INTRODUCTION TO GARDEN STEWARDSHIP

GARDEN MISSION/VISION
A catalyst for growth, the IU Northwest Community Garden collaboratively builds capacity and connections. The Garden is open to all members of the campus and public and is committed to education, health, social and physical well-being.

GARDEN HISTORY
The Garden began as an idea for a 2010 class project, but quickly outgrew the confines of the classroom. By the spring of 2011, a campus-community partnership formally established the Garden, transforming a vacant lot on campus grounds into a blossoming array of colorful native plants and vegetables. In 2014, the Garden was relocated to the larger site, where it continues to flourish, on the corner of 35th Avenue and Washington, across from the Anderson Library.

GARDEN STEWARDS
These volunteers are the lifeblood of the Garden. Working either independently or as part of a team, Garden Stewards commit themselves to caring for a specific Garden box throughout the growing season (May through September). Additionally, the Lead Garden Steward of a box serves as the main contact and person responsible for ensuring the care of the box (teams may choose their Lead, while those working independently are automatically designated as Lead). Instead of caring for a specific Garden box, Garden Stewards can opt to assist with general Garden maintenance (such as weeding, watering, and other tasks as directed by the Garden Manger) and/or administration (as directed by the Advisory Board).

To become a Garden Steward:

• Read the Letter of Commitment
• Complete and sign the Commitment Agreement
• Community members who are not also IU Northwest students, faculty, and/or staff will also need to complete and sign a Release from Liability (provided upon request)
• Submit completed form(s) to:

  Center for Urban and Regional Excellence
  Indiana University Northwest
  3400 Broadway
  Library Conference Center, 203
  Gary, IN 46408
cureiun@iun.edu
**LETTER OF COMMITMENT**

By adhering to the responsibilities and guidelines listed below, Garden Stewards help to ensure the success and sustainability of the IU Northwest Community Garden.

**ALLOTMENTS**

Garden boxes will be allotted to Garden Stewards on a first-come, first-served basis. Allotments from the previous season will be taken into consideration, but will not serve as guarantee.

**BOUNDARIES**

The boundaries of the Garden, including the placement/location of Garden boxes, must remain as they are. Any proposed changes or expansion must be first reviewed and approved by the Garden Advisory Board prior to any actions being taken.

**COMMUNICATION AND MANAGEMENT**

The Garden Advisory Board and Garden Manager serve as resources for Garden Stewards and continually strive to help Stewards create a positive and productive presence in the Garden. Toward this end, the Garden Advisory Board and/or Garden Manager will send regular email updates and other communications to the Garden community, which may include names and email addresses of Garden Stewards. The intention of this is to facilitate communication among those involved in Garden activities; however, individuals may request that their contact details not be shared (please notify the Garden Advisory Board and/or Garden Manager). Garden Stewards are expected to report problems occurring with operations or participants/patrons of the Garden immediately, and the Garden Advisory Board should be involved in the resolution of any such problems.

**FUNDRAISING**

Garden Stewards interested in organizing fundraising events/activities must first consult with the Garden Advisory Board.

**HARVESTING**

Garden Stewards should not harvest from, nor interfere with, a Garden box to which they are not assigned, unless they have the express permission of the box’s Garden Steward(s). It should be acknowledged that the open (rather than enclosed) nature of the Garden may result in individuals not officially associated with the Garden harvesting from Garden boxes.

**LIABILITY**

Each Garden Steward who is a community member, and not also an IU Northwest student, faculty, and/or staff member, must sign a new Release from Liability form each year.

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1 Portions of this document are borrowed, with permission, from the Chicago Park District.
MAINTENANCE
The space allocated for the Garden is located on campus grounds and must be actively maintained. To this end, Garden Stewards are expected to help clean up litter in the area of the Garden, particularly in and around Garden boxes. In addition, Garden Stewards are entirely responsible for the maintenance of their allotted Garden box, and as such are expected to engage in cultivation activities on a regular basis and to properly prepare for winter at the end of the fall harvest period.

MINORS
In keeping with the mission and vision of the Garden, people of all ages are welcome. For safety considerations, all minors (those under the age of 18) are expected to be accompanied by an adult (ages 18 or older) Garden Steward.

