

COUNTY 76 VOLUNTEER MANUAL



2026



COUNTY 76 **VOLUNTEER MANUAL**

INDEX

Section 1	What is County 76?
Section 2	Leadership Team State Leadership, Executive Board, Project Chairs, and President - Appointed Positions
Section 3	Bylaws
Section 4	Project Synopses Descriptions of Appointed Positions
Section 5	Criteria for C76 Projects Project Proposal Form
Section 6	Online Reporting Instructions
Section 7	Membership Roster
Section 8	Policies & Procedures
Section 9	Resources Website Information Garden Voice Newsletters



COUNTY 76 MASTER GARDENERS

County 76 Mission Statement

Active Master Gardener members from across Arkansas are working together to strengthen and support the statewide and local Arkansas Master Gardener Programs.

What is County 76?

County 76 is the statewide advisory group for the Arkansas Master Gardener program. It is open to all active Master Gardeners in Arkansas. County 76 members help set policy and provide guidance to county programs. Programs offered statewide will be County 76 "projects".

The structure of the group is based on our county programs, and since there are 75 counties in Arkansas, this group is now the "76" county. The "County Agent" is the State MG Coordinator, and the officers will be elected from the membership of County 76. The projects will focus on organizational, leadership and general management issues. County 76 members will decide which projects will be created, and each member will decide on which project he/she wants to work.

Who can join County 76?

County 76 is open to all Master Gardeners who have completed the training and are in good standing in their local county programs.

In addition to their county commitment, each County 76 member must accrue 10 additional hours on County 76 sanctioned projects. Membership term is unlimited for those who recertify both in their local county and at the state level. County Agents who have an active Master Gardener program in their county may also participate.

COUNTY 76 2026 LEADERSHIP TEAM

STATE LEADERSHIP		
Extension Educator Consumer Hort MG Coordinator	Randy C. Forst	Little Rock State Office
Horticulture Program Associate	Julie Treat	Little Rock State Office

EXECUTIVE BOARD		
President	Don Casteel	Benton County
1st Vice President	Kathy Launder	Washington County
2nd Vice President	Rose Ann Houston	White County Independence County
Secretary	Diann Arington	Garland County
Treasurer	Barbara Nivens	Clark County
Asst. Treasurer	Debbie Atchison	Faulkner County Garland County
Past Treasurer	Becky Gibson	Pulaski County
Member at large	Ren Ray	Saline County
Member at large	James Lamb	Hempstead County Red Dirt MGs

PROJECT LEADERS		
Advanced Training	Juanita Nesbitt	Pulaski County
	Karol Zoeller	Pulaski County
Fundraising	Susan Colles	Pope County
	Sheila Waddell	Jefferson County
Plant, Nurture, Grow	Phil McConnell	Saline County
	Harold Abbey	Pulaski County
Recruitment, Retainment, Recognition	Rose Ann Houston	White County Independence County
	Becky Gibson	Pulaski County

APPOINTED POSITIONS		
Media Relations	Mike Wilbanks Coordinator	Craighead Couty
Garden Voice Newsletter	Becky Gibson Editor	Pulaski County

County 76 Master Gardeners' Bylaws

ARTICLE I – Name

This organization shall be known as the County 76 Master Gardeners.

ARTICLE II – Purpose

The County 76 Master Gardeners are volunteers of the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service operating as volunteers at the state level. The goals of this organization shall be to strengthen and support the Arkansas Master Gardener program statewide and to establish policies and guidelines for consistency in the state Master Gardener program. County 76 will follow all University of Arkansas Master Gardener program and financial management guidelines.

ARTICLE III – Membership

- A. Membership is open to all Master Gardeners who are active members in good standing in their counties.
- B. To retain membership in County 76, Master Gardeners must:
 - 1) Remain in good standing in their home county.
 - 2) Complete at least 10 hours per fiscal year in the County 76 program. These hours cannot be applied to the county programs.
- C. Membership entitles the individual to attend meetings, participate as a voting member, hold office and participate in projects or other County 76 activities.
- D. County agents that have an active Master Gardener program in their county may join County 76 as ad hoc members with no requirement for project work hours.
- E. County 76 Master Gardeners, whose fiscal year shall be from January 1 through December 31, will hold at least four meetings per year. All financial and reporting statistics shall be based on the fiscal year.
- F. The Exec Board may implement the use of a Zoom format for any C76 meeting if circumstances dictate i.e., including and not limited to weather, restrictions set by the State Office, or any unforeseen situation.
- G. Each member is responsible to communicate any changes in mailing address, email or phone numbers to the 2nd Vice President.
- H. If a member chooses to resign from County 76, an email confirming the desire of resignation should be communicated to the 2nd Vice President.

