

For: FSA Employees

People’s Garden Initiative (PGI) Time and Attendance Policies

Approved by: Administrator



1 Overview

A Background

The Secretary announced PGI in February 2009, and challenged USDA employees, as well as non-USDA organizations across the Nation, to create their own People’s Garden. The Secretary reaffirmed this message to all employees in July 2009.

On September 9, 2009, the FSA Administrator, NRCS Chief, and RD Under Secretary issued a joint memorandum supporting the Secretary’s message about PGI that encouraged employees from the respective Agencies to cooperate toward PGI goals and gave examples of PGI activities. See Exhibit 1.

A memorandum (Exhibit 2) was sent from DAFO to all SED’s on September 21, 2009, providing the following:

- additional details on PGI
- naming State PGI point-of-contacts (POC’s)
- guidance on using existing operating expense funds for PGI
- brief summary on employee time and attendance.

Notice CM-702 was issued in June 2012 to provide additional guidance on PGI time and attendance policies. The Secretary and Administrator continue to support this valuable initiative.

Disposal Date	Distribution
October 1, 2015	All FSA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices

Notice CM-760

1 Overview (Continued)

B Purpose

This notice provides the following:

- information about PGI
- updated policy about time and attendance for FSA employees involved in the Secretary's PGI.

2 Contact

A National Office Employees and State Office PGI POC's

If there are questions about this notice, contact Jim Michaels, FSA coordinator for the Secretary's PGI, by either of the following:

- e-mail to james.michaels@wdc.usda.gov
- telephone at 202-690-0794.

B All Other State Office Employees and County Offices

If there are questions about this notice, contact your State Office PGI POC.

3 Policy

A PGI Voluntary Efforts

Voluntary efforts supporting PGI are encouraged. Volunteer hours supporting PGI shall be completed outside the employee's regular tour of duty, during normal lunch hours, or during annual leave.

B Working on PGI Within Position Description

If work to further PGI aligns directly with an employee's position description, the employee may continue with PGI work as usual on regular time with supervisor awareness and approval.

3 Policy (Continued)

C Working on PGI Outside Position Description

If an employee's supervisor determines that PGI activities do **not** directly fit within an employee's position description, the following provisions apply.

- Employees may use up to 40 hours of regular time per FY to work on PGI with prior approval from their supervisor.
- Additional regular time or administrative leave hours to work on PGI may be granted at the discretion of the Administrator, SED, or delegated representative.
- Regular time or administrative leave hours to work on PGI **must** be completed within each employee's regular tour of duty.

Note: These hours supplement the volunteer hours employees contribute and will assist in sustaining the PGI gardens over time.

D Conflicts With Other Responsibilities

Work towards PGI may **not** interfere with an employee's duties and responsibilities provided in their position description.

E Credit and Compensatory Time for PGI

Credit or compensatory time may **not** be earned for PGI activities.

Notice CM-760

4 Documentation

A Reporting PGI Gardens

All gardens for which PGI hours are completed **must** be listed in the USDA PGI database available at

http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=PEOPLES_GARDEN. Under the left hand column, CLICK “**Join Us**”. On the Join the Movement Screen, at the bottom of the “These Gardens Are Making a Big Impact in Their Community” box, CLICK “**USDA employees enter here**”. Employees may enter or edit PGI gardens and request signs in the database using their eAuthentication ID.

Gardens may **also** be added to the PGI database by private individuals or organizations, according to the following.

Note: The web site is currently under construction and is temporarily unavailable. A follow up notice will be issued notifying States and counties when the web site is back online.

Step	Action
1	Submit application online at http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=PEOPLES_GARDEN by clicking “ Join Us ” in the left hand column.
2	Request an eAuthentication ID from USDA. Note: Instructions on requesting an eAuthentication ID will be e-mailed to the applicant after the application is approved.
3	Enter the garden in the database.

B Recording PGI Hours

Using the WebTA Activity Reporting System, employees shall record PGI hours by selecting program code “**NP**” and the activity code “**Garden**”.

Note: If there are problems using these codes in WebTA, contact Mitzi Lankford by either of the following:

- e-mail to mitzi.lankford@wdc.usda.gov
- telephone at 202-720-0510.

Notice CM-760

5 Funding Availability

A Existing Allotments

No additional funding has been provided in FY 2014 allotments to cover purchases that may be made for PGI supplies or services. The cost for purchases **must** be covered within existing allotments.

B BOC's

See 98-FI, Exhibit 27 for all BOC's. An appropriate BOC should be selected for any purchases made relative to this initiative. For example, the purchase of seeds by the Maryland State Office would be coded to the line of accounting "08402484000000", BOC "2620". The same purchases by a County Office employee in St. Mary's County, Maryland, would be coded to the line of accounting "08724037000000", BOC "2620". BOC 2620 is for scientific and experimental supplies.

6 Action

A National and State Office Action

National and State Offices shall implement the provisions of this notice.

State Offices shall report State POC to Jim Michaels according to subparagraph 2 A by **April 1, 2015**.

B County Office Action

County Offices shall implement the provisions of this notice.

