

growing together



A Toolkit for Convening a Garden-based
Learning Summit in Your Region



Resources and Reflections from the Pilot
Mid-Atlantic Regional Garden-based Learning Summit

by City Blossoms, the United States Botanic Garden, and the
Office of the State Superintendent of Education



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City Blossoms is a nonprofit dedicated to cultivating the well-being of our communities through creative programming in kid-driven gardens. Washington, DC is our home base, where we innovate new resources, approaches, and techniques. Applying our unique brand of gardens, science, art, healthy living, and community building, we “blossom” in neighborhoods where kids, their families, and neighbors may not otherwise have access to green spaces.

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acknowledgments

Growing Together: A Toolkit for Convening a Garden-based Learning Summit in Your Region is the culmination of more than half a decade of brainstorming, collaborating, and dreaming big alongside the school garden support community across the Mid-Atlantic region and beyond.

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section 1

getting started



CONTEXT

This toolkit captures the planning, reflection, and learning that led to a pilot Regional Garden-based Learning Summit (referred to hereafter as “the Summit”) for the Mid-Atlantic region. The core planning group consisted of staff from City Blossoms, USBG, and OSSE.

This toolkit is a collection of resources created at various stages throughout the project by the core planning group. We have included some of our reflections in textboxes, offering tips from our experience that might be helpful for future summit planning teams in other regions. We hope that this toolkit serves as a useful guide to others who are interested in similar efforts.



PURPOSE AND TARGET AUDIENCE



Purpose

The purpose of the pilot Summit was: *To provide garden-based learning organizations with inspiration and resources to create and enhance support to garden-based education within the Mid-Atlantic region.*

The core planning group established this purpose based on responses from an initial interest form we distributed to potential participants in our region (see “[Needs Assessment](#)”). The most common interests and priorities included:

- Networking and relationship building
- Space for troubleshooting the unique and common challenges that organizations in our region face
- Opportunities to learn about specialized content

Target Audience

At its core, the Summit provided a unique opportunity for garden-based learning programs to deepen community connections, share resources and best practices, and gain inspiration and knowledge from each other. Taking the available budget, the amount of expressed interest and a realistic scale for a pilot summit into account, we established the following criteria:

- **Two people per organization**—This quota was to ensure there would be ample space for as many organizations as possible to attend. We also believed that organizations sending a pair of representatives, as opposed to one, would have a greater chance of retaining and applying the information and ideas gained during the summit to their work.
- **Maximum audience of 75 attendees, including facilitators**—This limit was to keep in mind our available capacity and resources to plan a pilot summit, the first of its kind for our region. The core planning group invited interested participants to be facilitators, sharing their expertise and problem-solving with peers, and we ensured that the number of facilitators was appropriate for the target audience and event size.
- **Representation from a variety of garden-based learning organizations**—We recognized that garden-based learning organizations come in all shapes and sizes. Some work directly with schools, some strictly in neighborhoods, and others fit in between. All these experiences are valuable and make up the whole community of garden-based learning, so we kept this criterion open.
- **Representation from specific states within the Mid-Atlantic**—Our goal was to better connect people within the Mid-Atlantic region, which we defined as: Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C.
- **Ensuring equity and accessibility**— The Summit was free to attend. Offering up to a \$100 travel stipend, at minimum, for all attendees was a crucial component to mitigating the cost factor that could pose a barrier against participation for smaller organizations. We were unable to include a lodging stipend to further alleviate financial burden at our pilot summit.



ENVISIONING A PARTICIPANT-CENTERED SUMMIT

Early on, the core planning group knew we wanted to create a summit that would feel worthwhile and welcoming to all participants. We also wanted the Summit experience to be shaped by participant knowledge, experience, and interests.

Summit Goals

As we began planning, we discussed what we hoped the Summit would accomplish for the garden-based learning community in the Mid-Atlantic:

- 1. **Build community and connections** among professionals leading garden-based learning across the region;
- 2. Enable participants to **exchange ideas, resources, and solutions** relevant to garden-based learning in the region; and
- 3. Cultivate a renewed **sense of inspiration** among professionals engaged in garden-based learning in the region.