ARTICLE IV – Executive Board

- A. The Executive Board shall act as the governing body of County 76 Master Gardeners and transact its necessary business.

- B. The Board shall consist of the officers of County 76 Master Gardeners, members at large, the County 76 Agent and the County 76 Horticulture Program Associate.
- C. The County 76 Agent, who provides leadership and counsel to the Master Gardener program, shall serve as Advisor to and Administrator of County 76 Master Gardeners. As the UA Cooperative Extension Service representative, the County 76 Agent is the final authority on its projects and programs. The County 76 Horticulture Program Associate shall serve as liaison to the Executive Board at the discretion of the County 76 Agent.
- D. A simple majority of the members of the Executive Board present shall constitute a quorum.
- E. The President shall schedule meetings of the Executive Board prior to quarterly meetings.

ARTICLE V – Officers

- A. The officers of County 76 Master Gardeners shall be: President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and Past President. All officers will assume office on January 1st following election.
- B. The President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President and Past President will serve a term of one year. Elections for the President, 1st Vice President, and 2nd Vice President shall be held at the last meeting of every year.
- C. The Secretary, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer will serve a term of two years. Elections for the Secretary, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer will occur at the last meeting of odd numbered years.
- D. No person may hold more than one office at the same time or hold an office for more than two successive terms.
- E. Vacant offices and committee chairs shall be filled by appointment by the President, with the approval of the Executive Board, for the remainder of the unexpired term. However, if the office of either the President, 1st Vice President, or the 2nd Vice President becomes vacant, it shall be filled by a special election of the general membership. If an officer has served more than half a term, the individual is considered to have served a full term in that office. Officers leaving their term of office for any reason shall transfer all records and property of their office to their successor.
- F. Up to two members at large from the County 76 membership will be appointed by the Executive Board each year for a one-year term. Their responsibilities will be defined by the Executive Board based on the needs of the organization. They will not be voting members of the Executive Board.

ARTICLE VI – Duties of Officers

A. The President shall:

- 1) Preside at all meetings at which he or she is present.
- 2) Schedule Executive Board meetings at least quarterly.
- 3) Prepare agenda for meetings and send to Secretary for distribution.
- 4) Exercise general supervision over the affairs and activities of County 76 Master Gardeners.
- 5) Be responsible for the formation and dissolution of committees.
- 6) Assure that the committees are functioning and appoint members to committees as required.
- 7) Appoint a Nominating Committee to be announced at the 3rd quarter meeting each year.
- 8) Appoint other ad hoc committees, as needed.
- 9) Become the Past President at the expiration of the current Past President's term of office.

B. The 1st Vice President shall:

- 1) Perform the duties of the President whenever the President is absent.
- 2) Provide guidance to Project Chairs to assure project work remains within the organizational guidelines.
- 3) Oversee County 76 Sanctioned Projects and maintain appropriate records.
- 4) Coordinate general membership meeting lunch activities with County 76 Horticulture Program Associate.
- 5) Monitor the bylaws and advise the Executive Committee of needed revisions.
- 6) Coordinate County 76 Website updates with Projects and County 76 Horticulture Program Associate.
- 7) Update County 76 Timeline for each year based on Project activities.

C. The 2nd Vice President shall:

- 1) Perform the duties of the 1st Vice President whenever the 1st Vice President is absent.
- 2) Coordinates changes of members records such as address, phone, email, or status of said member to accommodate quarterly Roster updates.
- 3) Coordinate general membership meeting registration, including new attendee contact.
- 4) Announce new member induction at membership meetings.
- 5) Provide an updated list of current members and project hours for the Executive Board by the first meeting of each fiscal year.

