

The following template is to support community gardens, orchards, & forests to structure the management and sustainability of their project. Any part of the template may be adjusted as needed. The final version and any subsequent edits of the charter should be given to Harvest Pierce County. All community food projects are required to abide by a charter in order to receive resources or be eligible for funding from Harvest Pierce County.

(name of project) Charter

Founded Month/Day/Year

Month/Day/Year of last edit

Article I – Purpose & Vision

1.1 Purpose – The purpose of (name of project) is to provide (goods/services) to (who).

1.2 Vision – The vision of (name of project) is that (ultimate measure of success).

Article II – Membership

2.1 Definition — A member of the (name of project) is someone who participates in the (name of project) and adheres to the rules. *There may be tiers of membership – if so, describe the different levels of involvement (i.e. members who benefit from programming, members who facilitate programming)*

2.2 Becoming a Member — *Describe the process & requirements of becoming a member (i.e. being assigned a garden plot by someone in the governing body & paying dues, signing membership agreement).* State what is required for a person to become a garden member.

2.3 Staying a Member — A member remains a member as long as they adhere to the rules.

2.4 Termination of Garden Membership – Membership is revoked if member does not adhere to the rules. *Clearly explain the process of membership termination including warnings, how warnings will be given, and by whom. Clearly explain timeline if rules are not adhered to. If there is a circumstance that would result in immediate termination, clearly explain that (i.e. violent or threatening language or behavior, using illicit substance).*

Article III - Governance

3.1 Definition — The (name of project) is governed by (i.e. Steering Committee, Leadership Team, Board of Directors). The (name of governance body) consists of (minimum and maximum number of people) whose roles must include (crucial roles, i.e. membership coordinator, secretary, treasurer, etc.) The (governance body)'s core function is to ensure that the (name of project) is a safe and welcoming place for all.

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3.2 Responsibilities —The (governance body) is responsible for developing, interpreting, and enforcing the rules. It is the obligation of the (governance body) to review the rules and the charter on a regular basis and to be certain that both documents are fair, consistent, and current.

The (governance body) may also be responsible for:

- Developing & implementing long-range plans for the continuation and improvement of (name of project).
- Planning and arranging any activities intended for the benefit and enjoyment of its membership and the surrounding community.
- Recruiting members to fulfill the responsibilities of the (governance body).
- Meeting on a consistence basis.
- Commitment to transparent decision making
- Discussion and consensus of decisions beyond the scope of the charter, rules or guidelines.

3.3 Leadership Meetings —Meetings of the (governance body) will occur (frequency, i.e. on the first Monday of every month, no less than four times a year at a regularly scheduled time decided upon by all members of the governance body). *Explain the process for developing the agenda (i.e. coordinator will develop agenda 1 week prior to meeting for approval). Explain how the information at the meetings will be shared with members (i.e. meeting minutes will be shared with all members via email within a week of the meeting.) Explain if general members are invited to attend these meetings even if they are not a part of the governance body.* Meetings of the general membership will occur (frequency, i.e. generally on the first Saturday of March and the last Saturday of October). *Explain the purpose of meetings of the general membership, i.e. end of season to elect new leadership, beginning of season to collect plot fees & introduce new members).*

3.4 Election of Leadership — Those in the (governance body) will be elected by (who, i.e. a quorum of members of the project) every (frequency, i.e. every November and as needed). This shall occur every (frequency, i.e. 2 years). A term of an elected member of the (governance body) is (frequency i.e. 2 years) and they will be limited to (frequency of terms) in the same position. A member of the (governance body) must adhere to their specified responsibilities, attend (percentage of meetings), and be in communication with fellow members of the (governance body). The core leadership positions (i.e. coordinator, treasurer, secretary) must be held by different individuals.

3.5 Leadership Removal — If a member of the (governance body) is unable to perform their duties, fellow members of the (governance body) may vote to remove the individual from their position. A member of the (governance body) may also resign. Notice of resignation must be given to fellow members of the (governance body) as early as possible. If the removal occurs at another time besides the election cycle, an interim replacement will be voted on by the fellow members of the governance body.

3.6 Decision-making – All decisions made by the (governance body) will be through a (i.e. consensus based model, majority). All decisions require a quorum, (*define your quorum, i.e. 50% of leading members plus one*). Explain the process for decisions which require input from general members, i.e. election of new leaders or increasing plot fees.

3.7 Conflict Resolution—The (governance body) shall be responsible for supporting fair and transparent resolutions to conflicts between members, leaders, and neighbors. These core functions include:

- Fielding complaints or concerns from garden members or neighbors and addressing them in a timely manner.
- Mediating conflict between members if members are unable to come to an agreement on their own.
- Informing Harvest Pierce County staff of any conflict that is unable to be resolved by the (governance body).
- Ensuring a safe environment for members to bring forth concerns or complaints.

Article IV –Leadership Role Descriptions

4.1 Coordinator — the Coordinator shall serve to manage the (name of project)’s overall organization and their role is essential to the continued operation of (name of project). These core functions include:

- Setting the agenda, scheduling, & facilitating meetings of both governance body and general membership
- Be a reliable contact point for general members, members of the leadership team, future garden members or those on the waiting list, property owner, and key partners (i.e. Harvest Pierce County, Pierce Conservation District, MetroParks, etc).
- Be a guiding example and adhere to all rules of the (name of project).
- Support election of new members of the (governance body)
- Support transparent, fair decision making process by both (governance body) and general membership.
- Ensure the (name of project) is a safe and inclusive environment for all members and future members.
- *Other functions may include:*
 - *Manage wait-list*
 - *Manage plot assignment or use of any vacant plots.*
 - *Ensure all members are adhering to rules of (name of project), issue warnings if not followed, and enforce consequences when necessary*

4.2 Secretary – The Secretary shall serve to maintain and manage the rules, charter and records which are essential to the (name of project). These core functions include:

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- Recording, saving & sharing minutes from meetings of both the (governance body) and general membership.
- Ensuring all records are secure. Records include minutes from previous meetings, contact information of (governance body) and general membership, previous rules & charters, violation records, etc.
- The Secretary shall provide an environment that is as secure as reasonably practical for safeguarding membership information.
- When a Secretary's term is up, it is the previous secretary's responsibility to transition all records to the new secretary as smoothly as possible.
- The Secretary shall act as the coordinator should coordinator be unable to perform their duties for any given amount of time. Secretary shall assign the role of taking minutes at this meeting to a fellow member of the (governance body).

4.3 Finance Coordinator —The Finance Coordinator shall ensure transparent collection and expenditure of (name of project)'s funds. These core functions include:

- Receiving, depositing, and accounting for all funds.
- Retaining all account statements for accounts held by the (name of project) and balance and reconcile statements from these accounts with internal accounting records.
- Processing requests for expense reimbursement, pursuant to policies and procedures established by the (governance body).
- Provide to (governance body) a report on the current status of all accounts, receipts, and expenditures on a schedule established by (governance body).
- Provide access and copies of any and all financial materials, in original form, to (governance body) when requested.
- Ensure that key financial records are preserved and accessible in the event that the Finance Coordinator is unable to perform their duties.

4.4 Landscape Coordinator – The Landscape Coordinator is responsible for ensuring the (name of project)'s grounds are in good condition. These core functions include:

- Coordinate, schedule, and facilitate work parties among members and other volunteers to maintain communal areas or any abandoned or neglected areas.
- Keep account of communal tools or resources of (name of project).
- Support garden members to fulfill any volunteer expectations through record keeping or logs. Provide to (governance body) a report of volunteer hours on a schedule established by (governance body).