Ultimately, we hoped that a summit accomplishing these goals would enable participants to apply their learning in ways that would:

- 4. **Strengthen garden-based learning programs** in the Mid-Atlantic region and **increase their impact within their communities**.

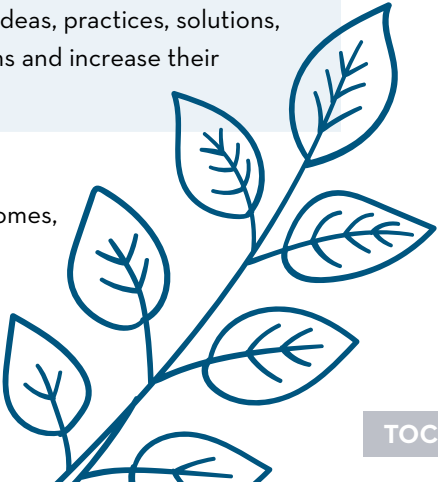


CREATING AN EVALUATION PLAN

Once we defined our goals, we developed a theory of change.

Regional Garden-based Learning Summit	
Theory of Change	
If...	we gather garden-based learning professionals from across the Mid-Atlantic region for a Regional Garden-based Learning Summit
Then...	they will build community and connections with colleagues in the region; share resources, best practices, and solutions for engaging children and youth in garden-based learning; and be inspired by one another’s work (see Goals 1-3)
Which will lead to...	garden-based learning professionals in our region being able to apply new ideas, practices, solutions, and professional connections to strengthen garden-based learning programs and increase their impact within their communities (see Goal 4)

Next, we developed a [logic model](#) that identified our envisioned inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts. The outcomes and impacts we identified aligned with our goals and helped us craft evaluation questions.



EVALUATION TOOLS

The core planning group developed Pre-and Post-Summit Reflections to help collect information about Summit outcomes and participant feedback on the experience.

Pre-Summit Reflection

For the [Pre-Summit Reflection](#), we inquired with registrants about their current (Pre-Summit):

- Sense of connection with a network of garden-based learning colleagues in the region
- Awareness of garden-based learning work happening in the region
- Ideas for their programs in the coming year
- Solutions for addressing challenges facing their programs
- Awareness of resources to support garden-based learning in the region
- Sense of inspiration about garden-based learning work in the region

Post-Summit Reflection

For the [Post-Summit Reflection](#), we inquired again about the areas addressed on the Pre-Summit Reflection, so that we could examine areas of change for participants. We also inquired about new areas such as:

- Participant satisfaction with the Summit
- Sense of welcome and inclusion felt at the Summit
- Extent to which the Summit addressed their interests and priorities
- Intent to keep in touch with colleagues from the Summit
- Most impactful components of the Summit
- Recommendations or feedback to share with Summit organizers

Follow-Up Outreach

Three months after the Summit, we followed up with participants via email, inviting them to share their main takeaways. We also asked them to share recent activities or professional connections that were informed by the Summit. This information helped us gain a sense of the Summit's longer-term impact. See "[Communicating with Event Participants](#)" for more information.



BUILDING A PLANNING TEAM

Core Planning Group

The planning process for the pilot Summit began after a small team—which later evolved into the core planning group—dreamt big. Representatives from City Blossoms and OSSE experienced firsthand the abundance of inspiration and knowledge sharing at a national garden-based learning conference and wondered, “What could this opportunity look like for our region?” As part of an effort to strengthen the USBG’s connection to the local garden-based learning community, the concept for a regional garden-based learning summit came to life.

