

Chicago Botanic Garden
2016 Operating Plan
Government Affairs

Goal	Objectives	Deliverables	
<p>1. The Chicago Botanic Garden will remain committed to serving the needs of all its partners and advocates, in particular the people of Cook County. The Government Affairs department will proudly communicate the model public-private partnership that the Chicago Horticultural Society and the Forest Preserves of Cook County have built together.</p>	<p>1.1 Continue to educate, deepen, and strengthen relationships with President Preckwinkle, the commissioners and their staffs, Superintendent Randall, Deputy Superintendent Figel, Chief Financial Officer Steve Hughes, Forest Preserves stewards, and other key Forest Preserves and Cook County offices and personnel, including the Offices of Contract Compliance and Building and Zoning.</p>	<p>Maintain, and strive to increase, the current level of funding the Garden receives annually through its allocation from the Forest Preserves; monitor any movement on the Illinois Tollway land issue.</p> <p>Arrange for presentations by Windy City Harvest participants, Science First and College First students, Conservation and Land Management interns, and Garden staff at Forest Preserves Board meetings in both Cook and Lake Counties, at budget hearings, and other events as requested or appropriate.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for Forest Preserves stewards to attend Garden programs, symposiums, and seminars.</p> <p>Work with Garden staff to offer one adult education class or staff training at a Forest Preserves site.</p>	
	<p>1.4 Continue to work with Garden staff to meet the goals set in the supplier diversity program.</p>	<p>Assist with updating website language; continue to educate, encourage and work with Garden staff as they pursue minority- and women-owned businesses for contracts; continually update vendor database; keep comprehensive records to use in compiling regular communication with President Preckwinkle and the Forest Preserves' and Cook County's Compliance Offices; attend and participate in outreach and training activities to further advance the Garden's supplier diversity plan.</p>	
	<p>1.5 Continue to partner with the Forest Preserves as they implement their Next Century Conservation Plan.</p>	<p>Offer the Garden's expertise in marketing, visitor services, and education as the Next Century Conservation Plan is implemented.</p> <p>Continue to participate in focus groups and planning meetings and assist in the implementation of the Forest Preserves' Next Century Plan.</p>	
	<p>2. To assist in growing the annual revenue needed to meet expense increases, the Government Affairs department will investigate every possible means to secure funding from the City of Chicago, Cook and Lake Counties, the State of Illinois, and the federal government.</p>	<p>2.1 Maintain, and increase if possible, the funds allocated for the Conservation and Land Management intern program, the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers development program, and other sources of federal funding. Monitor legislation that could positively or adversely affect the Garden.</p>	<p>Closely monitor any key staff changes or shifts in priorities that would affect the funding the Garden receives for the Conservation Land Management interns.</p> <p>Write letters to elected officials and sign on to group letters on issues of concern.</p> <p>Work with the Garden's federal lobbyist to prepare language for appropriations bills.</p>
		<p>2.2 Continue to coordinate efforts with members of the Plant Conservation Alliance, Plants of Concern, the American Public Gardens Association, and others to educate, reinstate, and increase funding for native plant and ecosystem conservation and restoration efforts.</p>	<p>Encourage colleagues from these groups to participate in Washington, D.C., visits with elected officials and agency personnel.</p> <p>Encourage representatives from these groups to sign onto congressional letters.</p>
		<p>2.3 Strategize with Garden staff and our state and federal lobbyists to target, educate, and enlist additional local, state, national, and international conservation organizations with the goal of developing strong coalitions that support heightening awareness of and pursuing and increasing funding for plants and animals.</p>	<p>Educate, develop relationships with, and enlist support from representatives of new organizations.</p>
<p>2.4 Investigate and secure new programmatic and capital funding through whatever sources might be available.</p>		<p>Work with state and federal lobbyists to find funding sources—a state gambling bill, line items in the state budget, supportive legislative language, bond funding, member initiatives, etc.</p> <p>Continue efforts to obtain member initiatives from targeted members of the General Assembly.</p> <p>Investigate forming a Windy City Harvest Coalition or Urban Agriculture Caucus made up of elected officials who have Windy City Harvest sites in their districts.</p> <p>Arrange for Windy City Harvest participants to provide testimony at a meeting of the Illinois Black Caucus.</p>	
<p>2.5 Support the Garden's Foundation and Government Relations department.</p>		<p>When requested, secure letters of support from elected officials and appropriate Garden partners and friends on behalf of grants submitted by the Garden.</p>	

