

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we changing how we report our volunteer effort?

The ability to report online has been requested by several parish LMG coordinators and LMGs. This new system will help your parish LMG program and the state LMG program. It provides statewide consistency and will help identify trends that will be useful in future planning. Online reporting allows you to directly report your volunteer effort and gives you an immediate update of your volunteer effort. The system will maintain a current database that can be used to inform you of events.

Do I have to use this new online reporting system?

Yes. All LMGs will need to enter their own information or have it entered by someone else.

Will my personal information be secure?

Yes. All personal information is confidential. Only those who have specified access, along with you, will be able to view and edit this information.

How do I get to the LMG Reporting System?

Your LMG Online Reporting System is available online by entering the LSU AgCenter's website www.lsuagcenter.com and then clicking **Lawn & Garden**, then clicking **Master Gardener**, then going to the sub-topics menu on the right side of the page and clicking **Reporting Volunteer Hours**. Once you click **Reporting Volunteer Hours**, a new page will appear. The top is where you click to register for the first time and to report your volunteer effort. The middle contains a "Getting Started" video which is highly recommended to view prior to registering. The bottom provides valuable information that again, is highly recommended to read prior to reporting.

I'm not registered yet. What do I do?

For your first visit only, you will need to click on **New Users Click Here To Register** and then proceed to enter your personal information. This is a one-time only step. The following information is required: LMG Program, First Name, Last Name, Street Address, City, State (defaults to LA), Zip Code, Home Telephone & Area Code (please type number with a hyphen: 578-1030), Year of Graduation (or anticipated year if currently taking a class). If any requested box is left empty, an error message will appear at the bottom of the page. It will highlight in red what information is missing. The page will not go forward until all the information is entered.

All other information requested is optional so you may enter it as your desire. I encourage you to completely fill out the registration page.

All subsequent visits to this website will only require you to enter your email address and your password. Your password is anything you'd like it to be.

How do I change my username, password, email address, and/or other personal information?

You can change any of the above by clicking "Edit/View Contact Info" from the menu located on the left of the screen once you've signed in. From this screen you will be able to edit all of your contact information, including your username and password.

What if my service hours activity is not listed in the drop down menu?

If you feel that the activity you completed is not closely described by any of the activities in the drop down list, then e-mail your state coordinator, Bob Souvestre, and he will decide whether your activity should be an added option. Please refer to the "Explanations for Volunteer Activities" help sheet.

What if my service hours activity matches multiple activities in the drop down menu?

Please choose the activity that you think BEST describes what you completed during your service hours out of the possible choices. Please refer to the "Explanations for Volunteer Activities" help sheet.

What are the different levels of access available to Master Gardener volunteers?

Volunteer & Volunteer Administrator are the two levels of access available. Once you register with the system, you are automatically assigned Volunteer access, which allows you to work with your own personal Master Gardener contact information and service & continuing educations hours information.

Volunteer Administrators are assigned access by their Program Coordinator or State Coordinator. Volunteer Administrators have access to their own personal Master Gardener contact & hours information. Volunteer Administrators also have an additional menu when they log in that gives them the ability to view, edit, & add to contact & service & continuing education hours information for all fellow volunteers in their parish program only. They also have the ability to add new volunteers with or without email addresses.

How do LMG Program Coordinators give or take away administrative access to a Master Gardener volunteer?

To assign access to an existing volunteer choose Edit/View All Volunteers from the menu located on the left of the page you initially open. From there click "Edit/View Details" next to the volunteer you need to modify access for. Toward the bottom or end of the edit form, you will see an "Administrative Status" option. If you want them to have administrative access, choose Volunteer Admin and click the "Save" button. Perform the same task to remove Volunteer Administrator status to return the LMG to Regular Volunteer status.

If one does not have a computer or access to the Internet, how does that LMG report their volunteer effort: Volunteer hours, Continuing Education hours, contact information, write Comments and Impact Statement, record Mileage and Unreimbursed Expenses?

A parish designated LMG (Volunteer Administrator) can enter information for you. If you have an email address and simply do not wish to record your personal volunteer effort, then a fellow LMG can enter the information for you or a personal friend can enter information for you.

