

## Issue #1 Application Process

I happened upon the deadline for application for the master gardener volunteer program quite by accident. You can imagine my surprise when I found out that the 2022 application deadline was October 1<sup>st</sup>, two days away! I was pleasantly surprised when I downloaded the application to find that the goals of the program were much more inclusive of many of my retirement volunteer goals than I expected. See the priorities here:



The University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener volunteer program

The first four priorities made perfect sense to me, but I didn't realize that the focus on local food would be align with the food insecurity issues that were so prevalent during the pandemic. It was also exciting to see the climate change and nearby nature as priorities, two things that I really wanted to incorporate into my volunteer work. I had this aha moment of, "This is meant to be!"

I submitted my application in the nick of time. The application had 30 questions, so it did take some time to think through. I am glad I had done a rough draft and then refined my answers for entering into the final application online.

A couple of weeks later, I received an email describing the next step of the process which is a short presentation by the county extension educator and interview by a master gardener and intern pair. The interview was done in a breakout room of the zoom call, and it was fun to talk with like-minded people – lovers of gardening. There is something infectious about being around people that have the same passion that you do.

Yay! On October 29<sup>th</sup>, I was accepted into the program! So excited! Now I just need to complete my background check and safety of minors training. Then I will need to sign up for the CORE Course by December 1 which starts in early January. The CORE course is the name for the curriculum for the master gardener volunteer program. There is a cost involved so they had asked during the interview process if this is something you can commit to (although there are scholarships available).