**Pathway Forward, Inc.**

**Pathway Forward Garden**

**Policies and Rules**

Pathway Forward Garden is a faith-based community engagement component of the non-profit organization Pathway Forward, Inc. Pathway Forward Garden is located on lots adjoined to Allen African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church located at 1130 West Lexington Street in Baltimore, Maryland.

**Mission Statement**

The Mission of Pathway Forward Garden is to provide and maintain organic plots for community members to grow vegetables, herbs, and flowers.

**Purpose**

The Purpose of Pathway Forward Garden is to:

1. Create a learning garden.
2. Raise awareness of gardening.
3. Use gardening as a resource to increase access to locally grown vegetables, fruits, herbs, flowers, and other plant life.
4. Provide the means for plot holders to grow vegetables, fruits, herbs, and flowers as a source of food and enjoyment.
5. Provide opportunities for community relationship building and engagement.

6. Encourage sustainable gardens as a means of preserving the Earth.

**Membership**

Membership is available to any individual or household who:

1. Agrees to follow the rules and policies of Pathway Forward Garden;
2. Pays annual dues. An inability to pay annual dues may not prevent an individual or household from joining Pathway Forward Garden. On a case-by-case basis, the Garden Council may waive annual dues;
3. Commits to volunteer in the garden a minimum of two (2) hours per week during the garden’s open hours; and
4. Agrees to be on the membership’s email or phone contact list to be notified of garden updates, scheduling notices, and etc.

To maintain good standing, a member must:

1. Volunteer in the garden a minimum of two (2) hours per week during the garden’s open hours;
2. Comply with the garden’s rules and policies; and
3. Appropriately maintain their plots.

Members are encouraged to attend all general meetings concerning the garden. Each member is entitled to one vote in matters concerning issues put before the general membership for approval.

Membership is for the growing season April 1st to November 30th each garden year. Members may join at any time during the growing season. The cost of membership is a flat fee that is not prorated. Therefore, it is most advantageous to become a member at the beginning of the growing season.

Membership may be suspended or terminated for violation of the terms and conditions outlined in the Pathway Forward Garden Membership Application and Policies and Rules. Membership will be suspended or terminated by Pathway Forward, Inc. Board of Directors.

**Garden Council**

The Pathway Forward Garden is managed by the Garden Council. The Garden Council shall consist of five councilors: Coordinator, Vice-Coordinator, Secretary, and two (2) Members-at-Large. The Vice-Coordinator and one Member-at-Large shall be a youth member. A youth member is age 15 to 18. Each Garden Councilor must be a member in good standing.

The Garden Council will:

1. Meet quarterly (four times per year) with at least three of the meetings occurring during the growing season. During the meetings, councilors will discuss the plans for the garden season including special garden design projects, community outreach goals, and special events.
2. Be valued, respected, and free to express ideas and concerns. Each garden councilor has one vote.
3. Ensure operations of the garden, oversee general upkeep and progress of the garden.
4. Be a liaison between all garden members and the Pathway Forward, Inc. Board of Directors.
5. Oversee the general maintenance and upkeep of tools, as well as, managing garden access, use, and common area design ideas.
6. Post relevant information on the group messaging and calendar applications, communicate specific needs that require attention, and direct various work efforts during open hours.
7. Assist and enforce decisions regarding waiving annual dues, termination of membership and/or plot forfeiture.
8. Develop strong relationships with community garden and urban farm related organizations and work to broaden the scope of the garden’s impact in West Baltimore.

Garden Councilor Roles

* Coordinator shall preside at all meetings and is responsible for the style and content of internal and external communications, serve as liaison to the President of Pathway Forward, Inc., and present funding request to Pathway Forward, Inc.
* Vice-Coordinator shall be a youth providing insight, ideas, and opportunities for active participants with the garden.
* Members-at-Large shall report on the wellbeing of the general membership, engage with membership, and serve as liaisons between members and the Pathways Forward, Inc. Board of Directors.
* Secretary shall record the minutes of the Garden Council and garden membership meetings. The secretary will distribute the minutes to the Pathways Forward, Inc. Board of Directors, councilors, and members (as appropriate) within two weeks of meetings. Additionally, the Secretary shall send communications to garden members, promote the garden’s initiatives to the public, and distribute marketing material (e.g., flyers, press releases).