		Work with elected officials to monitor the status of a grant or when funding that has been allocated is not forthcoming.
	2.6 Investigate the possibility of jointly applying for contracts and grants through the Forest Preserves, Chicago Wilderness, the Brookfield Zoo, and other organizations.	Further develop coalitions of colleagues at other institutions to pursue joint opportunities. Continue to investigate with Garden staff the development of a contract proposal for a land management intern program that can be offered to forest preserves, park districts, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and others.
3. Assist Garden staff in further intensifying international recognition of the Garden's science and conservation program through affecting wildlife- and plant-conservation policy at the local, state, and federal levels by engaging in partnerships with and providing service to elected officials, agency personnel, and conservation nongovernmental organizations.	3.1 The Garden will continue to broaden, deepen, educate, and steward its relationships with current and new elected officials, key staff members, and agency personnel of the federal government, State of Illinois, Cook County, neighboring communities, and the City of Chicago, as well as key officials in the conservation and museum communities.	Invite elected officials, staff, agency personnel, and other key individuals to Garden events such as Wonderland Express, the Orchid Show, and the Antiques, Garden & Design Show; Windy City Harvest open houses; Day at the Garden for Elected Officials, Staff, and Agency Personnel; World Environment Day; and seminars, symposiums, presentations, etc. Continue to provide Windy City Harvest site tours and briefings to elected officials, staff, and agency personnel. Continue to participate in the public affairs committees of Chicago Wilderness and Museums Work for Chicago as a way to educate our partners on the Garden's wide scope of activities, programs, and involvement. Through participation in these organizations, develop contacts for possible collaborative efforts, joint grants, or funding sources. Assist other Garden staff members in establishing a national discussion and charting a forward-thinking course of action to establish the Garden as a national and international leader in conservation efforts. Include Garden staff and Board members on visits to Washington, D.C., and Springfield, Ill., when appropriate. Continue to make elected officials aware of their constituents who participate in special Garden programs or win awards, honors, or recognition, etc. Send pertinent Garden materials, including articles and videos, to elected officials, staff, agency personnel, and nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners. Continue to offer the expertise of Garden staff to elected officials, staff, and agency personnel. - Closely monitor the upcoming Congressional, Forest Preserves, General Assembly, Illinois constitutional officers, and City of Chicago elections.
4. The Government Affairs department will continue to expand its community outreach involvement.	4.1 Expand the Garden's commitment to reach and serve citizens from throughout Cook County by continuing to build connections with residents from underserved communities.	Provide pertinent Garden information for newsletters of the Forest Preserves, Museums Work for Chicago, other organizations, and neighboring villages. Educate key constituents on the economic impact the Garden provides. Continue to facilitate CONSEC (Council of North Shore Environment Commissions) and CONSEG (Consortium of North Shore Environment Groups) speakers and meetings.
	4.2 Continue to serve as the Garden's liaison with the Chicago Consular Corps.	Continue to develop new, and strengthen current, relationships with the Chicago Consular Corps.
	4.3 Increase involvement with the City of Chicago.	Continue to expand the Garden's group visit program for commissioners and other elected officials, including the City of Chicago's Regional Senior Centers and Chicago Park District. Work with Garden staff to offer a class or series of classes at the After School Matters site. Explore the Garden's participation in the Fiesta Del Sol or the Bud Billiken parades.
	4.4 Participate in Village of Glencoe Advisory Committee.	Continue participation in the Village of Glencoe clubhouse advisory group.