



November 4, 2025

Ms. Beth Ganga, Policy & Planning Director
Michelle Long Spears, Commissioner District 2
DeKalb County Board of Commissioners
1300 Commerce Drive
Decatur, GA 30030

RE: Scope of Work for the Ability Garden Program at Legacy Park

Dear Ms. Ganga

Trellis has prepared a Scope of Work for the Commissioner's consideration for funding a year of programming for adults living with diagnosed disabilities at Trellis's Ability Garden at Legacy Park in Decatur. This programming is specific to the delivery of group therapeutic gardening sessions for one year. The purpose of this program is to improve health and wellness by reducing social isolation, providing equal access to gardening, horticulture education and fresh food access in a wheelchair-accessible space.

The total requested funding for one year is \$52,173 for delivering 93 groups sessions and serving an estimated 62 individuals.

On behalf of Trellis, I very much appreciate this potential funding opportunity. I'm available to schedule a phone call or meeting to discuss this scope of work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel S. Cochran". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Rachel" on the top line and "S. Cochran" on the line below it.

Rachel S Cochran, Co-Founder
Trellis Horticultural Therapy Alliance
rachel@trellishta.org
(404) 834-4660



Ability Garden at Legacy Park Program Scope of Work

prepared by

Trellis Horticultural Therapy Alliance
Decatur, GA
November 4, 2025

I. ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

Trellis's Mission: Trellis uses the power of gardening and nature to enrich the lives of people living with disabilities.

Organization Description Trellis Horticultural Therapy Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Decatur, Georgia and founded in 2017 by Rachel Cochran and Wendy Battaglia, both trained horticultural therapists. The founders saw a critical need to reduce the detrimental effects of social isolation on adults living with disability by connecting them to gardening and horticulture projects for mental and physical wellness. Trellis's group garden therapy programs are rooted in the professional practice of horticultural therapy that provide purposeful recreation, mental stimulation and social connection. Trellis fully believes that everyone should have equal access and opportunity to engage in recreational gardening, regardless of ability. Trellis is the only nonprofit organization in the Atlanta metro area dedicated to providing therapeutic gardening programs in an accessible garden for the disability community.

Programs and Direct Service Clients: Trellis operates the Ability Garden at Legacy Park, located at 500 South Columbia Drive, Decatur, GA 30030. Trellis's main operating location is housed at Nickeson Cottage adjacent to the Ability Garden. This space provides indoor programming space, a teaching kitchen and office space.

Trellis completed the design and construction of the Ability Garden and the Legacy Park Community Garden, in October 2024. The Ability Garden is a wheelchair-accessible teaching and demonstration garden consisting primarily of 3-ft high elevated raised beds. This approach makes gardening comfortable and successful for people using wheelchairs and other assistive devices. The community garden offers raised bed garden plots to the public for an annual membership fee and is also wheelchair accessible.

From 2019 through 2024, the Ability Garden program operated at Callanwolde Fine Arts Center. Trellis currently maintains greenhouse space at Callanwolde for growing plants and holding greenhouse growing sessions for Ability Garden program participants and volunteers.

The Ability Garden program delivers small group therapeutic gardening programs for up to six individuals plus their caregivers. In 2024, Trellis delivered 144 group sessions, serving 165 adults with disabilities. For 2025, Trellis expects to surpass this number to an estimated 180 adults and 156 group sessions. Trellis currently delivers an average of 13 group sessions per month and plans several community events throughout the year. The new garden at Legacy Park has allowed Trellis to serve more clients and expand its veteran's program. The populations served at the Ability Garden at Legacy Park include



adults living with neurological impairment due to stroke, brain and spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, and veterans diagnosed with mental health disorders, traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress.

Population Demographics: 100% of the people Trellis serves are diagnosed with a medical disability. Age range: 24 to 78; Race/Ethnicity: 53% Black, 43% White, 4% Hispanic. County of residence: 56% Dekalb, 35% Fulton; 6% Gwinnett; 3% other metro Atlanta counties.

Ability Garden Programs Fees: The cost of disability can be staggering – from job loss, reduced income, and increased medical costs. For this reason, Trellis's Ability Garden programs are offered at no cost to people with diagnosed disability. Through this Scope of Work, the funds requested will be used to offset program costs so that participants can attend at no cost.

Ability Garden Program Goals:

- Increased access to and participation in supported recreational opportunities
- Increased motivation for participants to leave their homes, thereby reducing social isolation
- Increased sense of purpose and interest in gardening education
- Increased skills and knowledge in growing, harvesting and cooking fresh garden-grown food.

Program Benefits: Gardening provides access to fresh food and physical, mental, and emotional benefits. Program participants who are at risk for chronic isolation and poor health outcomes experience fun and fulfillment that encourages movement, reduces stress and fosters critical social connections. Trellis holds two major fundraising events each year. The annual Spring-thyme celebration and plant sale at Legacy Park, and Holiday Wreath Sale fundraiser and wreath-making workshops. These events provide additional social opportunities for the people Trellis serves and helps to raise awareness of Trellis and its mission within the local Decatur community.

