

# Default Report

*MG Volunteer Hours*

March 29, 2018 10:22 AM PDT

## Q2 - What county or region are you reporting for?

County	Your Name
Polk	Pam Scharf
Benton & Linn	Brooke Edmunds
Union	Cindy Frick
Josephine	Terry Ruitter
metro	Weston
Josephine	Terry Ruitter
Metro	Jordis Yost
Polk	Neil Bell
Curry	Scott Thiemann
Baker	Mindy Sherrieb
douglas	Steve Renquist
Columbia	Chip Bubl
Marion	Neil Bell
Lincoln	Liz Olsen97
Yamhill	Heather Stoven
Coos	Samantha Clayburn
Hood River	Rachel Suits
Wasco	Michelle Sager
Central Oregon	Amy Jo Detweiler
Klamath	Nicole Sanchez

Jackson

Jane Moyer

Lane

Jeff Choate

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Q3 - What is the minimum volunteer service hour requirement for MG trainees in your county or region?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Plant Clinic Hours	0.00	46.00	22.26	12.15	147.58	23
2	Other Hours	0.00	60.00	32.61	13.07	170.85	23

## Q4 - During the growing season, how often do you keep your plant clinic desks staffed?

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Tuesday and Thursday mornings - 9 a.m. - 12 noon, year round. Desk is in the Extension Office.

We try to staff the Extension office plant clinic year round, but realistically don't have regular MG staffing from Nov-Feb. During the growing season we do not have a set schedule but aim for an AM & PM shift daily. The clinic desk is usually staffed 80-90% of the work week.

10 hours a week (in 2017)

Four days (Monday-Thursday) 9:00-3:00 and Saturday Growers Market 9:00-1:00

3 clinics, M-F, business hours (more or less) = 6 shifts per business day

Four days a week (Monday-Thursday), 9:00-3:00, and Saturday Growers Market, 9:00-1:00.

Phones are staffed with volunteers 12 months in a year...two offices are 9 am to noon and one is 10 am to 2 pm. Metro Program also staffs 10-12 farmers' market clinics one day per weekend May - October. Both phone clinics and market clinics count in the 28 hrs. required as 'Program support'.

The office plant clinic operates Tuesday and Thursday, 9am to 12pm

once per week on Weds from 10-2.

Once a week for 4 hours. Sometimes more as needed. (last year - one person)

From April through October we have the MG clinic desk staffed Monday-Friday 12:30pm-4pm. March and November Mon-Wed-Fri 12:30pm-4pm.

Most of our plant clinic interactions are at Farmer's markets and other events. I take care of the bulk of the calls that come into the office.

The office plant clinic is open Monday through Friday, 9am through 5pm. 2 shifts of 4 hours each per day. April through September at a minimum.

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday 9am to noon April through end of October November thru March Adopt A Week flexible schedule

During business days when possible. We have flexible desk clinic hours based on when we are able to get volunteers. The desk clinic in the office is staffed most business days during the growing season, but not all - Fridays can be an issue to staff.

Our plant clinic at the office is staffed twice a week (Mondays and Thursdays) from 9am to 12pm (sometimes later if there is a lot of work to get through). We have a plant clinic table every Wednesday at a local Farmers Market in Coos Bay from 9 to 2 as well as once a month at another Farmers Market in Bandon from 10-4.

Monday 1-4pm (1 shift, 2 volunteers) Thursday 9am-noon (1 shift, 2 volunteers) Thursday 1-4pm (1 shift, 2 volunteers) Saturday 9am-1pm alternating between FM and Ace Hardware (1 shift, 2 volunteers) We also have a few other one-off and festival plant clinic shifts, 2 volunteers per shift and about 15 shifts total

twice a week in the office - Tues/Thurs 1-4pm once a week at a satellite location - Saturdays 9am-1pm - Home Depot (April-June), The Dalles Farmers' Market (July-October)

In Deschutes county it is staffed daily, Monday through Friday. In Crook County it is staffed once a week. If we staff in Jefferson County it is staffed once a week. Last year we did not staff in Jefferson County as there is an employee that works at the Central Oregon Ag Research Center who is also a MG so she covers the clinic there. It currently is not busy enough to warrant additional volunteers. Our staffing begins end of March at the earliest, really gears up in April through September with less coverage in October and we close in October.