Employee PGI Memorandum

Following is the PGI memorandum sent to all employees.

Growing Healthy Food, People and Communities



SEP 09 2009

Dear FSA, NRCS, and RD Employees:

We would like to encourage all of you to join together in support of the Secretary's People's Garden Initiative. The Secretary inaugurated the People's Garden on President Lincoln's Birthday in February, and challenged USDA employees, as well as non-USDA organizations across the Nation to create their own People's Gardens. He reaffirmed this message to all employees on July 17, 2009. If you have not done so, please visit the People's Garden website at www.usda.gov/peoplesgarden and view his videotaped message.

The People's Garden at National Headquarters in Washington, DC was designed to provide a sampling of USDA's efforts throughout the world as well as teach others how to nurture, maintain, and protect a healthy landscape. However, the initiative does not stop there. The goal is for USDA facilities worldwide to install People's Gardens at the local offices. Because many offices throughout the country are USDA Service Centers, we encourage employees from agencies co-located together to collaborate on a garden that best suits the location.

There are many options for developing gardens. Some possibilities include:

- Traditional gardens with fruits, vegetables, herbs, etc.
- Crop or conservation practice demonstration gardens
- Organic gardens
- Native plantings
- Rain gardens or roof gardens
- Bioswales (landscaping to remove silt and pollutants)
- Tree plantings to encourage carbon sequestration
- Children's gardens
- Pollinator or butterfly gardens
- Other educational gardens

Not all locations will be suited to have a garden, so other options include:

- Volunteering at a community garden or in crop "gleaning" efforts
- Helping start a garden at a local school or community center
- Other creative ideas that meet the purposes of the initiative

Note: Activities on leased land must have landlord permission. All food grown must be donated to a local food bank, soup kitchen, or other non-profit organization. Donations are covered by the Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act (<http://www.usda.gov/news/pubs/gleaning/appc.htm>).

"USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender."
To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.,
Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800)795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Employee PGI Memorandum (Continued)

FSA, NRCS, and RD Employees

2

The goals of the People’s Garden Initiative align well with the missions of our agencies, and we believe that FSA, NRCS, and RD employees uniting in support of the Initiative will make a marked impact in rural and urban communities across the country. The impressive work you do in USDA offices nationwide already makes a difference; your efforts toward this initiative will only increase the awareness and scope of the work you are already doing. If you volunteer your time towards this initiative, you will also help support the President’s community service initiative, United We Serve. Please share your success stories with your agency Point of Contact listed below so they can be included in the People’s Garden Website. Please participate and get involved with this exciting Initiative.

Agency points of contact:

Katina Hanson, FSA
202.720.0062

Julie Grogan-Brown, NRCS
202.720.1163

Stacey Brayboy, RD
202.720.1522

Sincerely,



Dallas Tonsager, Under Secretary
Rural Development



Jonathan Coppess, Administrator
Farm Service Agency



Dave White, Chief
Natural Resources Conservation Service



SED PGI Memorandum Sent to SED's

Following is the PGI memorandum sent to SED's.

TO: State Executive Directors

FROM: Karis T. Gutter *Karis T. Gutter* SEP 21 2009
Deputy Administrator for Field Operations

SUBJECT: People's Garden Initiative: Identifying State Points of Contact (POC)

A memorandum from the Administrator, NRCS Chief and RD Under Secretary was sent to all employees on September 11, 2009, regarding the Secretary's People's Garden Initiative (Initiative). To support the initiative, SEDs shall identify at least one FSA State Office POC for the Initiative. The State POC will provide advice to employees who are volunteering for the Initiative in your State, and track and report Initiative activities and donations to the FSA National POC, Katina Hanson. The State POC will also provide advance notice to the FSA National POC about upcoming events related to the Initiative, including harvest dates, what is being harvested, harvest location, and pictures. The State POC may also coordinate requests for seed donations through the National POC.

No additional funding has been provided for this Initiative. The SED shall provide guidance through the State POC to employees on the use of existing State and County Office operating expense funds for the Initiative for services or supplies that are not provided through donation. The State POC may also provide suggestions for opportunities for partnering with other USDA agencies and outside organizations such as Botanic Gardens, AmeriCorps, 4H, FFA and Master Gardeners. Secretary Vilsack has established a department-wide USDA volunteer program as well as guidelines to facilitate it under SM1059-001. This program is aimed to encourage USDA employees to volunteer with the People's Garden Initiative.

The Initiative is mainly a voluntary program. However, within existing workload priorities, SEDs are authorized to permit the use of regular time or administrative leave for employee activities deemed central to the FSA mission. In areas where FSA is collocated with NRCS, every effort should be made to keep consistent policies with NRCS on time and attendance related to maintenance of onsite People's Gardens.

Normal ethics rules and regulations shall be followed with regard to the Initiative.

For more information about the People's Garden Initiative, please visit www.usda.gov/peoplesgarden or contact the National Office Point of Contact, Katina Hanson by email at Katina.Hanson@wdc.usda.gov or by phone at (202) 720-0062.