

Chicago Temporary Hydrant Use Permit 2021- Frequently Asked Questions

Where and how do we fill out the application for hydrant use permit access? Should we start filling out this application now?

- The website address for obtaining a temporary hydrant use permit through the City's website is <http://hup.buildinganewchicago.org/>.
- While we encourage community gardens and farms to get their required materials in order as soon as possible, we also recommend starting the online application when the updated application language is in place. The updated period of application is set to open February 22. Urban Ag Partners (UAP) recommend getting your application in between February 22- March 22.
- Urban Ag Partners (UAP) have scheduled office hours, beginning February 8th, on Monday mornings, and Thursday evenings, for helping gardens/farms navigate through the requirements they will need. [Sign up here if interested.](#)

Our garden has been able to access a hydrant in prior years with a simple valve, a letter, and minimal fee. Why are there so many changes that unexpectedly started last year?

- Last year, the Department of Water Management identified that though legal agreements, insurance, and certified RPZ units had always been required by city code, these requirements shall be implemented going forward.
- The legal municipal codes that have always been mandatory were more formally enforced in 2020.
- Increased attention to water access and policy brought more equitable rates to urban farms, now able to secure a seasonal rate for water, where previously, urban farms had been required to pay an expensive daily rate for hydrant use.
- DWM is committed to working with urban ag partners to support farms and gardens getting the right information and support during this transitional time.
- Throughout 2021, Urban Ag Partners will provide feedback to DWM from urban farms and community gardens. Each month during the season, at the request of Urban Ag Partners, DWM will provide a list of urban farms and community gardens that have applied for a temporary hydrant permit.
- Throughout 2021, Urban Ag Partners and philanthropic partners will make sure farms and gardens without appropriate resources are able to move forward with growing and food production. DWM will assist the Urban Ag and philanthropic partners with the temporary hydrant permitting process and requirements.

Our garden purchased a 2 inch RPZ unit, so that we could have enough pressure to water our very large community garden. When applying last year for our permit, there was only a ¾ inch RPZ option for certification. Why is this, and what can we do to assure we have enough water pressure to water our large space? We imagine this is challenging as well to larger, more productive urban farms.

- The size of the hose and the water pressure per cubic feet is reflected in the municipal code allowing for a ¾ inch. (This water pressure amount aligns with the allowed amount of water use allowed for urban farms and community gardens.)
- In some limited cases, gardens and farms who need the larger hoses are investigating ways to install permanent water facilities into their garden.
- One temporary solution is for gardens and farms to use the ¾ inch RPZ, and using adapters, connect to 2 inch hoses. (As stated above, at this time, the 2 inch unit RPZ is not legally accepted for a hydrant use permit.)

Our alderman has given us a letter that says we have permission to use the city land we are gardening/farming on. Are we good to go?

- While a letter from an alder is good to have, the city requires legal permission (example: rights of entry, certain environmental testing, legal agreement between city) for access to City owned land for gardening.
- Urban ag partners are working with city representatives to clarify the path for obtaining legal access to City owned land for urban farms/ community garden use.

Our garden is aware that there is an insurance requirement to access hydrant use, but we are not incorporated as an NFP. What can we do to acquire this insurance?

There are several ways to get insurance.

- Your landowner may have insurance on the land already, and it is sometimes possible with adjustments to work with this existing insurance to cover the water and parkway. Sign up for an info session mentioned above for further clarification.
- If you are required to get insurance separately from the landowner's insurance, and you are not incorporated as a legal non-profit, you will still need to get an ein number as a "social club organization" as a first step to be eligible for insurance. Cornell has a [detailed explanation of how to get that EIN number here](#). It shouldn't take too long (2-3 days) to get that EIN number.
- Once you have retrieved an EIN number for your group, you can contact your local U.S.L.I. agent, to help you fill out the application.

Our garden has discussed using water from a neighbor's house. Is this a viable option for water?

- There are several community gardens in Chicago who use water from a nearby house or business. Some gardens use a simple written informal arrangement, some gardens agree to pay a seasonal water fee to the neighbor or organization; others may feel more comfortable with a more formal legal agreement, but water from neighbors is an option.

We know that we need an RPZ unit, and that we need to get it tested to apply for a permit, but when we have called plumbers to do this work, often they don't return our calls. Can you make a recommendation for plumbers who do this kind of work?

- While we can't make recommendations for plumbers, we can let you know what to look for to identify plumbers who are properly certified with the City of Chicago, as well as have licensed cross-connection certification. Please refer to the Hydrant Use Permit Plumbers guide.

We are aware that there is support for the 2021 year to ensure community gardens and farms are able to access the water we need. Without support, we will not be able to gather the documents that we need, as we don't have the time to devote to this administration work. How do we access this support and what can we expect from this support?

- Urban Ag Partners, as well community garden leaders and urban farmers will provide input to assist with the DWM 2021 Temporary Hydrant Use Permit process. In addition, the Urban Ag Partners will be providing support (both monetary and navigational) through the year. [If you are interested in this support, please fill out the following form.](#) Support can be arranged as early as March of 2021; contact us early in the season to benefit from this support. *This opportunity would not be possible without the outstanding support of Margot Pritzker and Francia Harrington, co-founders of the Urban Ag Resource Navigator, a platform currently in formation.*

How do we measure our square footage of our growing space, to make sure that we are getting the right number? We use only a portion of our garden/farm for growing and watering, and want to make sure we are not charged for spaces we do not water?

- A site visit from a DWM water inspector will measure the square footage of your growing area (space between beds will be included.) A garden leader should be on site to confirm areas for measurement. If you are interested in measuring the square footage of your site to cross reference, there are apps available for measuring online maps of your garden. https://www.mapdevelopers.com/area_finder.php