D. The Secretary shall:

- 1) Maintain written records of all meetings of County 76 Master Gardeners and of meetings of the Executive Board.

- 2) Conduct the correspondence of the County 76 Master Gardeners at the direction of the President.
- 3) Distribute the agenda, minutes and Treasurer's report to the membership, one week prior to quarterly meetings.

E. The Treasurer shall:

- 1) Assure compliance and adherence to all University of Arkansas Master Gardener financial guidelines.
- 2) Validate all expenses and authorize/verify payment of invoices in accordance with University of Arkansas Master Gardeners' financial guidelines as necessary to fulfill the business of County 76 Master Gardeners.
- 3) Present a current financial statement at each meeting of the general membership.
- 4) Prepare an annual budget in consultation with the Executive Board for presentation to the membership by December 15th of each year and for vote at the first meeting of the fiscal year.
- 6) Provide an annual report at the end of the year.

F. The Assistant Treasurer shall:

- 1) Assist the Treasurer in assuring compliance and adherence to all University of Arkansas Master Gardener financial guidelines.
- 2) Assume the duties and responsibilities of the Treasurer in his or her absence.
- 3) Assist Treasurer with completion of financial reports for meetings, development of an annual budget and preparation of annual yearend report.
- 4) Serve as a standing member of County 76 Fundraising Project to assist with Silent Auction events.

G. The Past President shall:

- 1) Serve as Chair of the Nominating Committee with members appointed by the President.
- 2) Serve as Chair of the Janet B. Carson Scholarship Committee with members appointed by the President.
- 3) Coordinate update of volunteer manual.

ARTICLE VII – Projects/Committees

- A. County 76 sanctioned projects will focus on organizational, leadership, and general management issues. County 76 members decide which projects will be created and each member decides which project he/she wants to work.
- B. Each County 76 Project leadership will consist of a Chair and at least one Co-Chair, or a dual Chair position. Project Chairs and Co-Chairs shall serve for one fiscal year with two successive years maximum. All Chairs and Co-Chairs of the County 76 Master Gardeners' projects and committees may attend Executive Board meetings as non-voting members.

- C. The President shall create committees as needed and shall appoint committee chairs.
- D. The Nominating Committee will include the Past President and members appointed by the President.
 - a. At the October membership meeting, the Committee will present a slate of officers who have volunteered to serve in the offices and for the terms noted.
 - b. Nominations from the floor will be accepted. A reading of the job description of the office will be made for any nomination. Voting will be by secret ballot.
 - c. If there is only one nomination for an office, a secret ballot would not be required.

ARTICLE VIII – Budget

- A. A proposed budget of anticipated revenues and expenditures as prepared by the Treasurer shall be submitted to the Executive Board no later than November 30th.
- B. The Executive Board shall present the proposed budget for review by the membership no later than December 15th. A vote for approval of the budget by the general membership shall be held at the first meeting of the following year.
- C. The Executive Board, along with the County 76 County Agent, may approve a certain amount up to \$300 for any non-budgeted expenditure or any expenditure that exceeds the budget amount. Any amount over \$300 must be pre-approved by the membership.
- D. The Executive Board shall authorize fundraising activities for County 76 Master Gardeners when the purpose of such activities is in agreement with the objectives of the group and not in conflict with the nature of County 76 Master Gardeners.

ARTICLE IX – Amendments

The bylaws may be amended at any regular or called meeting of County 76 Master Gardeners by a simple majority vote of the eligible members present provided that written notice of the proposed changes has been sent to the membership at least fifteen (15) days before the time of the meeting.

October 2024 Revised

2026 Sanctioned Project Synopses

Advanced Training Project –The Advanced Training Project was developed as a retention strategy to keep members in the program who wish to obtain more in-depth knowledge about specific topics and get advanced levels of certification. To be eligible to attend an Advance Training class, an individual must have complete forty (40) volunteer hours. The project will focus on developing and planning Advanced Trainings around the state with various host counties, which will provide additional opportunities for further learning.