City Blossoms, USBG, and OSSE thereby formed the Summit’s core planning group, with the overarching purpose to:

- Conduct a needs assessment to guide the planning process
- Create a timeline, including key actions
- Identify potential partners to support outreach and ensure attendance
- Begin planning the Summit, including determining the regional area and audience, an optimal schedule and location, and other logistical plans and details
- Manage registration and implementation of the event
- Provide an evaluation tool to attendees



Advisory Committee

The core planning group recognized the Summit planning process could benefit from additional perspectives within our region’s garden-based learning community. To ensure a well-rounded, holistic approach, we formed an advisory committee consisting of members from five organizations from across the region to support in the design and implementation of the Summit.

We invited folks from garden-based learning organizations based in the Mid-Atlantic to submit [a short application](#) to join the advisory committee, with the purpose and scope of commitment clearly mapped out. The core planning group deliberated using this [review table](#). We factored in our target audience and how to accurately represent their perspectives—in terms of region, age groups, type of work, organization size—in the planning team. We saw the importance of having representatives from across the region collaborate with the core planning group and, in turn, promote the Summit enthusiastically within their local networks.

Advisory committee tasks included, but were not limited to:

- Engaging in creative brainstorming
- Assisting in development of Summit priorities and structure
- Advising on design of the Summit schedule and activities
- Conducting outreach to potential attendees
- Being actively present at the Summit and facilitating, presenting, and/or engaging with participants

We sent out [acceptance emails](#) to the new members of our planning team about two weeks after the application deadline. Members of the advisory committee signed [an agreement](#) upon confirmation of their commitment to receive a stipend contingent upon meeting the following requirements:

- Attend and actively participate in committee meetings, including at least one face-to-face meeting and multiple virtual meetings
- Actively assist with Summit outreach and preparations
- Attend the Summit in its entirety and support day-of needs



CONDUCTING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Since the Summit was the first of its kind for our region, the core planning group sent out a [needs assessment](#) to a broad array of community stakeholders before starting the planning process. We sought to better understand: 1) *Is there interest in a Regional Garden-based Learning Summit?* 2) *Who is interested—both in terms of what organizations and what roles?* 3) *Where in the region are interested prospective participants located?* The needs assessment provided valuable insight into the potential Summit audience and helped inform our targeted outreach to build the advisory committee. We had a clear model to follow (i.e., the 2022 Growing School Gardens Summit), and the needs assessment made clear that there was interest and demand for a summit in our region.

Now that there is proof of concept from the pilot Regional Garden-based Learning Summit and a clearly established purpose, conducting a needs assessment could look different in future summit planning. For example, it could take place after the advisory committee has formed and focus more on summit programming details instead of gauging high-level interest.



FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

The Summit was primarily funded through a federal cooperative agreement between USBG and City Blossoms. Other sources of funding, including in-kind, were leveraged. See the list below for additional details:

- **Personnel costs (staff time), materials, advisory committee honoraria, equity stipends:** core planning group members from the USBG and OSSE had their own staff time covered through their overall organization budgets. City Blossoms' staff time, materials, an \$800 honoraria to four advisory committee members, and up to \$3,000 in travel stipends were partly covered through the cooperative agreement between City Blossoms and USBG, and the rest through a grant with a private foundation. City Blossoms' development team included some expenses from the Summit in the grant application with the private foundation.
- **Space rental:** The planning team secured in-kind space for both days of the Summit. The first day was hosted at OSSE's main office in downtown Washington, D.C., and the second day was hosted at a City Blossoms garden. Both spaces were free of charge.
- **Food and beverages:** City Blossoms covered these expenses, purchasing breakfast and snacks from a grocery store and lunch from local restaurants.

OVERALL TIMELINE

We recommend getting started as early as possible, **ideally one year out**, but in our experience, **the bulk of the planning can be done in six months**. [This timeline](#) outlines the tasks that we prioritized leading up to and after the Summit. We took into consideration the planning team's capacity to create a realistic timeline that would yield the best possible participant experience.



section 2

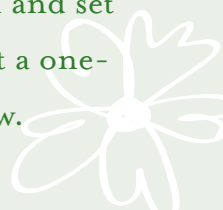
shaping the summit



APPLICATION

The core planning group circulated [this application form](#) to potential participants from garden-based learning organizations and entities across the region. The application was distributed through various channels; we leaned heavily on advisory committee members to assist with getting the word out to potential participants in their regions.

