

Descriptions of Volunteer Positions

In larger gardens, these committee leaders work together as a garden committee. They meet several times during the growing season to make plans and decisions between the all-gardener meetings in spring (Spring Registration) and in fall at some gardens. Large decisions like changes in garden policy or plans to expand or build at the garden are made democratically by discussions and voting at the all-gardener meetings.

Registrar

The registrar holds the waiting list for people who want plots, runs Spring Registration, and assigns plots. S/he takes calls from people who would like plots at the garden. Her/his phone number and email are printed in CAC publicity about the gardens, so that new gardeners will know who to call for the garden that is nearest to them. The Registrar also coordinates the activities that occur on Registration Day. At large gardens, a committee shares the work of the Registrar.

- ❑ Beginning in winter, keep a list of each person who wants a plot, with their contact information and the date they called.
- ❑ CAC asks that most new gardeners begin with ½ plot (200 square feet) their first year so that they can learn and keep up with their weeds. If new people are very experienced, they might start with more space if it is available.
- ❑ When a date for Spring Registration is set, contact each person on the waiting list by phone call or a post card, to let them know to come to sign up for a plot, meet other gardeners, and learn how the garden works.
- ❑ Help the Coordinator and Treasurer lead Spring Registration. If space is tight, encourage gardeners to request smaller plots so that all can fit. Help gardeners fill out their registration forms and collect these at the end.
- ❑ After Spring Registration, make up a map of the whole garden, assigning plots to as many gardeners as possible. If there are extra plots, they can be assigned to gardeners who want multiple plots. Ask gardeners to pay for as much space as they want while warning them that the top priority is giving some space to everyone who wants it. Then the treasurer can mail refund checks if space runs out, rather than having to track down people to pay again if it turns out that extra space is available.
- ❑ Most gardens have a system for giving out plots that gives preference to returning gardeners, people who live nearby, people who come to Spring Registration, and people who are on the waiting list. See Quann Plot Assignment Criteria for a strategy that gardeners developed to be fair to all. You might need to meet with interested gardeners as a Registration Committee to develop a policy for plot assignment at your garden.
- ❑ Attend Opening Day, bringing the map of the garden to use to lay out the plots. Post the map on the bulletin board so that all gardeners can see where their plot is.
- ❑ After Spring Registration is over, keep a waiting list of people who want plots (or want another plot). Fit new gardeners in when plots become available.
- ❑ Give copies of the garden map to the Coordinator, the Monitor, and CAC.

Monitor

Soon after the Last Planting Date, check all the plots to make sure that gardeners have begun working. If any are not being used, notify the Registrar to reassign them. Contact the person who hasn't planted to let them know that their plot has been reassigned. Most gardens use this system because they have found that gardeners who do not plant by the 'Last Planting Date' rarely succeed with their garden plot. If the plot can be reassigned quickly in early summer, someone else will be able to use it for the season. Otherwise, the plot will most likely be weedy throughout the season, since it is hard to find a gardener to take on a plot in midsummer or later.

- ❑ Several more times during the summer, check the plots to make sure that they are being used. Some gardens find that monitoring during the planned workdays works well. Each garden has their own rules for plot maintenance, but tall weeds are a sign that the gardener needs help. Call the gardener to see whether they need help or want to give up their plot.
- ❑ If they want help, try to pair them with an experienced gardener who can help. Give them a deadline for having the plot tidy.
- ❑ If they do not want the plot, ask the Registrar to reassign it.
- ❑ If a weedy plot is not tidy by the deadline, ask the Registrar to reassign it.
- ❑ CAC staff can help if there is conflict about monitoring; often it's easier for staff to play the role of enforcer. Monitoring can be divisive, since keeping your plot tidy means different things to different people. A friendly approach by the Monitor, as well as clear expectations and deadlines can go a long way. We all want the gardens to be a place to build community, so feel free to call for a little help with mediating.

Coordinator

The coordinator gathers the gardeners together for events, workdays, and meetings, encouraging all to share in the work and decision-making of the garden. S/he also works to get other gardeners involved, recruiting people to take on tasks and responsibilities so that the garden and gardeners are cared for well. At some gardens, there are two people who co-coordinate. At the large gardens, there are committees of gardeners who take on the role of coordination, meeting monthly during the growing season.

- ❑ Call together garden volunteers in late winter to plan Spring Registration, set Opening Day and other dates on your Garden Calendar, plan for any needed tilling or water system preparation needed, and decide if any major improvements will happen this season.
- ❑ Take notes at planning meetings and distribute to volunteers involved in planning.
- ❑ Coordinate preparation of Welcome Packet.
- ❑ Plan for translation when needed so that non-English speaking people can garden and be a part of the garden leadership. Contact CAC for help with this.
- ❑ Work with the Treasurer to budget for the season and discuss major expenses and purchases.
- ❑ Plan for regular or as-needed workdays, asking a different gardener to lead each one. These can be a time for volunteers to do plot monitoring as a group.