Mon, Wed, Fri, 9-12 and 1-4, from April to October. this is the first year we will try April- Oct, previously started in May.

Monday--Friday 9:00 am--2:00 pm (April--October) Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00 am--2:00 pm (November--March)

Monday-Thursday, 10am-1pm & 2pm-5pm = 24 hours/week

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## Q5 - What do you anticipate might be some of the POSITIVE outcomes of reducing volunteer service hour requirement to somewhere between 40-55 hours, for MG trainees?

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Easier for volunteers to reach threshold for graduation.

Easier for those who work to complete their hours. Less mentally daunting to new trainees. Might help reduce burnout and increase retention?

We already require 40 hours. Shorter hours means more people can commit to the volunteer service requirement. People that I have talked to said the volunteer hours would difficult to fulfill with their busy schedule.

If this refers to during the first year rather than after it, reducing the number of hours could make it more feasible for people who are working to be involved in the MG program. It would reduce the pressure students feel to complete their hours.

More people might be able to finish to program, continue volunteering with OSU. I think the whole package of MG is daunting for a lot of people. 56 hours of volunteer time is still a lot for modern volunteers.... We lose 1/3 of all people the first year, who don't report back

If I understand this, our senior Master Gardeners would have to increase from the current 20 hours to 40-55 hours. I am not sure I see a positive, other than seniors will log more of the hours they actually work. I could see fewer recertifications as a result, however. I would expect the MGs interested in working to continue.

Metro Program requires 56 hours to finish the training year, but only requires 20 hours per year after the first year (veterans). If you are asking about reducing the requirement for the training year (now 56) I feel that reducing the requirement to 40-ish could look like a more achievable goal for some.. For trainees to be able to reach the point in which they qualify for their orange badge at an easier pace could ease stress and encourage participation in the program for longer.

It might provide an additional incentive for some class members to finish service hours and graduate, especially those that are currently employed.

possibly more retention, but our 50 seems right.

That is not a reduction for us. But the reducing on the east side rural areas might help people to meet their obligation.

Easier for non-retired MG volunteers. Might attract more to the program.

I think, for many, it is a more reachable goal. We have tried to diversify our payback opportunities and that should help as well.

I assume you mean the service hour commitment for current year class members? In other words, the service hour requirement for 2018 for 2018 class members? If that's what you mean, it would make it easier for those class participants who are employed part- or full-time to fulfill the hours requirement. The service hour requirement AFTER the first year of training is already 20 hours to recertify, no?

Retention of trainees after class training 40 doesn't sound daunting

Potentially more graduates. I am wondering however if these graduates that are concerned about volunteering the extra 15-20 hours may not be involved long term. I have found that those who are really committed to being volunteers are willing to complete the 65 hours. We are also very flexible and willing to work with those who want to graduate and are having a hard time completing the last few hours.

We will be able to fully certify more of our trainees as the 60 hours we currently require does eliminate some of them.

Higher graduation and retention rates, especially if they are working individuals.

We are already on the low end of volunteer service for trainees, but I definitely wouldn't raise the hours here. Many of our trainees struggle even to get to 42, mostly because it takes a while to really get integrated into the program. I know that many advanced MGs put in way more than 42 hours (even though they are only required to do 24) but when you're new, it's different. It's not a part of your life yet, and you are still building community within the program.

Our volunteer hours for veterans is 16 hours in plant clinic and 10 hours community outreach. So they are only required to do 26 volunteer hours in total, after the first year of training. Plus the 10 in continuing education units.

potentially more people able to participate if less commitment

In Jackson Co. we design most of the volunteer hours to be hands-on learning opportunities that benefit the public. Because reducing the number of volunteer hours required would reduce both student learning and the amount of time dedicated to giving back to the community, I see no positive outcomes.

Possible increased interest in the MG program by people intimidated by a larger volunteer commitment.

## Q6 - What do you anticipate might be some of the NEGATIVE outcomes of reducing volunteer service hour requirement to somewhere between 40-55 hours, for MG trainees?