We recommend sending out a call for applicants as soon as there is an established planning team and set location/date, with at least a one-month application window.



APPLICATION REVIEW

To evaluate the applications, we formed a review team consisting of members from both the core planning group and the advisory committee.

The core planning group reviewers began by previewing applications for basic eligibility. Applicants were deemed eligible if they:

- 1) currently supported garden-based learning programs in our region, and
- 2) were available to attend at least one day of the Summit.

Applicants who did not meet one or both of these criteria were removed from consideration.



We split the remaining applications among members of the review team. Reviewers previewed their assigned applications for potential conflicts of interest. Each reviewer received a set of approximately 15 applications to review, an [instruction sheet for reviewers](#), a [scoring rubric](#), and a [scoring sheet](#). In scoring the applications, reviewers considered factors including the applicant's potential to benefit from the Summit, motivation for attending, plan for sharing their learning from the Summit with their community, and potential contribution to the diversity of perspectives represented at the Summit. Each individual application was scored by two reviewers over a two-week review period.

For the Pilot Summit, we approached application review with an understanding that garden-based learning work looks different across the Mid-Atlantic. Talk with your planning team about what ensuring diverse perspectives means for your Summit. This might include diverse representation in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, veteran status, Tribal affiliation, disability status, age, sexual orientation, experience, communities served, organization types, organization sizes and budgets, geography, or other factors important to your team.



After review, the core planning group checked applications for any potential barriers to participation shared in the applications. The core planning group used this information to consider ways to maximize the Summit's accessibility. Core planning group reviewers also checked applications for areas of potential preference. These included applicants' self-identification as contributing to inclusivity and subsequent diversity of the Summit, ability to attend the Summit with a counterpart, and ability to attend both days of the Summit.

Following the review period, the core planning group reviewers met to review scoring and finalize the list of applicants to invite to attend. The core planning group then sent email notifications to all applicants, inviting accepted individuals to register for the Summit.



REGISTRATION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF AUDIENCE

The planning team utilized a multi-step process to ensure we gathered necessary information from registrants to inform the content focus areas of the agenda, support in logistics planning, and integrate participants into the implementation of the Summit. We recommend this approach because it allowed us to intentionally build the audience and then tailor the Summit to the expressed interests and needs of the attendees.

See [the Regional Garden-based Learning Summit Registration Form](#) for a full list of questions we asked applicants through the registration process.

We came up with a list of content focus areas, asking registrants to identify the topics they most wanted to dive into during the Summit. Their interests supported how the planning team shaped the agenda, including which activities to extend, cut, or shift. In addition, one of our goals was to create ample opportunities for participants to lead activities and share their expertise throughout the Summit. To do so, we gauged interest from participants in leading activities and provided space for them to share specific skill areas on which they wanted the Summit to focus. Their responses helped streamline the next steps of the planning process.

COMMUNICATING WITH EVENT PARTICIPANTS

We sent out multiple email correspondences between registration and the Summit to coordinate with facilitators, arrange travel stipends and accommodations, and share important logistical information with Summit participants. Below outlines the cadence we followed, with example emails:

- **Call for Applicants:** We sent this email widely—six months ahead of the Summit. See [“Application”](#) for more information.
- **Invitation to Register:** After finalizing the attendee list, we sent this formal invite announcing the days, times, and locations, and asked folks to RSVP within two weeks. See [“Registration”](#) for more information.
- **Travel and Lodging Logistics:** We shared this information as soon as it was finalized—ideally at least two months out.
- **Individualized Coordination:** We emailed back and forth with registrants on a case-by-case basis, answering questions that came up and arranging stipends with folks who requested them during registration.
- **Agenda and Final Logistics:** Once the facilitators were booked, we shared the agenda and any final details the participants would need to prepare and get excited for the Summit—about two weeks before the Summit.
- **One-Stop-Shop Doc:** The planning team shared a comprehensive document to set the attendees up for success—one week out. This document included the detailed agenda, contact information, and key logistics for attendees all in one place.
- **Last Minute Reminders:** We sent one final welcome email the day before the Summit, sharing our Pre-Summit Reflection (see [“Evaluation Tools”](#)) and linking again the One-Stop-Shop document.

