

SCHOOL GARDEN SUPPORT ORGANIZATION (SGSO) KEY ACTIVITY SUSTAINING & INSTITUTIONALIZING SCHOOL GARDEN PROGRAMS

VISION

We strive for all school gardens to have programs that are both financially and programmatically sustainable.

overview

★ Elements of financial stability

- Diverse funding sources
- School investment

★ Elements of programmatic stability

- Dedicated program staff
- A web of programmatic investment
 - Consistent and clear program alignment with schools
 - Strategic planning
- Partnerships and community engagement

EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

Examples of Various Methods of Achieving Financial Sustainability

★ Diverse Funding Sources

- Models of State Funding for School Garden Programs
 - [Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Program, within the Oregon Agencies of Agriculture and Education](#)
 - [Washington, DC's School Garden Program, within the Office of the State Superintendent of Education](#)

View our [Webinar on Financial / Program Sustainability](#)

Since 2016, School Garden Support Organizations (SGSOs) have been gathering annually for a Leadership Institute hosted by Life Lab in Santa Cruz, CA. The following is a collectively created, curated set of notes from these gatherings, updated annually by Institute participants and facilitators. Find more resources for SGSOs, including Webinars, a digital copy of this Best Practice Document, and information on upcoming Leadership Institutes, at: www.sgsonetwork.org.

Find resources shared by Leadership Institute participants in this [Sustaining Multiple School Gardens Folder](#)

- Provides \$1M annually to support school gardens. The majority of these funds are used to staff programs and build green schoolyards.
- Models of District Funding for School Garden Programs
 - [San Francisco Public Schools / Education Outside](#)
 - Education Outside has helped secure nearly \$14 million in bond funding for the development of green schoolyards in 84 San Francisco public schools. The organization funds green schoolyard installation; teacher trainings; and a service program that trains and places AmeriCorps Service Members in public elementary schools across San Francisco.
 - [Boston and Cambridge Public Schools / City Sprouts](#)
 - City Sprouts receives district funds to provide garden education and support in every elementary school in Cambridge Public Schools and schools in Boston as well.

Examples of Contracts and Memoranda of Understanding Between SGSOs and Schools:

- ★ [Denver Urban Gardens \(DUG\) MOU](#)
- ★ [NOYO Food Forest MOU](#)
- ★ [New Haven SYH Contract](#)

- Models of District Funding Public Schools Garden and Nutrition Education
 - [Berkeley Unified School District Gardening and Cooking Program](#)
 - District funded as a match to the grant from [Healthy Berkeley](#) funded
- Models of Corporate Giving to School Garden Programs
 - [Gardeneers](#)
 - Identifies individual schools to work with specific donors on projects that align with values of the donor.
 - [Fort Worth Independent School District / REAL School Gardens](#)
 - Corporate funds account for approximately 80% of the program cost, funders participate in building the garden as well as ongoing support REAL School Gardens works with school communities to install gardens and coordinates with the district to ensure that their professional learning program is aligned with the district priorities and goals.
- Grants for School Gardens
 - Comprehensive list of [School Garden Grant Searching Resources and Grant Writing Tips](#) at the Collective School Garden Network.

- Online Donor Resources
 - [Green Our Planet](#) 0% fee crowdfunding platform
 - Donors Choose <https://www.donorschoose.org/>
- Examples of Legislation to Support School Gardens
 - [Healthy Schools Act \(Washington, DC\)](#)
 - [Soda Tax for Health & Wellness Project \(Berkeley, CA\)](#)
 - [Property parcel tax funds garden coordinator positions \(Santa Cruz, CA\)](#)

★ Programmatic Sustainability

- Models of School Gardens with Dedicated Program Staff
 - School-based staff
 - [Princeton Public Schools pays a stipend to school garden coordinators to be placed in each elementary school.](#)
 - Partner organization staff
 - [Gardener in Residence Program \(Community Groundworks\) provides a school garden educator for schools.](#)
 - [Hybrid staffing structures \(REAL School Garden\) provides staff to train teachers and coach them to use the garden](#)
 - [Staffing Framework Example \(Washington, DC\)](#)
- Models for Building Strong School Investment
 - Connecting to Academics
 - [Mill City Grows](#) - Mill City Grows, in partnership with curriculum coaches in the Lowell Public School District have increased the number of students engaged in school gardens.
 - [University Arizona- Professional Learning Communities](#) *The UA School Garden Program has teamed up with Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) to create professional learning communities (PLCs) which meet monthly during district paid professional development to engage in hands-on garden training.*
 - [CTE Programs in High schools](#)
 - [Hawaii's Curriculum Map Connecting Gardens to Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards](#)
 - [Life Lab's Webinars and Database Connecting Garden Lessons to Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards](#)
 - [REAL School Gardens study connecting school gardens with improved test scores](#)
 - Connecting to Social Emotional Learning: By linking the garden to social/emotional learning goals of the schools, we can increase school investment in garden programs. If you know of a school garden program that is tracking these outcomes well, please mention it in the comments section.

- Models of Community Partnerships with Schools - Many nonprofits and other organizations partner with schools to sustain school garden programming. These are some successful models of such partnerships.
 - [DC Greens Garden Army Internship \(Washington, DC\)](#)
 - [Community and School Garden Program \(Tucson, AZ\)](#)
 - [Hunger and Environmental Nutrition Garden Lab \(Boone, North Carolina\)](#)
 - [Urban Ag Ambassador volunteer program \(Somerville, MA\)](#)
 - [University Extension Master Gardeners \(Madison, WI\)](#)
 - [Community Share \(Tucson, AZ\)](#)
 - [Recommended Partner List \(Washington, DC\)](#)