space at that current time on Crown Land.
 - The reference will check your address and connection to the Office of Housing

Cultivating Community will:

- ✓ Acknowledge your application via text message or email
- ✓ Offer you access to the rules and your responsibilities to read
- ✓ We may do a reference check to ensure there are no character or behavioural challenges that make you unsuitable to be a member of the garden
- ✓ We will also check that you are eligible for a garden by living in public housing

Once we have checked, Cultivating Community will communicate:

- ✓ You are on a waiting list
 - You will be made aware of how many people are on the waiting list before you.
 - We cannot give timeframes for how long it will take to get a garden space.
- ✗ Your application is refused
 - Our capacity to support renters in the garden space that have character or behaviour challenges is not possible.

APPLY FOR A GARDEN SPACE HERE!!



STEP 2

A garden space is available

We will first call, SMS or send you an email. If you do not answer the phone, or respond to our SMS or email:



- 1 We will leave a message asking you to contact us



- 2 If no response from you after 5 business days, we will post you a dated letter of your offer



- 3 We will wait for 10 business days after the date of the letter for you to contact us



- 4 Failure to respond in these timelines will mean the garden space will be offered to the next person on the waiting list!

It is important to tell us if you are on a waiting list and going to be away for more than a month!



STEP 3

At the garden induction

The garden induction is an important meeting. We will endeavour to be on time and organised and ask the same of you. Please expect garden inductions to take an hour and do not try and leave early or rush the process.

Cultivating Community has the right to suspend any induction if we are concerned that a renter is not suitable or ready to become a member of the garden!

Cultivating Community will:

- ✓ Provide an interpreter for this meeting if needed
- ✓ Ensure you have read the garden rules and your responsibilities document. We will answer any questions you have and clarify anything that is not clear
- ✓ Explain your rights and responsibilities as a member of the garden
- ✓ Explain Cultivating Community's rights and responsibilities as service provider to the garden
- ✓ Ask you to sign an agreement to show that you understand the rules, your rights and responsibilities and breach processes

We will then:

- ✓ Take you on a tour of the garden, explain how the garden works and where things are
- ✓ Show you your garden space
- ✓ Introduce you to other gardeners in the area if available
- ✓ Provide you with some seeds to get started

Key Deposits

Cultivating Community does not accept cash. You must pay via electronic payment; we have card readers in gardens to accept payments

We will provide you with a key for the garden gate and the shed.

- ✓ This requires a \$25 deposit which is payable on the day of the induction.
 - If you lose your key, it is \$25 to replace it
 - You may not give your key to anyone else
 - If you decide you do not want your garden space, we ask you to return the key and we will reimburse your deposit amount

Full Membership of the Community Garden

We will observe how you are going and if you are using your garden space. If after one month we see:

- ✓ You are not actively gardening or following your responsibilities
- ✓ We have received formal complaints about your behaviour

Cultivating Community will ask you to return your garden space and key. We will reimburse you your key deposit.



Organisations & Community Groups

If there are garden spaces available and no waiting list we may consider applications from local organisations, community groups or social enterprise.





Inspiring a healthy and just world.

CC has a vision for joyful, connected communities
who care for each other and the earth