We recommend taking into consideration both the planning team and the audience’s best interests in shaping the communication timeline. As a regional conference, it was important to provide information as soon as it was available to allow folks to make informed decisions about their budget and capacity and arrange for travel and lodging plans. We aimed to only email pertinent information, using bulleted lists when appropriate and highlighting important details. We also found it helpful to add deadlines into subject lines to make clear where action was needed.



CREATING AN AGENDA

The planning team developed the [agenda for attendees](#) and shared it with participants ahead of the Summit. We sought to include as much relevant information as possible in this detailed agenda, including timing, locations/addresses, activity descriptions, facilitator information, and more. The advisory committee provided feedback to the core planning group on general logistics and activity structure to support the development of the agenda.

When developing the agenda, the planning team ensured flexibility in our activities structure and built in extra time during transition periods. We also made sure to include plenty of breaks, energizers, and variety in the Summit's activities (see "[Activity Descriptions](#)").

Most of the activities in our two-day agenda were informed by, designed with, and facilitated by Summit participants. The planning team created the structure and provided general guidance for the agenda, but ultimately, our participants led the content comprising our main activities.

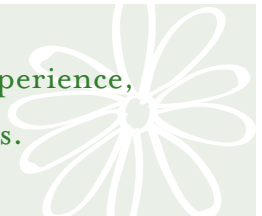


IDENTIFY AND CORRESPOND WITH FACILITATORS

To center participant voice at the pilot Summit, the planning team invited participants to facilitate a variety of activities. We first gauged attendee interest during registration, then followed up with individuals to confirm their facilitator roles based on their selections. We strongly recommend being as specific as possible about details such as available technology and upcoming action items, as well as giving organizations sufficient time to make decisions about committing to facilitate. We framed facilitating as an opportunity for folks to highlight their ongoing work, share their expertise with peers, and foster a space for collaboration and problem-solving, rather than asking participants to create new resources to present at the Summit.



Because we wanted this Summit to be shaped by participant knowledge, experience, and interests, the majority of the speakers and facilitators were participants.



The planning team took into consideration Summit logistics (e.g., budget, room capacity, etc.) alongside the amount of expressed interest to ensure that the number of facilitators would be appropriate, relative to both the size of the audience and the rooms. From there, we sent out an [invitation to facilitate](#) via email to prospective facilitators and had them provide details and commit to certain activities through a [participation survey](#). We recommend confirming facilitators well in advance, ideally three months prior, to give everyone time to plan and prepare any deliverables.

Below is an outline, with example email language, describing how the core planning group followed up with facilitators to coordinate each participant-led activity:

- **Lightning Talk Facilitators:** The core planning group pulled their responses from the participation survey into [a table](#) for facilitators to review the information for accuracy, and we requested that folks send, at minimum, a title slide to have visuals to present during the lightning talk sessions. We recommend making this ask well in advance, at least one month out, and setting a realistic timeline; we had slides due the week before the Summit, leaving a couple days for last-minute reminders and troubleshooting as needed.

- **Solution Seekers Facilitators:** We asked facilitators to review the written description of their challenge that they shared in the participation survey, defining a goal, sharing specifics on what has been tried, and proposing targeted questions to ask their peers. The core planning group joined facilitators for a 30-minute call about two weeks before the Summit to prepare for the sessions.
- **Skill Share Facilitators:** We created [a table](#) for them to review and update their information from the participation survey, including details on their skill share and any needs or notes to flag for the planning team, by the week before the Summit. We promptly followed up with individuals to address specific requests.
- **Satellite Site Visit Hosts:** Based on expressed interest in hosting from the participation survey, the planning team created [a sign up form](#) and shared it with attendees ahead of the Summit. We then connected host organizations with participants who expressed interest in visiting for them to coordinate independently.



