

Funding Kansas Community Gardens: Lessons From a Mini-Grant Project

**Cheryl R. Boyer*, Evelyn Neier, Cary L. Rivard,
Frannie Miller, Charles Marr**

**Kansas State University
Dept. of Horticulture and Natural Resources
Manhattan, KS**



K-STATE
Research and Extension

Challenge, Opportunity

A photograph of a community garden. In the foreground, there are numerous white and yellow flowers, possibly daisies, growing in a raised bed. In the background, several people are visible, some wearing hats, walking through the garden. There are green plants and trees in the distance, and a building is partially visible on the right side. The sky is blue with some clouds.

- Stakeholders lack a place to garden
- Partnership (2011)
 - Kansas State University Research & Extension
 - Kansas Health Foundation

Objective

- To increase Kansans' access to fresh, healthy produce by expanding the number of community gardens in Kansas.
- Goal: Establish 60 NEW gardens in 3 years
 - Mini-grants of up to \$5,000 to establish new community gardens

Implementation

- Developed criteria for mini-grants
 - Application process
 - Rating form
- \$100,000 available for distribution each year
 - 90 applications in Year 1!
 - An additional \$50,000 was added for each Year 2 and 3

2014 The Kansas Community Gardens Project Application

Project is administered by K-State Research and Extension and funded through a grant from the Kansas Health Foundation



The Kansas Health Foundation is a private philanthropy dedicated to improving the health of all Kansans. For more information about the Kansas Health Foundation, visit www.kansashealth.org.

The goal of the Kansas Community Gardens Project is to increase public and private value of our communities through the development of new community gardens in Kansas. We will provide seed money for 60 gardens over three years (2012-2014) in order to inspire the development and certification of even more community gardens. Applicants will be required to indicate how the gardens will benefit the community, incorporate sustainable practices, include project partners, and implement measures to ensure the long-term financial sustainability and continuation of these new community gardens.

This Kansas Community Gardens Project Grant is available to establish new community gardens in the state of Kansas. Existing gardens that are still in the early stages of their development may qualify for grant funds if they can demonstrate a clear rationalization and explanation of how funds would help sustain the garden. The clear and primary focus of these gardens is to increase and expand access to healthy, fresh foods. However, gardens may incorporate a secondary focus such as recreation, wildlife protection, etc. The grant could provide funds for tools, equipment, water line installation, irrigation equipment, raised beds, or soil improvement materials. New gardens may ask for a maximum of \$5,000. Grant recipients must keep records and submit an annual report (for no longer than three years) on the activities of their garden and progress made in establishing and sustaining their garden. Kansas State University will provide recipient with a report template. If you have questions, contact Evelyn Neier at 785-410-3760 or eneier@ksu.edu.

Community Gardening Grant Scoresheet DRAFT

Application # _____ Name of Garden _____

Location _____

Located in a poor food access area Yes 5Pts. _____

No 0 Pts. _____

Age of garden: New Garden 10 Pts. _____

1- 3 Yrs. 5 Pts. _____

4 + Yrs. 2 Pts. _____

Are there other gardens in area that still have plots available? Yes 0 Pts. _____

No 5 Pts. _____

How many gardeners will be involved? 0-10 2 Pt. _____

11-24 3 Pt. _____

25+ 5 Pt. _____

Is the group affiliated with other organizations? No 0 Pt. _____

Yes up to 5 Pts. _____

Does the group have a financial plan, have they found other funding lines,
do they have a plan to remain sustainable? up to 15 Pts. _____

The Garden Plan—does the garden have a clear focus, purpose, goals, etc.
Have they conveyed their challenges and how the grant will help them
become established and have sustainability? Have they clearly
communicated their need? up to 25 Pts. _____

Is the budget clear? Do the proposed expenditures seem logical and a good
use of the grant funds? Keep in mind money cannot be spent for salaries
for garden managers. up to 15 Pts. _____

Are all the organizational documents, rules, plans, watering plan, etc. (# 14-22)
included, complete, appropriate, etc.? up to 15 Pts. _____

Total _____

Implementation

- Some gardens did not request the full \$5,000 and were later offered a “supplemental” grant award in order to offer the most support to successful gardens

New Resources Created



The screenshot shows a Firefox browser window displaying the website www.kansascommunitygardens.org. The page features a navigation menu with links for Home, Resources, Other Grant Opportunities, Grant Recipients, Garden Registration, and 2013 Conference. A central image shows a lush garden path. Below the image, the text reads:

2014 Call for Grant Proposals

Grant funds are available to start 30 new community gardens in Kansas at up to \$5,000 each in 2014.

In 2012, there were over 90 applications received from across the state of Kansas (see map below). We were able to fund 24 community gardens in 2012 and 35 gardens in 2013! Applicants who did not receive funding in 2012 or 2013 are strongly encouraged to apply again next year.

The browser's address bar shows the URL www.kansascommunitygardens.org. The taskbar at the bottom includes icons for Windows, Internet Explorer, Word, PowerPoint, and other applications. The system tray shows the time as 8:39 AM on 5/22/2013.

