



## Chicago FarmWorks Community Garden Program

Thank you for being part of Chicago FarmWorks Community Garden Program! We want to ensure you have everything that you need for a successful 2026 growing season. Below we have listed the important dates to keep track of this year, as well as some updated policies and resources available to you. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to your staff contact.

<b>Your Chicago FarmWorks Staff Contact</b>	<b>Rebekah Scher</b>   <i>Community Engagement Supervisor</i> <b>Phone:</b> 312-802-1539 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:rscher@heartlandhumancareservices.org">rscher@heartlandhumancareservices.org</a>
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## Community Garden Due Dates for 2026

### **Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026 – Community Garden Opening Date**

The community garden is open! Members will be sent new gate code and can access the garden once payment for bed fees is received. The fee is \$10 per bed, with a maximum of two beds per household.

### **Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026 – Membership Fees Due**

Previously reserved beds will be held without payment for returning gardeners until May 1<sup>st</sup>. A fee of \$10 per bed (max 2 beds) must be paid by returning members by this date or beds will be marked as available for rent.

### **Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026 – Initial Planting Due Date**

Please have something planted in your garden bed by June 1<sup>st</sup> to show you are committed to participating in our community garden program throughout the growing season. If you are joining our program after June 1<sup>st</sup>, please have something planting in your bed within two weeks of joining the program.

### **Friday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2026 End of 2026 Season; Bed Clear-out Due Date**

The community garden will close for the season and open back up in spring 2027. All garden beds need to be cleaned out by this date and any FarmWorks garden tools returned to their appropriate storage areas.

### **Please Note:**

*If you are unable to meet these due dates for any reason, please let us know, so we can work with you on an alternative solution. We want to encourage an active garden community and avoid abandoned garden beds. We will also do our best to send email reminders of upcoming due dates to ensure everyone is set up for success this growing season.*

## Community Garden Updates for the 2026 Season

### **New application process**

This year, we are asking all new and returning garden members to fill out an application form to ensure we have the most up-to-date contact information and residency requirements continue to be met. The application form can be found [here](#). A paper copy of this document can be provided upon request.

### **Update Policies and Code of Conduct**

This year, we are also requiring members to read and agree to our membership policies and code of conduct. All members will be emailed a copy of this document, and a paper copy of this document will be provided upon request. We ask that everyone sign and submit a copy of this document in-person or via email to [rscher@heartlandhumancareservices.org](mailto:rscher@heartlandhumancareservices.org)

### **Water Access**

This season, we will continue to encourage the use of rain barrels as the first choice for watering your garden beds. We will provide a garden hose to supplement the barrels when they are empty.

Our farm is connected to city water. We will notify gardeners once the water is turned on for the season – this usually occurs between mid-April to early-May. Water typically gets shut off around the first week of November. Please keep these timeframes in mind, as members will have to rely solely on rain to fill the rain barrels and water their plants when the water is shut off.

### **Weed Disposal**

Please continue to dispose of weeds in the dumpsters located outside the fence. Please do not put weeds in the compost bins.

### **Tools**

Please return all community tools back to the tool chest and place all community watering cans by the rain barrels when you are done using them. Please do not take any tools off site with you.

### **Community Garden Workdays**

Community garden workdays will run once a month, May through October. A poll will be sent in April to returning members to find workday times that accommodate as many schedules as possible. These workdays are not required, but we encourage members to join when available. These workdays are an opportunity to build connections with other gardeners while caring for the garden.

### **Extra Seedlings**

We sometimes have extra seedlings from our greenhouse to share throughout the growing season. When that happens, we will reach out [via email](#) to our current gardener members to offer them up on a first come first serve basis. If there is a lot of interest, we will divide the seedlings as equally as possible to those interested.

### **Get In Touch With Us**

We do our best to stay on top of the community garden, but we are a small staff. If there is something you need that you don't have, please reach out and let us know so we can address it. If you want to see something added or changed at the community garden, please reach out with your feedback. We would love to hear how we can improve our community garden program, and we will do our best to accommodate requests that are within our capacity.