BOOKING VENUE/VENDORS

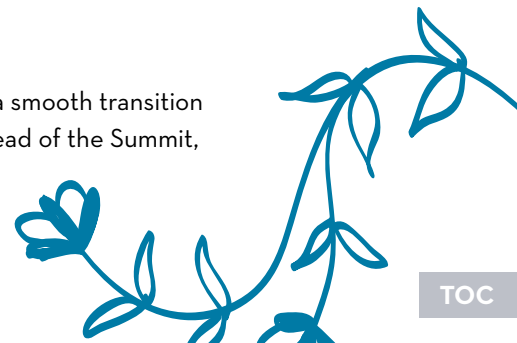
We hosted the Summit at an indoor venue for the first day and an outdoor venue for the second day. The first day we gathered at OSSE in a large conference room and held breakout sessions in multiple small meeting rooms. The second day we met at the Farm at Kelly Miller, a City Blossoms Community Green Space.

Here are some things we took into consideration when booking venues:

Venues	Must Haves	Strongly Recommended	Nice to Haves
All types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seating capacity for number of participants + presenters and facilitators + staff • Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible • Restrooms • Drinking water • Trash receptacles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-neutral restrooms • Breakout session spaces • Wi-Fi and projector with screen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen with refrigerator and freezer • Close to public transportation • Parking for personal vehicles • Compost and recycling receptacles
Outdoor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shade/weather protection • Activated garden on-site to support Summit activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of plants growing in the space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access for loading/unloading vehicles • Access to indoor space in case of extreme weather

INTERNAL DETAILED AGENDA

Once we had finalized all our logistics, we compiled an [internal detailed agenda](#) to ensure a smooth transition from planning to implementation, expectation to reality. All supporting staff reviewed it ahead of the Summit, and it served as the master guide to our run of show.



implementation

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS

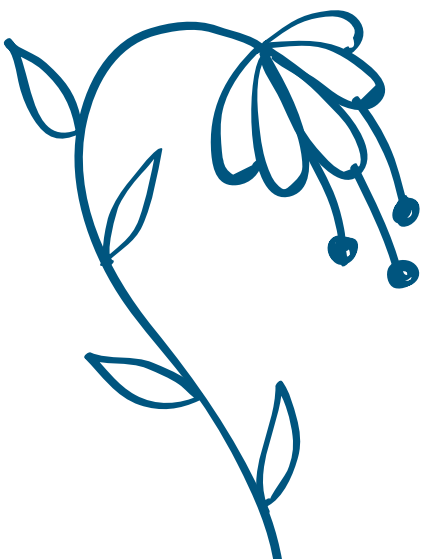
We recommend writing a short paragraph of each activity and providing this to participants to review ahead of the Summit, so they will know what to expect and get excited about attending.

Lightning Talks

- We held two 1-hour lightning talk sessions on the first day: one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Both sessions split attendees into two rooms, each room consisting of three lightning talks led by pre-registered facilitators. Attendees signed up for their choices during check-in.
- Facilitators presented for 5-7 minutes on their programming or something that their organization does well. Each lightning talk was followed by a 10-minute small group discussion, with prompts related to each presentation.
- We wanted to harness the breadth of knowledge among attendees by creating opportunities for participants to highlight the work they were doing.

Energizer and Guiding Networking

- After lunch, we led an energizer for the group before a guided networking session, consisting of small group activities aimed to support organizations connecting with one another and discussing relevant topics. See our [facilitator's notes](#) for more details.