NEGELECT
If a Garden box is deemed unsightly, weedy, or unkempt by the Garden Advisory Board’s independent observation, then the Lead Steward for that Garden box will be issued a warning, which will be communicated by both a phone call and by an e-mail message (or postal letter if an e-mail address was not provided). If the issue is not rectified after two weeks from the first warning, then both the Lead Steward and Secondary Steward (for Teams), will be issued a second warning, which will be communicated by both phone calls and by an e-mail messages (or postal letter if an e-mail address was not provided). If the issue is not rectified after two weeks from the second warning, then the Agreement will be revoked and the Garden Stewards will lose the privilege of participating in the Garden.

ORGANIC PRACTICES
In keeping with the Garden Advisory Board’s commitment to sustainability, and for the health and safety of Garden Stewards and the community, it is required that all gardening practices, including disease and pest control, be organic. No chemical pest control measures may be used. Even when utilizing organic practices, Garden Stewards should ensure that the methods used do not drift onto, leach on, or otherwise affect neighboring boxes.

RESPECT
Garden Stewards are expected to treat the Garden, fellow Stewards, residents of the surrounding community, and representatives of the Garden Advisory Board with respect and kindness. Garden Stewards are expected to obey reasonable directions from employees or representatives of IU Northwest and the Garden Advisory Board.

SIGNAGE
Each Garden box will have a sign indicating the name of the Garden Steward or Team to which it is allotted. Garden boxes may also contain plant markers. Any other signage must be first reviewed and approved by the Garden Advisory Board.
TEAMS
Any changes to a Team’s Lead Steward or Secondary Steward should be reported immediately to the Garden Manager and/or Garden Advisory Board. A Team’s Lead Steward is expected to ensure that all new Team members read the Letter of Commitment, complete the Commitment Agreement, sign a Release from Liability form (if applicable), and submit the completed documents to the Garden Manager and/or Garden Advisory Board.

TERMINATION
If a Garden Steward or Team decides to no longer maintain their Garden box, then they must immediately notify the Garden Manager and/or Garden Advisory Board.

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES
Garden Stewards are welcome to use their own garden tools and/or supplies (gloves, seeds, trowels, etc.). Some garden tools and supplies may also be borrowed from the lending closet maintained by the Center for Urban and Regional Excellence. Contact the Garden Manager and/or the Garden Advisory Board details.

VANDALISM
Like drought, hail and freezing temperatures, theft and vandalism are among the assumed risks of participating in the Garden. While the Garden Advisory Board continues to support efforts to reduce unnecessary vandalism or theft, guarantees cannot be made that the Garden is free from the risk.

WASTE AND COMPOSTING
As the Garden is not currently outfitted for composting, plant materials and other organic waste must be bagged for disposal. Small bags/amounts of plant material can be disposed of in nearby university trash receptacles. Large bags/amounts of plant waste, such as that created during weeding parties, should be placed at the south end of the Garden (along the alley), and the Garden Manager and/or Garden Advisory Board should be notified. Garden Stewards interested in establishing composting in the Garden are encouraged to submit a proposal to the Garden Advisory Board, which must be reviewed and approved prior to any actions being taken.

WATER
Please conserve water! Water is distributed to the Garden through a hose that is stored near the brick wall on the west side of the Garden. The hose connects to a spigot located near the center of the wall. Garden Stewards are expected to ensure the spigot is turned off and that the hose is returned to its storage location after watering is complete. The Garden Manager may coordinate/schedule watering in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of this activity.
GARDEN STEWARD COMMITMENT AGREEMENT

I, ________________________________ (please print name), accept the responsibilities of Garden Steward, acknowledge that I have read the Letter of Commitment, agree to abide by the terms listed, and now enter into a commitment to maintain the IU Northwest Community Garden and/or a Garden box located in the IU Northwest Community Garden.

Signature: ________________________________ Date: _____________________

Please check the box for the role that best applies to you:

| ☐ I am the **Lead Garden Steward** for a team caring for a box or I am caring for a box independently. | ☐ I am the **Secondary Garden Steward** for a team caring for a box. | ☐ I am a **Garden Steward** that is part of a team caring for a box or I am assisting with general Garden maintenance. |

Name:

Phone Number:

Mailing Address:

Email:

Preferred Activity (circle one):  Box Allotment  General Maintenance  Administration

Complete this section if you are part of a Garden Team:

Garden Team Name:

Lead Steward’s Name:

Secondary Steward’s Name:

Please return completed form(s) to:  Center for Urban and Regional Excellence  Indiana University Northwest  3400 Broadway  Library Conference Center, 203  Gary, IN 46408  cureiun@iun.edu