Recruitment of Program Participants: Interested participants learn of the Ability Garden programs through social media posts, the Trellis website, and through other rehabilitation service organizations including the Shepherd Center, Emory Rehab Hospital and Emory Brain Health Center. Interested participants complete an online intake application to ensure that they meet the disability requirements of the program. If the client meets the requirements, they will be invited to attend one of several different group sessions depending on their disability.

Client Organizations and Community Partnerships

Trellis values collaboration and cross-sector partnerships. Client organizations that attend the Ability Garden are the **Veteran's Affairs** Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center for veterans receiving mental health services, **Shepherd Center's SHARE Military Initiative**, and **Learning Services of Lilburn** that provides a group residence for men with traumatic brain injury.



The **Atlanta Botanical Garden** serves as an education partner with Trellis helping to co-lead an 8-week education series called Spring into Gardening for Trellis's participants with spinal cord injury. The Ability Garden at Legacy Park serves as a designated site for **Agnes Scott College's** Scotties Serves volunteer program, and Trellis oversees student practicum experiences for Agnes Scott's mental health counseling graduate program and undergrads majoring in environmental sustainability and psychology. Trellis also provides mentorship to students and professionals through its horticultural therapy internship program.

Trellis Staff Members & Board of Directors

Trellis Staff: Trellis has four part-time staff members, all trained horticultural therapists, which are responsible for the planning, delivery, and evaluation of the Ability Garden's group sessions. In addition to programming, Trellis staff members are responsible for new client and partnership development, program marketing, client outreach and communication, client data tracking and program evaluation. A description of each staff member's qualifications and responsibilities is provided below.

Wendy Battaglia, Co-Founder and Executive Director – Ms. Battaglia is a trained horticultural therapist, and she manages Trellis's programs for the brain and spinal cord injury community. As Executive Director, she is also responsible for fundraising, new program and partnership development, social media communications, and special events. Ms. Battaglia has been instrumental in developing Trellis's partnerships with the Shepherd Center's SHARE Military Initiative and former patients living in the community.

Rachel Cochran, Co-Founder, Manager of Grants and Program Evaluation – Ms. Cochran is a trained horticultural therapist, and she is responsible for grant financial management, reporting, designing feedback surveys, and program data tracking. Ms. Cochran also supports program planning efforts at the garden level and directs the care and management of the Ability Garden at Legacy Park.

Shelly Roberts, Program Director & Dekalb County Master Gardener: Ms. Roberts is responsible for Ability Garden program delivery and plans and leads the veterans' sessions with the VA and Shepherd Center. She also plans and manages Trellis's annual spring plant sale fundraiser.

Christy Righter, Program and Volunteer Coordinator: Ms. Righter is responsible for the coordination of volunteers that maintain the Ability Garden space and support programming. Ms. Righter is also responsible for planning group sessions, procuring supplies and supporting the regular care and maintenance of the Ability Garden. Prior to working with Trellis, she worked as a registered nurse.

Trellis Board of Directors

Mr. Morgan Ownbey, Associate Counsel (Board Chair)
Chambliss, Bahner & Stophel, P.C.

Ms. Christine Trotman, Executive Assistant (Board Secretary)
University of Pittsburgh, Board & Public Relations



Ms. Ashley Wiley, Marketing Manager
Food Well Alliance, Atlanta, GA

Mr. Russell Hopson, Medical Sales Representative
Syneos Health Group, Atlanta, GA

Mr. Leroy Thompson, Graduate Student & Trellis Participant
Representative

Mr. Pete Anziano, Disability Board Advisor
Spinal Cord Injury Peer Support Manager, Shepherd Center, Atlanta, GA



II. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED SERVICES

Description of Proposed Services: This Scope of Work is for the planning and delivery of eight group garden therapy sessions per month for a total of 93 programs per year. Group sessions will accommodate up to six adults plus a caregiver. Session duration is 1.5 hours. Programming will be held at the Ability Garden at Legacy Park.

Below is a list of the group sessions for which funding is requested:

- **Garden Connections:** Designed for stroke survivors from the local community (2 sessions/month; 24 sessions/year)
- **Veterans Healing Garden:** Designed veterans receiving mental health services from the Veterans Administration that reside in the local community (4 sessions/month 45 sessions/year, adjusted for 3 session breaks)
- **Art in Nature:** Designed for people living in the local community and diagnosed with a spinal cord injury or other neurological condition that limits mobility. Sessions focus on plants and nature for creative expression. (2 sessions/month; 24 sessions per year)

Ability Garden sessions not included in this funding request are 1) Gather & Grow program specific to adults with spinal cord injury that meets 4 times per month. This group session is currently funded by a private foundation. 2) The monthly Shepherd Center's SHARE military initiative is not included as approximately half of the participants reside outside of Georgia.

Description of Group Sessions: Sessions are led by two staff horticultural therapists, as well as a trained volunteer to assist participants. Safety of Trellis's participants is the highest priority. Sessions are held out in the garden or indoors for 12 months of the year. Sessions focus on recreation with a purpose for improved wellness and life enrichment. Sessions begin with an introduction of the planned activity, completing the activity, and social time for conversation and sharing while enjoying a garden-inspired snack.