- ❑ At smaller gardens the coordinators take care of communications through email listserves, mailings, or phone calls.
- ❑ Conflict resolution is occasionally part of the coordinators' work.
- ❑ If space is available at the garden or if you want to reach out to more neighbors to get involved, some simple publicity can be done by the Coordinator(s) and the Registrar.
- ❑ Call together garden volunteers as needed during the summer to plan workdays, potlucks, workshops, or any other events you want.
- ❑ In late summer, let gardeners know if their plots need to be cleared, and plan for a Closing Workday to get things tidy for winter.
- ❑ Be a point of contact for garden neighbors and the outside world in general.
- ❑ Set a Last Planting Date, by which gardeners need to have planted their plots. Monitors will check the plots then, and several more times through the summer, to make sure that plots are being used.
- ❑ Delegate! Recruit gardeners to take on the small but important tasks of running the garden rather than trying to do it all yourself. Encourage as many gardeners as possible to get involved so that all can share in the tasks and decisions of the garden. Instill a spirit of "it's OUR garden" and always be on the lookout for new volunteers.
- ❑ Make policy decisions, with input from other Garden Leaders, and check out major changes with all gardeners at Spring Registration.
- ❑ Support gardeners with disabilities, and discuss any needed raised beds or other accommodations with CAC, who can help.
- ❑ Send in news of your garden to CAC for publication in the spring, summer, and fall issues of CAC Community Garden News.
- ❑ Keep a record of your garden's procedures in writing, so that coordinators that come after you will have a place to start.
- ❑ Communications Leader The communications person makes sure gardeners are in touch through meetings, phone calls, mail and email, and with help of interpreters when needed.
- ❑ Send postcards announcing garden events, or make phone calls if this will work better.
- ❑ Arrange for translation so that all gardeners can participate in activities and management of the garden. CAC can help.
- ❑ If needed, find a volunteer to create a listserve for the gardeners who use email.
- ❑ Find a volunteer to keep a gardener list with phone, address, and email contact information for gardeners.

Outreach

The outreach volunteer makes sure that people in the neighborhood know about the garden and feel welcome to participate. At large gardens, this is sometimes done by a committee of several people. Recruitment strategies that have worked well at Madison community gardens:

- ❑ Flyers and posters (post at businesses, churches, libraries, apartment complexes, community agencies)
- ❑ Articles in newsletters & newspapers put out by neighborhood associations and neighborhood centers
- ❑ Radio spots – announcements or interviews, in English, Hmong, and Spanish (WORT radio has programs in Hmong and Spanish, and Radio La Movida is Spanish broadcasting).
- ❑ Speakers at neighborhood meetings
- ❑ Hold informational meetings
- ❑ Word of mouth
- ❑ Door-to-door, talking with neighbors, leaving flyers (it's good to go in pairs, and bilingual people will be an asset).

Treasurer

The treasurer collects garden fees and deposits them in garden bank account, pays bills, authorizes spending in consultation with other gardeners, and sometimes manages grants that the garden receives. The treasurer will also work with other garden volunteers to budget for the season and then approve expenses. At some gardens, there are two treasurers. It's a good idea to have several co-signers on the bank account for convenience. A few CAC gardens do not have treasurers and CAC collects plot fees at those sites.

Grounds Leader

- ❑ Find volunteers to lead each workday. Talk with them in advance to make sure that you have materials and tools that you need. It's especially important to have one or several people leading the two big workdays: Opening Day and Closing Day.
- ❑ Help organize any improvements to the garden like signs, bulletin boards, fences, water system improvements, etc.
- ❑ Keep a to-do list of things that you notice or other gardeners suggest. When workdays happen, share this list with the leaders so that they know what the top priorities are. Keeping common areas like tool sheds, compost piles, and paths in good condition is a big part of the job. If a plot is abandoned, the Monitor will let you know and you can ask a volunteer to mow the plot to prepare it for a new gardener or keep it under control until the end of the season.
- ❑ Keep a list of requested tools or supplies, ask a volunteer to shop for these things when needed.
- ❑ Some gardens also have a Water Committee that takes care of leaky hoses, broken faucets, etc.

- ❑ Arrange for compost delivery, through calling CAC when your supply is low.
- ❑ Social / Education Leader The social committee leader organizes and publicizes potlucks and other parties at the garden. They can also set up educational workshops (CAC can help) and connect new and experienced gardeners with a buddy program.
- ❑ In spring, choose a date with garden leaders for at least one fun garden event – a potluck or other gathering. Some gardens hold a welcoming event early in the season, others wait until people have food to harvest and share. Some gardens include musical performances at their events.
- ❑ Educational workshops that have been popular include basic organic gardening, crafts (Hmong gardening baskets), cooking and preserving, extending the season for fall harvest, organic pest control, and gardening tips taught by gardeners of various ethnicities. CAC can help set any of these up, and recommend great teachers in Madison who can come to your garden to teach. All are welcome to register for Troy Garden’s excellent line-up of workshops: www.troygardens.org or 240-0409.
- ❑ You can offer new gardeners assistance by teaming them up with experienced gardeners. It’s a good idea to have a spring event at the garden for those participating. That way they can meet soon after Spring Registration, since garden design and initial planting can be intimidating for new gardeners.

Translation

Bilingual gardeners are important as interpreters during events, liaisons through the season, and with translating signs, mailings, etc.

- ❑ If you are bilingual in Spanish, Hmong, Russian, or Khmer, please consider using your skill to help at your garden. Lots of Madison gardeners do not speak English, others don’t speak Lots of Madison gardeners do not speak English, others don’t speak Hmong or Spanish! Our goal is to make it easy for all participate equally in their garden’s management.

Security

The security leader works on strategies to minimize theft and vandalism.