

DeKalb County
Community Gardens
STRATEGIC PLAN
2016-2018

Prepared by Alicia M. Schatteman, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
School of Public and Global Affairs
Center for NGO Leadership and Development
Department of Public Administration
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, IL

March 2016

Table of Contents

Values and Mission.....	1
Issue Statements, Goals and Objectives.....	2
Issue #1: Financial Sustainability	2
Goal 1	2
Goal 2.....	2
Goal 3.....	2
Goal 4.....	2
Issue #2: Community Engagement.....	3
Goal 5.....	3
Issue #3: Physical Assets.....	3
Goal 6	3
Issue #4: Management	4
Goal 7	4
Figure 1: Mission and Program Elements.....	5

DeKalb County Community Gardens

Values

1. **Social Justice and Equity:** DCCG is committed to equity and equality for all; particularly those populations who do not have equal access to nutritional food; involving all residents with all levels of ability, from all backgrounds.
2. **Sustainability:** DCCG is committed to using sustainable and organic methods for food production; to being fiscally responsible and ensuring financial sustainability for the organization; to supporting personal health and knowledge for self-sustainability.
3. **Education:** DCCG is committed to collaboration and engagement in all educational programs to support strong and healthy communities; to support the personal and professional growth of their volunteers and employees.
4. **Community Service:** DCCG is committed to serving and empowering the community by producing and distributing food throughout DeKalb County particularly where it is needed most.
5. **Integrity:** DCCG is committed to being an honest, transparent organization that earns and keeps the community's trust due to thoughtful and professional management practices.

Mission

DeKalb County Community Gardens empowers DeKalb County residents to choose healthy and sustainable foods through community education and participation.

Strategic Issues and Strategic Goals 2016-2018

Issue #1: Financial Sustainability – the need to establish a stable and diverse revenue stream to support current and future service delivery. The vision is to balance current fiscal resources while investing in long-term funding growth.

Goal One: To have the Board actively engaged in fundraising efforts led by a Board Development Committee.

- Objective: To create a Development Committee and plan for that committee by December 31, 2016
- Objective: To have 100% participation from the Board with a financial gift to DCCG based on their own personal ability to give by June 30, 2017.
- Objective: To hold a board training session on Board fundraising responsibilities and fundraising skill-building of the Board by June 30, 2017.
- Objective: To have the Board host three prospective events per year for potential major donors annually beginning July 1, 2017.

Goal Two: To create and develop an individual donor program so that contributions from individuals (including special events) account for 50% of total revenue by the end of 2018.

- Objective: To evaluate the current contact database and upgrade as necessary to capture information on all volunteers, past and current donors, and potential donors (prospects) by December 31, 2016. This will support fundraising as well as volunteer management.
- Objective: To create an annual giving program by June 30, 2017.
- Objective: To create a planned giving program by June 30, 2018.

Goal Three: To develop a grants strategy so that grant revenue accounts for 25% of total revenue by the end of 2018.

- Objective: To research new grant opportunities for operating expenses in 2016.
- Objective: To create a policy on grant funding that includes corporate and foundation grants that supports values of the organization by December 31, 2016.
- Objective: To submit one new grant proposal that is unrestricted or will include overhead/admin expenses by June 30, 2017.
- Objective: To institute a policy whereby DCCG will focus on grants that will support general operating expenses/administration costs by December 31, 2017 (unless a one-time program/project).

Goal Four: To develop earned revenue so that earned income accounts for 25% of total revenue by the end of 2017.

- Objective: To develop business plans for all earned revenue existing and future opportunities based on return on investment (measured by opportunity cost of time by volunteers and staff, as well as dollars and the projected return) to raise unrestricted funds for DCCG by June 30, 2017.

Issue #2: Community Engagement – as a core value of DCCG, it is important that all residents of DeKalb County are being reached and served by DCCG programs and activities. This is more challenging with traditionally under-represented residents.