Common goals for participants include increased social connections, enhanced self-esteem, increased independence and self-efficacy, and reduced caregiver strain. Trellis strives to create an environment focused on learning, curiosity, exploring what plants have to offer in terms of sensory stimulation, beauty, food, and their purpose in the natural world.

Session topics include the following:

- Growing flowers, fruit, herbs and vegetables throughout the year
- Organic gardening techniques
- Healthy cooking from the garden
- Native plant education
- Caring for birds in winter
- Botanical and nature-inspired art projects
- Canning and preserving garden produce
- Mindfulness practices for relaxation and stress reduction
- Environmental stewardship practices, such as composting and recycling



An example session is growing flowers from seeds, caring for the seedlings, planting the flowers in the raised bed garden, harvesting the flowers, pressing the flowers, and making a pressed flower note card or framed art piece. Through this process, participants become the caregivers of their plants, learn new skills, use creative expression, and have the opportunity give a hand-made gift to a loved one. Group session topics are guided by the seasonal gardening calendar.

Estimated Number of Individuals Served per Year: It is estimated that from the eight programs listed above, the Ability Garden will serve approximately 50 unique individuals plus 12 caregivers.

Program Evaluation Plan: The purpose of the Ability Garden program is to make a positive impact on the lives of those Trellis serves. Trellis has in place a program evaluation plan that strives to measure success as well as areas for improvement and that allows for gaining a better understanding of how best to meet the needs of the people it serves. Program evaluation consists of 1) Baseline and demographic data collected from the participant intake form, 2) Mid-year feedback survey to obtain insight into how connecting with plants, nature and other group members have affected behaviors, attitudes, mood and quality of life. 3) An end of the year focus group or focused interviews for selected participants is also conducted to probe deeper into longer-term outcomes.

The following metrics will be collected:

direct clients served
group sessions delivered
volunteers and interns engaged
volunteer and internship hours logged
special social events held such as veterans' community day, annual plant sale, and volunteer opportunities for Ability Garden participants.

Below is a sampling of qualitative responses that were collected from the Veterans Healing Garden sessions in response to the question "What did you like most about the group sessions?"

- "Learning how to grow organic food so I can grow it myself at home and nourish my family without pesticides."
- "I love learning new gardening skills and doing hands-on in the dirt work."
- "Learning the art of growing veggies and being empowered to feed myself."
- "I never really grew anything from a seed and watched it grow or anything like that. And so that's another reason why I like the sessions, just learning about how to do that. Different growing seasons, temperatures, different fruits, different vegetables, and things like that, so I'm still learning."



Budget Justification

The delivery of 93 sessions over 12 months is based on a session rate of \$450 per session. The level of effort to deliver each session requires 10 hours of professional labor billed at a rate of \$45/hr. for a total labor cost of \$41,850. This effort includes accomplishing the following tasks for each session:

- Session planning & supply procurement (2 hours)
- Session set up, delivery, and breakdown for two staff members (5 hours)
- Program monitoring (data tracking of new applications and attendance data (1 hour)
- Program evaluation (designing & administering feedback surveys, coordinating and leading focus groups (1 hour)
- Communication, social media marketing and session reminders to registered participants (1 hour)

Total Effort – 10 hours

Materials & supplies are based on a cost of \$60 per session, or \$10 per person for a group of six people. Basic materials and supplies include gardening supplies, such as potting soil, raised bed garden soil, compost, plants, seeds, fertilizer, and plant supports. Other supplies include plant pots, vases, floral design supplies, cooking supplies, pantry items for cooking, and art supplies. The total proposed cost of materials and supplies for 12 months of programs is \$60 for 93 group session or \$5,580.

The proposed direct cost for 93 sessions over 12 months is \$47,430. An indirect cost of 10 percent is applied to cover general administrative costs for a total annual proposed cost of \$52,173.



Trellis Horticultural Therapy Alliance

Ability Garden at Legacy Park Program

prepared November 4, 2025

Program Services	Description
8 program sessions per month for 12 months	93 Sessions
Maximum number of participants per session	6 Participants
Session length	90 minutes
Direct Program Costs	Amount
Cost per Session	\$450
Materials & Supplies per Session	\$60
Subtotal Cost per Session	\$510
Number of Session per Year	93
Total Cost per Year	\$47,430
10% Indirect Costs	\$4,743
TOTAL ANNUAL PROGRAM COST	\$52,173

Budget Notes: The annual program budget of \$ 52,173 will cover costs for the planning and delivery of 96 sessions/year. The estimated session cost is based on 10 hours of professional labor per session at a rate of \$45/hr plus \$60 in materials & supplies. Material & supplies are based on a cost of \$10 per participant for 6 participants. The estimated contractual period of service is one year beginning February 1, 2026. As the associated costs are predominantly fixed costs associated with each session, cost reimbursement will be sought on the total cost per session basis of \$510.00.