New Resources Created

- KansasCommunityGardens.org
 - Grant recipient descriptions and links
 - 16 videos
 - Links to relevant Extension pubs
 - Garden registry by county
 - Sample community garden documentation
 - By-laws, rules, budgets, etc.
 - Other grant opportunities

Conference Archives

Community Garden Conference, July 7 & 8, 2014, in Manhattan, KS

Conference Program: [CLICK HERE](#)

Sponsored by K-State Research & Extension and the Kansas Health Foundation

Turner Community Garden in
Wyandotte County



Turner Community Garden from Cheryl Boyer

Slide Handout



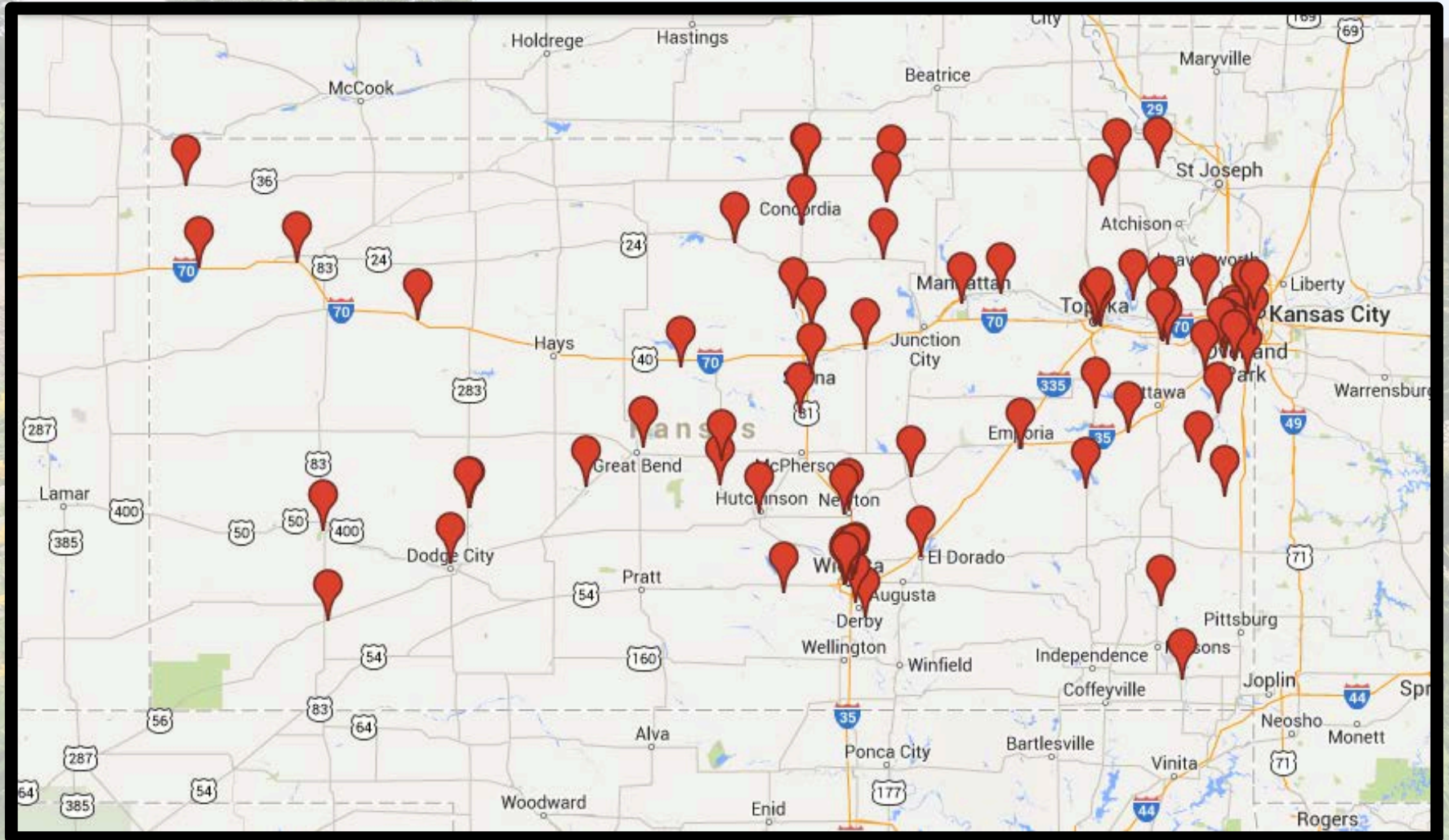
Growing Communities and Gardens -- Dr. Chuck Marr



Impact

- 85 gardens (25 over original goal)
 - received grants worth more than \$394,000
 - rural, suburban, and urban areas of all parts of the state
 - allotment gardens and communal gardens
 - diverse audience
 - exposure to Extension

85 New Community Gardens



Impact

- 85 gardens funded (82 still operating at end)
- 875,632 Sq. ft. in communal gardens added
- 1,500,805 Sq. ft. in total community garden space available
- 1,551 allotment garden plots added
- 5,253 gardeners/volunteers involved in community garden projects

Successful Community Garden Characteristics

- Sense of **community and commitment**—a “community within a community”
- Good gardeners (to **teach** the new gardeners)

Successful Community Garden Characteristics

- Diverse, robust leadership team (not a single person)
- Good communication, governance



Successful Community Garden Characteristics

- **A plan for obtaining water** (wells, hydrants, pump from lake, rain barrels, etc.)
- **A plan for managing and paying for the water** (plot fees, produce sales, etc.)

Successful Community Garden Characteristics

- **Good budget**, changes over time with the resources and needs of the garden
- **Shift efforts** from development stage to financial & organizational **stability**

Successful Community Garden Characteristics

- **Other strategies** needed for **ongoing, yearly expenses**





Questions