

REPORTING AND EVALUATION

Revised 11-01

If evaluation is thought of as too much paperwork, then there is no sense in doing it at all. However, evaluation is the chief tool of control, and the manager who seeks to control and direct the organization to better and more significant goals, needs to use this tool. Many volunteer organizations overlook this tool because they are too busy doing to think of planning. When plans are made and implemented through the setting of concrete goals, job assignments, and a lot of volunteer work, it only makes sense to evaluate; that is, find out if anything happened and if it did, had it been planned to happen.

The evaluation procedure needs to be planned at the beginning, when the goals are set, so that data can be gathered while the program is in action. If the goal is to put out \$100,000 worth of horticultural information to the public, then the volunteers need an efficient and relatively easy system to gather the data while they are giving out the information. If the volunteers are a part of the planning and goal setting, the evaluation will make sense and they will not feel as though are being asked to do meaningless and boring paperwork. Goals are not always attached to large numbers. Perhaps your Master Gardeners would like to serve a previously neglected segment of the community. For example, the goal might be to provide the opportunity for horticultural therapy to the members of a halfway house or to start three 4-H garden clubs.

Evaluation not only reveals the success of the program, it furnishes evidence that the program is valuable. In explaining the program to the paid staff, the community, or the volunteers, hard figures that reveal the amount of money saved by the citizens, the number of people seeking and receiving service, or the special population served, present a convincing case for continuation and support. Future planning can benefit greatly from evaluation of previous programs, too.

Evaluation should be meaningful. Measure the ways your goals were achieved. Evaluations must be timely. Some events need to have rapid reporting back, and others should be assessed after a given time (i.e., 6-12 months).

The Master Gardener program has proven beneficial to Extension Service offices again and again, and good management practices have been an important factor. If volunteers are useful employees, it is only logical that they be treated as valuable people by paying attention not only to them and to their needs, but also to the quality of work that they are asked to perform.

ANNUAL REPORT

Every county needs to complete an annual report of activities. This report should be completed at the end of each calendar year and returned to the Statewide Master Gardener Coordinator by the end of the year. It should be filled out by a Master Gardener and then reviewed and signed by the county agent. The report form follows.

County Annual Master Gardener Report

Year _____

1. How many Master Gardener volunteers were trained in your county last year?
_____ Male _____ Female _____ White _____ Black
_____ Hispanic _____ Others

How many total Master Gardeners (newly trained plus current)
_____ Male _____ Female _____ White _____ Black
_____ Hispanic _____ Others

2. How many volunteers have been in the program for 5-9 years? _____
10 or more years? _____

3. How many hours were reported for volunteer service-work hours? _____

4. How many hours were reported for learning hours _____

5. How much do you charge for training? _____

6. Do you have annual dues, and if so, how much? _____

7. What do you use your funds for in the county, and how are these decisions made?

8. Please tell about the 2 or 3 most successful projects for Master Gardeners in your county? How long have you had these projects? How many volunteers involved? How many clients served? Continue on the back or attach a separate page to do this. (Please attach a list of all your projects, as well.) _____

9. Please fill out and return the Master Gardener County Contact Information Release Form with this report. Each County may have two county contacts. At least one contact should have an email address.

Preparer's Signature _____ Date _____

County Agent's Signature _____ Date _____