Solutions Seeker Sessions

- The Solution Seeker Sessions were 1-hour small group conversations, designed to discover peer-driven solutions to specific challenges presented by Summit participants. Before the Summit, we shared descriptions prepared by the Solution Seeker facilitators with the expectation that participants would come prepared to discuss. Attendees signed up for their choices during check-in.
- During the sessions, Solution Seeker facilitators shared about their chosen topic and received targeted “consultation” from their participant-peers. See this [guide](#) for more details.
- Attendees learned from each other, taking the opportunity to share their expertise and build community.



Icebreakers

- We built in multiple icebreakers throughout the Summit to support long-lasting community building. We printed a [bingo activity](#) to encourage conversation throughout the day. We also organized an optional social hour that took place at the end of day one.



Rotating Skill Shares

- We kicked off the second day of the Summit at our outdoor site with a selection of hands-on skill shares. Pre-registered participants led different stations with activities around the farm to offer ideas and inspiration to their peers. Attendees rotated from skill share to skill share over the course of an hour, staying at each table for about 10 minutes.

Reflection

- We scheduled 30 minutes of reflection time toward the end of the second day, encouraging attendees to connect with their organizational partners and check in about what they had gained from the Summit.



Satellite Site Visits

- Several organizations based in the DC-region offered to host site visits to one of their spaces, so the planning team gauged participant interest and connected Summit attendees with prospective hosts. Satellite site visits were hosted independently by the volunteer organizations after day two of the Summit. Due to transportation and time constraints, satellite site visits were limited to the DC region.



RUN OF SHOW BEST PRACTICES

The planning team took away countless lessons learned from implementing our first-ever Regional Garden-based Learning Summit. See our top best practices below to support a smooth run-of-show:

- **Have additional staff on hand for support** during each phase of the agenda in case of emergencies or last-minute errands.
- **Organize multiple run-of-show meetings** with your implementation team to ensure everyone is on the same page with their roles and the roles of their team members. We recommend doing a dry run of the full agenda and double checking where each team member should be at any particular time.
- Start a group text with your implementation team and **build rapport among team members**. We recommend a team lunch or a post-planning meeting happy hour!
- **Arrive early with extra time on each day** of your summit to troubleshoot any last-minute issues. It is better to have an extra 30 minutes, during which your implementation team is doing nothing, than to be scrambling at the last minute, which does not yield a great experience for attendees.
- **Signage, signage, signage!** Over communicate with your attendees. Include publicly available agendas, signage for bathrooms, dietary specifics for meals, and maybe even a site map.
- Make space for taking photos, **both candid action shots and group pictures**. We asked supporting staff to capture photographs throughout the Summit and concluded both days with a full group photo. We recommend including a photo waiver for attendees during the check-in process on the first day or ahead of the Summit.
- Set group expectations with your attendees at the very beginning of the Summit. We recommend **setting these expectations in tandem with attendees**; share a list of your own expectations and invite folks to add to the list! Some examples include practicing a one mic rule, challenging the idea—not the person, taking care of yourself with bathroom runs and snacks as needed, etc.



section 4

follow-up



EMAILS FOR ATTENDEES

The core planning group made an effort to follow up with attendees on their Summit experience and stay connected with their ongoing work. We requested immediate feedback, which we strongly recommend, by making space on the last day of the Summit for participants to submit our [post-Summit reflection form](#) (see “[Evaluation](#)”). After the conclusion of the Summit, we sent out the following emails to keep in touch:

- **Initial Follow-up:** One week after the Summit, we reshared the post-Summit reflection form and distributed a link for folks to access and add to a shared photo drive.
- **Resource Share-out:** The planning team took a month to compile relevant resources from the Summit, largely contributed by Summit attendees, and we sent them out in a shareable folder, along with one last push for the post-Summit reflection form. We would recommend sharing any resources as soon as they are ready so that attendees can revisit and bring the knowledge back to their organizations while the Summit is fresh in their minds.
- **Summit Outcomes Check-in:** Three months after the Summit, we solicited feedback from attendees, specifically on any interpersonal connections and new projects/initiatives resulting from the Summit. Our intention was to leave enough time for attendees to return, reflect, and take action, while not letting too much time pass before checking back in. We also recommend sharing any available information regarding the next regional summit to offer an immediate touchpoint and further foster community connection.

