



City of Toledo Community Garden Water Program

Department of Public Utilities and the Department of Neighborhoods

In collaboration with Toledo GROWs, OSU Extension Service and the Center for Innovative Food Technology

Community gardens are on the rise throughout our nation, as families seek economic ways to eat more healthy foods by growing their own fruits and vegetables. Gardening in a neighborhood environment strengthens relationships among neighbors, reduces stress and enhances a sense of wellbeing.

The City of Toledo wants to help water community gardens because citizens working with non-profit partners can grow more than plants...When everyone pulls together, we can promote economic development through job training and education, and support entrepreneurs engaged in urban agriculture.

What is fundable?

The City of Toledo has authorized the Department of Public Utilities to use Water Distribution Infrastructure Development Funding to install in selected community gardens: the water tap, curb stop, meter pit, remote-read meter, and a surface (in-ground) hose connection at an estimated cost of \$2000 per location.

What are the benefits for Community Gardeners?

1. No equipment rental charges
2. No need for customer to call in meter reads
3. Customers pay for water only (minimum 2000 cubic feet charge for 90-days = \$30)
4. Reduces need to move across streets for hydrant water access, improving safety and reducing equipment costs (hose damage)
5. Convenience—All of the above

What are the obligations? Gardeners must pay cost of water: The cost for water will vary greatly depending upon how much is used but a conservative minimum for the *quarter* will be required. The minimum usage per 90 day cycle is 2000 cubic feet ($\$30/3 =$ less than \$10 per month) or 14,960 gallons, which would be about 166 gallons per day over 90 days. Using an estimate of one inch of water needed per week, this amount would water a 2000 square foot garden.

For larger gardens, the cost would be proportionate:

4000 Square Feet.....\$60
8000 Square Feet.....\$120
40,000 Square Feet.....\$600

The above examples use a general guideline of an inch of water per week. In hot weather, vegetables may need more water, up to about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch per week extra for every 10 degrees that the average temperature is above 60 degrees. An **inch of water** is about 60 gallons per **100 square feet**.

IMPORTANT: An authorized individual or entity (Agent) must sign a contract to be legally bound to pay for the water used at the garden location. This party will be billed based upon the actual metered usage. **NOTE:** To reduce charges during the off season, the party must contact DPU at 419-245-1800 to schedule a meter turn-off in the fall and turn-on in the spring. (There is no charge for turn-off, but a \$25 reconnection fee.)

Where is the application? Are there deadlines?

Applications are available through partner organizations (Department of Neighborhoods, Toledo GROWs, OSU Extension, and CIFT) and online at <http://toledo.oh.gov/watergardens>. Organizations may apply at any time, but applications will be reviewed three times a year, based upon being received prior to February 1, June 1 and September 1.

Hard copy applications complete with signature of authorized agent should be submitted to the Department of Public Utilities as indicated on the application form.

Who selects the Gardens?

Applications will be evaluated by a panel of representatives from the Department of Public Utilities, the Department of Neighborhoods, OSU Extension Service, Toledo GROWs, and the Center for Innovative Food Technology (CIFT). Applicant groups may be asked to meet in person with the Panel or a member of the Panel to address additional questions which may arise during the evaluation process.

What aspects are considered to determine selection for the Community Garden Water Program?

- The Community Garden Water Program is intended to facilitate urban gardens where citizens work together as volunteers and are affiliated with non-profit neighborhood associations/organizations or gardening outreach sponsors such as Toledo GROWs.
- To prioritize requests, the Panel will consider aspects promoting economic development such as: efforts to use the garden for job training and education, the number of people involved with the project, the number of families receiving fresh produce, the group or organizational capacity, dedication to sustaining the volunteer effort required to produce good results, support for entrepreneurs engaged in urban agriculture, and providing attractive green spaces for ticketed events and presentations.
- Neighborhood beautification will also be considered as an element of the Program.
- Further, the Panel will want to see evidence of the long-term viability of the community garden.
- A contract with the DPU for Community Garden Water service must be placed in the name of a responsible individual or organization with no DPU account arrearages.