



Interim Garden Policy and Procedure

Tenant FAQs

June 2024

Toronto Community Housing (TCHC) has developed an interim policy and procedure to give tenants guidelines about how to access and use community garden spaces at TCHC. This resource addresses some commonly asked questions about this interim procedure.

Why do we have a new policy and procedure?

This policy and procedure creates a standardized process for tenant gardeners in all TCHC communities. It makes it easier for tenants to apply for a plot, for staff to run the gardens, and gives all tenants an equal opportunity to participate in gardening programming. The policy and procedure also gives staff a set of guidelines to use when assessing the possibility of new gardening sites.

What has changed?

- The application procedure is now formalized, and we are asking tenants to fill out official application forms and sign agreements.
- Community gardening spaces will have official signage.
- There is a new fair access system where tenants get a garden plot in a first come, first served way.
- Each gardening space will have a waitlist.
- Tenants will have non-exclusive use, and they can hold a plot for a maximum of two garden seasons. Plot terms will begin upon the approval of a final policy and procedure in 2025.
- Only one plot is allowed per household.
- The gardening season now has set dates: May 1 to November 14.
- There are formalized eligibility requirements for tenants to participate.

Will this policy and procedure change again?

This is an interim policy and procedure that will be used as a test pilot until a formal gardening policy and procedure is developed. TCHC will do more



engagement and consultation with both tenants and staff as we develop the final pieces.

How do I get a garden plot?

Your Community Services Coordinator (CSC) will hold an information meeting for you to learn about this new interim policy and procedure.

You will work with them to fill out the appropriate application forms and agreements before being assigned a plot in your community garden.

Not all buildings have garden plots. Some communities have outdoor shared spaces where tenants can plant items to beautify the space. If your building has this type of space, your CSC will let you know how it will be managed.

I want to plant a lot of things. Can I get more than one plot?

Each household will only be assigned **one** plot.

If I get assigned a plot, is it mine to garden forever?

You will be assigned your plot for **two** gardening seasons. At the end of that time, you will need to apply again. If there is a waiting list for your community garden, priority will go to households on the waiting list before you are assigned another plot. Plot terms will begin upon the approval of a final policy and procedure in 2025.

I am on the wait list. How long do I have to wait?

Both gardening plots and the wait list are first come, first served. If you are on the wait list, available plots will be assigned according to your spot on the list. Spots may be available sooner, but you may wait for up to two garden seasons before you move off the waiting list.

Are there limits on what I can grow?

Yes, there are some restrictions on what you can grow in your plot. Do not plant any prohibited items, including invasive species, poisonous plants, illegal plants, plants used to produce drugs/substances.

Some gardens are considered “beautification gardens” where tenants are allowed to plant items like shrubs and flowers in outdoor space. If you have



one of those gardens, there are other limitations on what you can plant. These spaces are not allowed to have produce or crops.

My building/community doesn't have a garden. Can I apply for a plot at another building?

Priority will be given to tenants that live in the building or community where the gardening space is established. Tenants from other buildings are welcome to apply if there is no waitlist. You will be allocated a spot on a first-come first served basis.

Can I create a new gardening space at my building?

Tenants can ask TCHC for new community garden spaces to be created. Tenants must seek TCHC authorization and approval to create or occupy a garden space.

Staff will work with you to complete a site assessment based on whether the site meets the criteria and guidelines set out in the interim policy and procedure. TCHC will choose whether or not to allow a community garden space, at its discretion.

What happens if someone doesn't follow the rules/restrictions in the garden space?

TCHC has the right to revoke authority to use the garden space at any time if a tenant gardener doesn't follow the rules in the policy and procedure. TCHC will try to give seven days' notice if a tenant's use of a community garden space is being terminated.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

Please talk to your Community Services Coordinator if you have questions about community gardens. If you are not sure who they are, you can contact the Client Care Centre at **416-981-5500** or help@torontohousing.ca and they will connect you.

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