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Not as many volunteer hours will be done.

Might further reduce our ability to respond to client questions received in the Extension office in a timely manner during the heavy usage periods.

I see no negatives to changing the time commitment to 40 hours.

I would see people getting their hours and reducing their involvement in the activities around the MG program because they do not need to work more hours. If plant clinic hours are reduced significantly, I see a reduction in preparedness, which may be appreciated by some.

2017 stats New MGs- 56 hours (105 reported) Vets- 22 hours + 10 hours recertification (440 responded) Total hours: 38,000+ hours 2017. About 18,000 (47%) toward OSU activities and 53% toward partner activities We already have a hard time keeping these clinics, and so many other activities fully staffed. There is the ongoing tension between the OSU public service mission and all of the other partner activities. Plant sales, demo gardens, and other activities are just more fun for most people than clinic activities. With all of these other opportunities, we get only a handful of new volunteers who continue with regular shifts in clinic activities. We lose many volunteers initially or after year 1 who take the program and want to volunteer for their own project, that they had in mind before taking the MG training. Right now, we don't have a good way for volunteers to "Choose their own adventure," which seems to be more of interest to the next generation of volunteers.

I could see a reduction of recertifications.

Metro Program requires 56 hours to finish the training year, and only 20 hours per year after the first year (as above) If we were to reduce the trainee requirement of 56 hours, some negatives might be that trainees are less prepared to act as veteran educators in the community. We have also established an extensive number of volunteer commitments in the community based on time (hours) that MGs are expected to be active. We would need to narrow what we are able to do in the community if the hours were reduced. Maintaining the credibility of delivering research-based info through trained volunteers could diminish.

There is always a sense that more volunteers are needed to get things done, but perhaps we can compensate for fewer hours per volunteer with a larger cadre of committed volunteers.

not enough coverage on events and MG activities if less than 50

Don't see any

More people will not volunteer enough to get to know other volunteers or not connect with the program. They wont be as well prepared for the volunteer clinic time.

None.

Master Gardener project leaders (like all volunteer organizations) always think there are not enough volunteers to go around, so they may look upon plans to reduce new class member hours as adding to that problem.

Manning the plant clinic help desk adequately Coverage in our demo gardens Burn out with 66 hours training plus another 60 hours volunteer service

We often have a hard time filling our desk clinic slots and trainees play an important role at the desk clinic. We may have a harder time filling desk slots. I am wondering how flexible the amount of "desk hours" would be in comparison to "volunteer hours" and what the split would be or could we set this at the county level?

Less staffing at our plant clinics and various other events we hold. Although lately it seems we are having a harder time getting the veterans to sign up for plant clinics than the trainees.

Reducing the amount of volunteer hours available to work on Association projects. We may need to cut back on the projects we manage in the community.

Not sure as we currently don't require this many hours from our veterans. Of course many of them volunteer way more than the 26 hours required to stay recertified.

Jackson Co. has 20+ themed demonstration gardens that are cared for by students under the guidance of Garden Education Mentors and are open to the public. If the number of hours is reduced, the students would not learn as much and the gardens would not receive as much care. In fact, all of our many programs would suffer because we would not have the workforce we anticipated as we developed these programs. This could potentially affect our Plant Clinic, Spring Garden Fair, our annual Winter Dreams Summer Gardens Symposium, our Community Education Classes, our Seed to Supper program for low-income families, our Children's Garden summer program, our Speakers Bureau, and our "In The Garden" twice-weekly TV segments (March--October) in addition to the association committees that would be affected (publicity, the monthly newsletter, etc.)

Unless the aforementioned positive outcome is realized, we may struggle to maintain coverage of the Plant Clinic during the busy season. The time spent in the Plant Clinic is not purely service but is heavily weighted toward continuing training, as we have Plant Clinic Mentors that help new trainees work through checklists to become proficient at the various Plant Clinic tasks, and we also have Diagnostic Specialists during most shifts (we're working toward every shift during the April-June period) to help train plant problem diagnosis, as this is one of the aspects of the Plant Clinic that new volunteers have consistently identified in the past as being the most intimidating.