PUBLIC SHARE-OUT

After wrapping up the Summit and soliciting feedback from attendees, the core planning group summarized the run-of-show and compiled a list of key outcomes based on the Pre- and Post-Summit Reflections (see “[Evaluation Tools](#)”) to share. We publicly released a [full recap](#) on the Summit landing page and distributed the update through City Blossoms’ newsletter.

Resources

DIGITAL FILES, TEMPLATES, AND MORE





Regional Garden-based Learning Summit

Planning Checklist

GETTING STARTED

- ☐ Establish your purpose and target audience
- ☐ Define your goals and propose a corresponding evaluation plan
- ☐ Build your Planning Team
 - ☐ Draft Advisory Committee agreements with meeting dates
 - ☐ Solicit applications for Advisory Committee members
 - ☐ Deliberate and send out agreement letters to sign
- ☐ Determine whether to conduct a needs assessment
- ☐ Explore and secure funding opportunities
- ☐ Review your overall timeline, including:
 - ☐ Summit date(s)
 - ☐ Planning meetings (at least one in-person recommended, adjust pacing as needed, plan to increase frequency two months out):
 - ☐ Biweekly Core Planning Group Meetings
 - ☐ Monthly Advisory Committee Meetings
 - ☐ Key deadlines, for example:
 - ☐ Summit announcement launch
 - ☐ Application period - communication target(s), open/close dates
 - ☐ Notify attendees of acceptance
 - ☐ Solicit registration information, including presenter interest
 - ☐ Confirm venue and food
 - ☐ Finalize Summit agenda
 - ☐ Communicate final logistics with attendees
 - ☐ Walkthrough, setup, and showtime!

SHAPING THE SUMMIT

- ☐ Find your audience
 - ☐ Circulate application to potential attendees
 - ☐ Elect 3-4 application review leads from the Planning Team
 - ☐ Review applications
- ☐ Confirm and communicate with attendees
 - ☐ Solicit registration information, for example:
 - ☐ Needs assessment
 - ☐ Stipend/travel details
 - ☐ Dietary/accessibility requests
 - ☐ Presenter interest
- ☐ Build your Summit Agenda
 - ☐ Assess registration form responses
 - ☐ Determine a reasonable number of presenters for your summit
 - ☐ Send invitation to facilitate to interested registrants
 - ☐ Share logistics and request deliverables from speaker/facilitators ASAP
 - ☐ Write activity/session descriptions to share with participants
 - ☐ Book venue and vendors, taking into account expressed needs

IMPLEMENTATION

- ☐ Organize run-of-show meetings, including both Planning and Day-Of staff
 - ☐ Plan to arrive early and build in buffer time
- ☐ Print, prepare, and pack all hard-copy materials
 - ☐ Facilitators' agendas for staff
 - ☐ Daily agendas for attendees
 - ☐ Resources to share
 - ☐ Day-Of signage and tape, for example:
 - ☐ Bathrooms
 - ☐ Info cards for meals (vendor/allergen details)
 - ☐ Room names
 - ☐ Welcome table sign
 - ☐ QR codes for anything that needs to be filled out (i.e. photo waivers, pre/post surveys, etc.)
 - ☐ Site map(s) and arrows
- ☐ Check the weather forecast and communicate any necessary changes
- ☐ Confirm final logistics with venue and vendors

FOLLOW-UP

- ☐ Prepare a newsletter/social media/website share-out, including an event summary, impact numbers, and photos (with permission)
- ☐ Conduct participant feedback survey on the last day (immediately)
- ☐ Week after – reshare the survey link and create a shared photo drive
- ☐ Month after – send any shareable resources and plug the survey one last time
- ☐ 3 months after – general check in and share any info about the next Summit!