Goal Five: To improve outreach and service to traditionally under-represented residents.

- Objective: To begin tracking and measuring this level of involvement (time spent and people reached) by collecting data from volunteers, clients, program participants and other stakeholders involved with DCCG by December 31, 2016.
- Objective: To engage, support, and network with community organizations and community leaders in the Hispanic community to support leadership development in DeKalb County (ongoing).
- Objective: To create a guiding document for the establishment of an Advisory Board for DCCG (including but not limited to the Walnut Grove Farm) by December 31, 2016.
- Objective: To create an advisory board made up of constituents who are very interested in your mission, are diverse and preferably made up of people that you serve by March 31, 2016. The advisory board is not a governing board so they provide advice to the Board and staff on organizational issues, which can be very valuable. They may meet only as needed or infrequently such as a few times a year at convenient locations. Advisory Boards are useful to vet new ideas or changes. They should be governed by a document that outlines roles and responsibilities. Advisory board members can also be mentored to become Board members as they develop with the organization, allowing for a more diverse pool of Board candidates.
- Objective: To have at least two board members from under-represented populations in DeKalb County by June 30, 2017.
- Objective: To create an Advisory Board for DCCG made up of residents from all backgrounds that is representative of DeKalb County, to provide feedback for new programs, and evaluation of existing programs by June 30, 2017.
- Objective: To have the DCCG website (and print materials as needed) available in English and Spanish by June 30, 2018.

Issue #3: Physical Assets – the need to increase participation in local governance from all residents. Vision is to support operations across the county while having a centralized administrative headquarters and farm production.

Goal Six: To have a permanent location for administration and operations by 2018.

- Objective: To create a task force that will research possible locations in the DeKalb/Sycamore area including up-front investment costs (rehab for example) as well as monthly and annual operation expenses, research done by December 31, 2016.
- Objective: To come with a funding plan for necessary rehab, moving costs and building upgrades to chosen location by May 1, 2017.
- Objective: To move into location by December 31, 2017.

Issue #4: Management and Governance - as the organization continues to develop and professionalize, there are certain areas related to governance and management that will assist the organization transition to the next level of its life cycle.

Goal Seven: To establish the administrative capacity, and professional growth and development of the organization.

- Objective: To support one brand (DCCG) with a number of different but related programs under that brand by June 30, 2016.
- Objective: To establish clear lines of authority and oversight between a Board Executive (President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary) and the Executive Director. The Executive Director will still be a non-voting member of the Board by June 30, 2016. The Board President will chair all Board meetings, work with staff to set the Board meeting agendas and the Vice Chair could be used as a training for the Board President position on an agreed upon schedule as per your bylaws.
- Objective: To create a standing Board committee, the Nominating Committee, which can also be the four-member Executive (President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary) who are specifically focused on recruiting new board members to the Board through a recruitment, nomination and orientation process by December 31, 2016.
- Objective: To create a plan for the Executive Director with a possible timeline when that position will need to be paid by the organization by December 31, 2016.
- Objective: To expand the Board to 12 members who are all active and participating in governance issues, and ideally, be representative of DeKalb County demographic characteristics by June 30, 2017.
- Objective: To hire a part-time Volunteer Coordinator to grow and sustain a strong volunteer base by June 30, 2017.
- Objective: To model the DCCG values of integrity and transparency, all documents and information that pertain to governance should be easily accessible from the DCCG website including 990 forms, strategic plans, list and contact information for Board members, and list and contact information for staff. The mission statement should be prominently featured on the website as well as all printed documents by June 30, 2016.
- Objective: To improve public outreach and financial support, the DCCG website should be completely redesigned to signal a strong and professional nonprofit organization by June 30, 2017.
- Objective: To focus the organization's mission in three key areas (advocacy, food production and education) and evaluate all existing and potential new programs to determine if it fits the DCCG mission.

Figure 1: DCCG Mission and Program Elements