## Q7 - Are there any other thoughts you would like to share with the Advisory Panel?

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Standardization across counties is the right direction. Want to have the required volunteer hours be attainable but at a level that still allows trainees to get enough hands-on learning to help their classroom training stick and to make the connections within the MG community that help with retention. We recognize trainees that volunteer over the required hours at our graduation ceremony. Would be interesting to hear how/if other counties do this (certificates, listed in a program, special gift?)

I think the rationale behind changes should be explained to the MG programs around the state so everyone understands the purpose of the changes.

I think the panel should be prepared to provide a rationale for any changes in requirements for MG hours. We have considerable concern now about the lack of retention of Master Gardeners and doubling the volunteer-hour requirement may make that a bigger problem.

I'm not sure I fully understand the questions about volunteer hour requirements. Some parts seem to be about the first year and some... after the first year. I hope I was able to address what the committee intended.

Thanks for undertaking this effort!

I try to get all new trainees to help out with 12 hours of plant clinics, but depending on distance from Ext., will provide opportunities at info tables in their communities instead. The issue is then that they don't often have the resources to answer questions, but these are or can be forwarded on to our weekly clinic.

Some areas have an abundance of Master Gardener Volunteers. They are looking at ways to make requirements so it is easier to control the numbers. Other areas have very few Master Gardener volunteers. They see the need want to assist with what they can because most of our volunteers give of their time to more than one organization. Giving each group the flexibility to meet their needs as well as the needs of the organization is very important. So extremes is not healthy.

Making the program less academic will increase the idea that our program is a garden club not an educational program.

About 20-30% of our trainees are comfortable with diagnostics and develop the skills to be reliable. WE need a lot of other projects to use the many talents we bring into the program.

Thanks for your work in exploring these improvements to the MG program

I am overall not against a reduction in the requirement of hours, but I would prefer it on the higher side closer to 55. I also would like to keep the desk requirement time to volunteer time ratio on the higher end or make it flexible within the county to decide how many of the overall hours needed to graduate should be completed at the desk.

I think it is great that we are looking at ways to improve our retention of volunteers and encourage more participation from potential volunteers by making the requirements more attainable.

For accessibility: are you having conversations regarding cultural accessibility? I think the format of the program is not culturally appropriate/accessible to other cultures. I don't know specifically how to address it but think it is worth introducing into the concept of accessibility.

I think it could be a positive outcome to reduce the number of hours for trainees. It may attract more individuals but I think it would need to drop down at least 10 hours or more to really make a difference.

In Jackson Co. the consensus is that each Master Gardener site has different programs and different needs. Therefore, some sites may be able to reduce the number of required volunteer hours without severe consequences. Sites like Jackson Co., though, need to maintain these hours in order to maintain our existing programs. I have not talked to a single Jackson Co. Master Gardener, student or veteran, who feels the hours should be reduced. We, therefore, recommend that either the required hours remain the same or that each site be allowed to set their own requirements based on the amount of learning time we want to provide and our workforce needs.

I hope to use funds from "Horticultural Proficiency" participants to offset costs to volunteers the following year. This will give us the ability to know ahead of time what fees we will need to charge to ensure we are not operating at a loss. My goal is to make the cost of the book the only expense, although we will continue to charge a refundable deposit as an incentive to complete the volunteer commitment. If we are successful lowering the cost of the program, perhaps that, coupled with a decrease in the number of volunteer hours, would increase participation. If we have low Horticultural Proficiency during some years and have to charge more for the MG program in subsequent years, my belief is that for every hour they're paying, they should not also have a volunteer commitment. In other words, their payment can be money and/or time, but they should not be charged both for any portion of the program. Regarding training time, this is likely beyond CHAP's mission this year, but I would like to review what constitutes required topics. I may be overwhelmingly overruled, but I think there are more topics that should be required rather than elective. I do like the ideas of either grouping electives (i.e. at least x number of group I topics; y number of group II topics; etc.) or providing all of the elective topics over a period of time and letting participants choose from the true electives. The key, then, would be to have a solid core requirement that would yield highly competent volunteers on general topics.

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**End of Report**