Project Chair: Juanita Nesbitt
Project Co-chair: Karol Zoeller

Fundraising Project – Raises money to fund County 76 programs including, but not limited to, the PNG Leadership Conference, the Janet B. Carson Scholarship funds, and various state educational events. Responsible for Silent Auction events (live and virtual) held in conjunction with Master Gardener sponsored events, such as State Conference and PNG Leadership Conference.

Project Co-Chair: Susan Colles
Project Co-Chair: Shelia Waddell

PNG Leadership Project – Plant Nurture Grow (PNG) is an annual leadership training conference open to all Master Gardeners across the state. It is designed to inspire, educate, and provide necessary skill sets that will equip Master Gardeners for managing all aspects of Master Gardener organizational service. The training includes such skills as handling local projects, working with other volunteers, officer, and chairmanship positions within our organization, as well as service to and interaction with our community.

Project Chair: Phil McConnell
Project Co-Chair: Harold Abbey

Recruitment, Retention and Recognition Project – Recruitment, Retention and Recognition of our members is key to the success of the Arkansas Master Gardener program. Creative and useful information is generated for the local Master Gardener programs to tailor to their unique situations as they recruit, retain and recognize their members.

The “Annuals to Perennials” program, presented in the summer via Zoom video conference, is designed to further celebrate and integrate new members into the Master Gardener family, as well as to acknowledge and support their mentors.

To recognize outstanding Master Gardeners, the RRR Project manages the Arkansas Master Gardener Awards Program which is presented at the Arkansas Master Gardener Conference, typically in May or June.

RRR Project members are available to County Master Gardener Program Presidents as a friendly support to facilitate communication, share ideas to address challenges and celebrate successes under the leadership of the Master Gardener Program Coordinator.

Project Chair: Rose Ann Houston
Project Co-chair: Becky Gibson

2026 President Appointed Positions

Media Relations –The Media Relations position was developed as a position to primarily oversee the publication of the annual C76 calendar. This includes the coordination of the announcements associated with the gathering of photos from Master Gardeners across the state of Arkansas and submission of photos to the judges for the calendar. Additional responsibilities may include communications to the media, such as preparing articles, press kits, press releases and other content initiatives.

Appointee: Mike Wilbanks

Newsletter Editor – The Newsletter Editor is responsible for the quarterly publication of the C76 newsletter, *The Garden Voice*. The Editor will gather articles for each edition from the C76 President and highlights from Project Chairs and Co/Chairs quarterly reports. New member names, photos, and introductory information is also included. Other content is determined either from a pro-forma format of content or request of the Executive Board. A draft of the newsletter is submitted to the President and Vice-President prior to publication for review and approval. The newsletter is distributed to membership through a Constant Contact email.

Appointee: Becky Gibson

2026 EXECUTIVE BOARD APPOINTED POSITION

Member At Large –The responsibilities of the Member at Large will be defined by the Executive Board based on the needs of the organization. They will not be voting members of the Executive Board.

Appointee: James Lamb and Ren Ray

Criteria for County 76 Projects

- To promote and support the Master Gardener program on a statewide basis.
- To strengthen both the state and county Master Gardener programs.
- To offer educational opportunities through specialized training programs.
- To open new areas of participation for Master Gardener volunteers.
- Be submitted on Project Proposal form.

New projects may be proposed for sanction by County 76 by:

1. Completing the County 76 Project Proposal form and
2. Sending it to the 1st Vice President who will then
3. Present it to the Executive Committee for discussion and recommendation and will then
4. Offer the proposed project to the members of County 76 for approval.

All proposals shall be kept by the Vice President, with copies on file with the Secretary.



COUNTY 76 PROJECT PROPOSAL

Project Name _____

Purpose and Description of Project _____

Starting Date _____

Projected Expenses (amount and description) _____

Other particulars or details _____

Proposed by _____ Date _____

Vice President _____ Date _____

Executive Committee _____ Date _____

County 76 Approval ____ Yes ____ No Date _____

COUNTY 76

On-Line Reporting Instructions

To help you get started reporting your County 76 hours, here are a few instructions:

- Go to the www.uaex.uada.edu site, select Yard & Garden, then Master Gardeners.
- Scroll to the red button and click to go to the reporting page.
- You will sign on to the Master Gardener Login with your county login email address and password.
- A County 76 button should appear on the right-hand side of the screen. If it does not, contact your On-Line Reporting manager in your county to authorize you to enter hours for County 76.
- You can now enter your County 76 volunteer hours.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact your local county On-Line Reporting manager.

