

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

July 8, 2009

SECRETARY'S MEMORANDUM 1059-001

**Volunteer Program for the People's Garden Initiative**

**1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

This Memorandum establishes the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) People's Garden volunteer program and establishes guidelines to facilitate the program. The purpose of this program is to encourage individuals to volunteer with the People's Garden. The gardens will incorporate sustainable practices to educate the public about practical ways to enhance and conserve our land and water resources.

**2. GUIDELINES**

The Food and Agriculture Act of 1981 (7 U.S.C. 2272) authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to establish volunteer programs. All volunteer service must be performed under the following guidelines:

- Volunteer service may not displace any USDA employee.
- Volunteers are not federal employees for any purpose except relating to compensation and injury (Chapter 81 of 5 U.S.C.), or tort claims (Sections 2672 – 2680 of 28 U.S.C).
- Volunteers must be at least 14 years of age. Supervisors must adhere to appropriate Federal, State or local laws and standards regarding employment of minors.

All employees of the USDA are invited to take part. Participation is purely voluntary. In addition to the above guidelines, the following applies specifically to USDA employees:

- Volunteer hours must be performed during personal time; volunteer projects cannot be done during work time.
- Supervisors should take note that those who volunteer should not be awarded extra credit, and those who do not should not be penalized in any way.

Volunteer opportunities must be made available to all interested persons without regard to race, color, creed, age (except as provided herein), sex, disabling condition, sexual orientation, or any nonmerit factor.

**3. EXISTING DIRECTIVES**

Prior delegations of authority, administrative regulations, and other directives not inconsistent with the provisions of this Memorandum shall remain in full force and effect.

**4. EFFECTIVE DATE**

The provisions of this Memorandum are effective immediately and shall apply prospectively only.

**5. TERMINATION**

This Memorandum shall remain in full force and effect for one year or until such earlier time as published delegations of authority have been revised to incorporate its provisions or until revoked.

/s/

THOMAS J. VILSACK  
SECRETARY