



UC Master Gardener Program of Riverside County Program Reorganization Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why are we reorganizing?

In the Fall of 2023 the UC Master Gardener Program of Riverside County Advisory Board structure experienced a collapse due to volunteer resource and capacity issues and an inability to manage multiple activities across the county.

In addition, concerns were raised that the Master Gardener community felt less cohesive and connected and there was a feared loss of representation, funding and community interaction that needed to be addressed.

Who participated on the Organizational Planning Committee?

A group of Master Gardener leaders from across the county, formed an Organizational Planning Committee (the “Committee”) in December 2024. Their task was to gather information, to review program goals and objectives, perform a needs analysis and to develop a new, workable structure that address Master Gardener concerns.

What were the Committee’s objectives?

With the support of Rita Clemons, UC Area County Director for San Bernardino, Riverside and Orange Counties and Rosa Olaiz, UC Master Gardener Program of Riverside County Volunteer Services Coordinator, the Committee worked with an organizational change consultant to identify the Program needs and to develop a structure that supports current projects and prepares the organization for growth.

What are some key features of the new organization?

The old structure had Advisory Boards in both West County and the Desert and a decision support Executive Advisory Board.

The new structure envisions three regions across the county, creates two new roles and creates county-wide teams that includes projects that engage in similar functional activities.

The three regions are: ***Metro Riverside, South County and Coachella Valley.***



Regional Coordinators will work within their region to guide, support and engage regional Master Gardeners.

Project Team Administrators will work across the county in all three regions to manage and support projects where they are engaged in similar activities.

The initial Project Teams (6) are: Public Information & Events, School Gardens, Community Gardens, Community Education, Grow Labs and Media/Communication. These may change over time.

Project Leads will replace the current Project or Area Coordinator titles.

What will people in these new roles do?

Regional Coordinators will oversee and guide activities, resources and community engagement in the region. They will reinforce Program goals and strengthen Master Gardener connections. They will also be the regional voice to articulate the unique needs and identify new opportunities that expand the Program within the region.

Project Team Administrators will operate county-wide. They will review Projects across the county that engage in *similar functional activities* and *use similar resources*. For example, Information & Events occur across many venues that include farmers markets, festivals and other events. When the majority of activities and functions are similar across venues, the project will be reviewed and considered for inclusion in a Project Team.

Project Leads will continue to lead and support their current projects but will collaborate more closely with the *Project Team Administrator* with local support from their *Regional Coordinator*.

As part of the Project Team, local Project Leads will have more opportunities to share resources and duties across the county, learn about the successes and challenges of peer projects and work with their *Regional Coordinators* to ensure their unique needs in the region are understood and resources harnessed to address them.

These three positions will work collaboratively within and across the county to effectively and efficiently deliver to the community in support of the Master Gardener mission.

Will the UC Master Gardener Program of Riverside County leadership change?

No, the Program will continue to be led by Rosa Olaiz, the Volunteer Services Coordinator.



When will new organization structure take effect?

At the beginning of a new Master Gardener fiscal year (July 2025), the Committee will conduct live and virtual sessions that will introduce the new organizational structure and the new roles to current Project Coordinators and then to all Master Gardeners.

At the same time, the Committee will develop job descriptions for the new roles within the organization that will include guidance on lines of communication, decision-making and how to collaborate effectively across the county.

What do these changes mean to me?

As a result of the reorganization, Master Gardeners will be able to more easily engage with leaders in the region through their Regional Coordinator.

Through collaboration with the Project Team Administrator, Master Gardeners will work more closely with “allied” Project Leads across the county to improve delivery, to share resources and to take advantage of economies of scale.

Learning from their peers, Master Gardeners will share and learn from common challenges and solutions, develop a broader understanding of functional activities and develop the knowledge and experience necessary to take on leadership roles in the future.

What is the ultimate goal?

The ultimate goal of the new structure is to create a stronger, better connected and more efficient Master Gardener community that fosters Program growth and enhances our impact and value to the Riverside County community.

How can I help to support the program during the transition?

Master Gardeners should continue to deliver on projects as they have in the past. As we move forward and fill positions in the new organization, Project Team Administrators and Regional Coordinators will reach out to Project Leads to develop and support implementation plans. Those activities will take time and feedback and support from Master Gardeners will be essential.



Who do I contact if I have a question?

Please feel free to reach out to any member of the Committee listed below. They will be happy to answer your questions about the organization or to direct you to a Regional Coordinator (once identified) who can help.

Committee Members

Deby Anderson	dander75@att.net
Stephen Crouse	stephenmcrouse@icloud.com
Thurman Howard	thurmanhoward@gmail.com
Jim Huberty	jimdlux@me.com
Melody Knox	jaelknox@gmail.com
Tricia Malone	patmalone93@gmail.com
Georgia Renne	grenne@earthlink.net
Rosa Olaiz	rmolaiz@ucanr.edu