How often do I have to enter my hours?

Hours are best reported immediately after the activity has taken place. This new reporting system makes it easy and fast. All too often, LMG Extension Volunteers wait too long to report their volunteer effort and under-report their valuable volunteer service. Timely reporting will also eliminate the need to keep a written record.

Does the reporting system follow the calendar year?

Yes. This new reporting system applies to all state LMGs and will reflect your total volunteer effort during the January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008 calendar year, and then every year thereafter.

Can I enter hours for last year?

No. The system is designed to accept information entered in the calendar year. Reporting your volunteer effort must be completed by December 31st of the current year. But you can view (view only) all information ever reported regardless the year.

The reporting system will not allow me to enter more than one date on the calendar. I volunteered a weekend activity (2 days - 5 hours on Saturday and 4 hours on Sunday). How do I enter this?

Please enter the last day the activity occurred, Sunday, and enter the combined 9 hours along with combined contact information. Or you can enter each day separately. Your choice.

How do I change the date on the calendar?

You can change the date by clicking on the actual day and it will appear in the box below the calendar. You can change months by clicking on the arrows on either side of the month at the top of the calendar. The page will have to refresh after each click.

I volunteered every week for 9 weeks working 2 hours doing the same task. Do I have to report each week separately or can I combine all 9 weeks and make only one entry?

It is best to make separate entries. (To help those LMGs who have already volunteered a significant amount, it is allowed to combine repetitive tasks and make only one entry – but once you catch up for this calendar year, you are asked to start reporting your volunteer effort separately.)

What am I supposed to do with the empty box titled “Impact”?

This box is for you to make Comments and to submit an Impact Statement. Comments can include any details you’d like to provide about the volunteer activity you participated in and your volunteer effort, like the location, topic, speaker, public comments, your observations, etc.

The Impact Statement should reflect what difference your volunteer effort made in people's lives. For a better understanding of what this means and an example of an impact statement please read the document titled "How To Write An Impact Statement" found under "Printable Resources".

What does "Mileage" mean?

Mileage is the number of miles driven as an LMG while performing LSU AgCenter approved activities. Reporting is optional but encouraged, for two reasons. The value is important to the overall LMG Program and as a volunteer, the IRS allows you to deduct this expense, currently at \$0.18 per mile - check the IRS website for updated information.

What does "Unreimbursed Expenses" mean?

This is money you've spent (out-of-pocket) as an LMG Extension Volunteer for LSU AgCenter approved activities that you've not been reimbursed for. Examples: cash, check, credit card purchases; long distance telephone calls, demonstration materials, postage, office supplies, etc.

I have a hard time seeing detail on the screens Summer Prisock is discussing in the "Getting Started" Video Support section.

It is highly recommended all new users view the "Getting Started" video before registering and all existing users to view to make sure they have correctly registered themselves.

Once you click "Getting Started" a new screen will appear with Summer Prisock on the left and the actual page she is working on. It is this page that you want to make larger to make it easier to see. Look carefully at page displayed, towards the bottom right corner, and in the vertical black line you will see a small circle with a (+) plus sign in the center. Move your cursor over this circle (you will see the computer identify it as ("Show Full Size Slide Show")) and click the mouse. The page (a new page) will become larger. If you'd like to move this a bit to the right so you can continue to see Summer as she talks, move your cursor to the blue line at the top of this new page, and holding your left mouse key down, you can move your mouse to the right to shift the position of this page just enough to see Summer.

Volume Control – located under Summer's image as small 'plus' and 'minus' boxes. You can also control volume adjusting your computer.

Who do I contact if I am having technical difficulties with some area of the site?

Please email Summer Prisock sprisock@agcenter.lsu.edu, or call (225)-578-2547, with a detailed description of your problem and on what area of the site that it occurred.

Who do I contact if I have questions regarding the Master Gardener Program?

Contact your Extension faculty/parish LMG Coordinator or Dr. Bobby Fletcher, Jr., Assistant Director, bhfletcher@agctr.lsu.edu, (225) 578-2906.