During the Garden Council meetings, decisions shall require a simple majority agreement from the members present. The Coordinator may establish and abolish standing or special committees. Failure to attend two (2) meetings without explanation during the growing season, shall indicate the Garden Councilor’s resignation and the position declared vacant. Vacancies shall be filled for the un-expired term by the appointment of the Garden Council within 30 days.

Terms of Office:

Garden Councilors shall be elected for one-year terms. The first election shall be held in November 2021 and at the end of each preceding growing season.

**Common Areas**

Communal beds will be available for the growing of edible plants. All community members can plant, and harvest produce from the communal beds. Two of these beds are reserved for children (ages 14 and younger) and youth (ages 15 to 18) only. Small, annual plantings may be sewn in communal areas by garden members, according to common area design plans and with the understanding that the planting is not permanent.

Garden members should place a sign in the planting area stating what they planted. Only signage provided or approved by Pathway Forward Garden may be used. Proper signage will prevent the plants from being weeded, planted over, or otherwise immediately destroyed.

Plants sown in the communal areas are just that: communal. Any garden member may use a Pathway Forward Garden reusable bag to harvest vegetables, fruits, and herbs or other plant life cultivated in communal parts of the garden.

Golden Rule of Communal Gardening: If you are not sure what a certain plant is or what it requires, please ask a Garden Council Coordinator before you pull, prune and/or move it.

**Garden Maintenance Plan**

The Garden Coordinator will have an annual garden maintenance plan that considers the use of common areas within the garden, existing and proposed projects. These maintenance activities will be divided into large and small tasks. The large tasks will be assigned to garden workdays. The small tasks will be posted on the online group calendar. Garden members and volunteers should check this list of small tasks during open hours and other times that they are in the garden.

**Alteration of Garden Property**

Any decision concerning significant or permanent alternation to the property, liability, insurance, and safety must be approved in writing by the Pathway Forward, Inc. Board of Directors.

**Garden Rules**

1. Open Hours – Tuesdays 10AM to 12PM, Thursdays 5PM to 7PM and Saturdays 8AM to 10AM. This may be modified depending upon weather conditions.
2. Member Volunteer Obligations - Each member shall sign up and volunteer at least two (2) open hours per week throughout the growing season.  It is the responsibility of each member to find a replacement who can volunteer in their absence if they are unable to perform their weekly time obligation themselves. Failure to satisfy the two hour per week volunteer obligation is grounds for membership suspension or termination.
3. Organic Gardening – No pesticide, herbicides or non-organic fertilizers may be used in the garden. No treated wood may be used for garden beds. Pathways Forward Garden uses only organic growing practices.
4. Composting – Pathway Forward Garden has a public composting area. Members are encouraged to compost kitchen scraps and yard waste materials. Members must follow the guidelines posted in the composting area.
5. Children – Children up to age 14 must be accompanied by an adult garden member when inside the garden.
6. Animals – No animals are allowed in the Pathway Forward Garden.

1. Alcohol – No alcohol and persons under the influence of alcohol are allowed inside the Pathway Forward Garden.
2. Illegal and Illicit Drugs – The use and sale of illegal and illicit drugs are not allowed inside the Pathway Forward Garden. The use and sale of legally prescribed cannabis and other mind-altering drugs are not allowed inside the Pathway Forward Garden.
3. Smoking – No smoking is allowed inside the Pathway Forward Garden.
4. Suspension & Termination – Failure to comply with all Pathway Forward Garden policies and rules are grounds for suspension and termination. The Pathway Forward, Inc. will determine the suspension and termination status of members in accordance with the seriousness of the offense.
5. End of Season – All individual beds must be cleared of all plants at the end of the growing season and mulched. All members are expected to assist with season end garden closing by cleaning equipment, storing items, and removing waste.
6. Grievances – Members should bring all grievances to the Members-at-Large. If the Garden Council cannot resolve the matter, then the Garden Council Coordinator must bring the grievance to the Pathway Forward, Inc.’s Board of Directors for resolution.