Membership Roster

The C76 Membership Roster is updated after each C76 quarterly meeting. It is then distributed to the C76 officers and Project Chairs/Co-Chairs via email by the secretary or 1st Vice President.

Policies & Procedures

I. POLICY FOR HANDLING PAYMENTS TO MASTER GARDENER, ROOKIE, AND MENTOR OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS

- a. Within ten days after the Master Gardener State Conference the Recruiting, Retention and Recognition (RRR) Project Chair will provide to the County 76 Treasurer with the name, address and county of the Master Gardeners of the Year, Rookie, and Mentor of the Year award winners who attended the state conference.

The Treasurer will email the Horticulture AOS asking to have the amount of the reimbursement credited back to the award winner according to the payment policy set by Extension to pay the conference registration fee in the amount required to offset the award winner's conference basic registration.

The RRR Project Chair will email the winner when advised by the Horticulture AOS that the credit has been issued.

- b. No reimbursement will be made if a winner did not register and attend the Master Gardener State Conference.

- c. The PNG Leadership Project Chair will notify the Horticulture AOS within ten days of the PNG Leadership conference of the Project of the Year and Excellence in Education award winners who presented at the conference and request the Horticulture AOS transfer \$100 from the County 76 CES account to the CES county depository account. The Chair should also notify the County 76 Treasurer of the request for the money transfers. PNG Leadership chair will send emails to the county staff chairs and secretary informing them of the transfer of funds.

II. POLICY FOR CHANGE TO A PROJECT'S STRUCTURE

In the event a County 76 project wants to change their project's structure, the process would be:

- a. Present to project members for their opportunity to review, voice their opinion and vote. Voting on changes will be only by members of the project, majority vote of all votes cast. [Example, ten project members cast votes six or more support the changes, the change passed.]
- b. After passage by the project members, submit a request to the Executive Board to place the change on their agenda for review. After the Executive Board has reviewed the requested change, any comments regarding approval or disapproval will be communicated back to the Project.
- c. When approved by the Executive Board, changes may be implemented.

III. POLICY FOR HANDLING PAYMENT FOR MEALS FOR AWARD WINNERS AND GUESTS

- a. If a meal is served in conjunction with the Award ceremony at a Master Gardener State Conference, the Recruiting, Retention and Recognition (RRR) Project Chair will provide to the County hosting the conference the name and meal selection (if applicable) of the winners of the Master Gardener, Rookie, and Mentor of the Year and up to one guest of the winner. RRR will request the County 76 Treasurer to request a County 76 CES account transfer to the Master Gardener CES account to pay for the meals (based on meal charge defined by County hosting the State conference).
- b. If the Award winner has registered for the conference, their meal **SHOULD NOT** be included with this notification as it is already included in their registration.

V. POLICY FOR HANDLING PAYMENT FOR MEALS FOR SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS AND GUESTS

- a. If a meal is served in conjunction with the Award ceremony at a Master Gardener State Conference, the Past President (Scholarship Committee Chair) will provide to the County hosting the conference the name and meal selection (if applicable) of the

County Sanctioned Project and High School Scholarship recipients and up to two guests of the High School Scholarship recipient. The Past President will request the County 76 Treasurer request a County 76 CES account transfer to the Master Gardener CES account to pay for the meals (based on meal charge defined by County hosting the conference).

- b. If the individual receiving the County Sanctioned Project Scholarship is a registered conference attendee, his/her meal **SHOULD NOT** be included in this notification as it is already included in their registration.

Resources

WEBSITES:

- 1) Direct link to the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Master Gardener Program website:

<https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/master-gardeners/>

- 2) *In the Garden with Arkansas Extension Horticulture* blog

<https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/arkansas-garden-blog/>

- 3) Facebook: Arkansas Master Gardener Program

GARDEN VOICE NEWSLETTER:

The most current newsletter along with previous newsletters is located at:

<https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/master-gardeners/county-76/newsletters.aspx>