



INDIANA HANDBOOK FOR STATE VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS

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2010-2011 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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Congratulations on being selected as Indiana's State Volunteer Coordinator! This document will help you familiarize yourself with the Indiana Earth Team process. This does not address everything needed to do the job; you will also need the Earth Team Volunteer Coordinator Guide (ETVCG) that can be obtained from the National Volunteer Liaison located in Des Moines, Iowa.

Training

Reading the ETVCG is the main source of training for this position. This guide has in it the Guide for New Volunteer Coordinators, information about the SharePoint Site and email listserve, General Manual Part 428, Frequently asked Security questions, information about the volunteer tracking system, Supervisor's Guide, Orientation Guide for Volunteers, and forms.

Reviewing previous State Coordinator's reports to see the trends and accomplishments is also a good way to learn what Indiana has been doing. The Area Coordinators are also valuable sources of information. Schedule a meeting with them early on to learn all the wonderful things Indiana has been doing! And finally, if you haven't already talked with the National Earth Team Volunteer office in Iowa, call them to introduce yourself!

Plan of Work and Annual Budget

Earth Team State Volunteer Coordinator, in cooperation with the State Conservationist, Assistant State Conservations (ASTC)-Operations and Area Volunteer Coordinators develop, implement and evaluate volunteer activities in Indiana. To begin the process the State Volunteer Coordinator needs to develop a Plan of Work and annual budget. Below is the suggested timeframe for submitting the Plan of Work and budget yearly.

Mid July – provide Annual Plan of Work and proposed budget to ASTC-Operations.

Mid August – ASTC-Operations provides feedback to Coordinator.

October/Early November – Coordinator meets with State Conservationist to discuss budget and Annual Plan of Work and to receive approval.

April - Provide a written update to the State Conservationist outlining current status of the Plan of Work and budget.

The Plan of Work should include goals that can be completed each year. You should list the goals of the year with action items; who will lead the action item; proposed completion date; and budget. A percent complete and comments section should be included and used to provide updates to the State Conservationist. Budget costs can include, but are not limited to, postage for mailings, awards (plaques, certificates, thank-you cards, etc.), travel for Coordinators (Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) conference, National training, etc), incidentals, etc.

See Attachment A for an Indiana sample Plan of Work with budget. See pgs. 8-10 of the New Volunteer Coordinators Guide in the ETVCG for another sample action plan.

National Earth Team SharePoint Website

<https://nrsc.sc.egov.usda.gov/chief/lpad/et/default.aspx>

This site is available to all employees. You can access the site by logging into My.NRCS or by using the above address. This site is used to share documents, notices, forms, policy, success stories and ideas. To add information to the site, contact the National office.

Indiana Earth Team Website

http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/about/ETV/ETV_homepage.html

This website is used to promote the Indiana Earth Team program. Here you can find information for volunteers (why volunteer, what can I do, contact information, etc.) and you can use the site to promote the great things that Earth Team Volunteers have done in Indiana. The website should be updated twice a year with success stories and award winners, at a minimum do an update in January to announce and highlight success stories and award winners from the past year.

To update the website you will need to get with the website coordinator. You will need to provide information that can be easily put into html format. Due to Section 508 compliance rules, Adobe[®] format and Microsoft Word[®] products should not be put on the website (a Word document can be used to get information to the Website Coordinator). It is preferred to use multiple pages linked from the main site instead of a lot of context on the main page. There is no limit on the number of pages that can be linked from the main Earth Team website.

Making a Purchase

You will need to buy awards periodically during your tenure. You have a budget that was approved by the State Conservationist, now how do you use the money? Use the following steps to make your purchase, giving yourself plenty of time for the approval process (usually 1-2 weeks is sufficient time):

1. Complete an AD-700 form (see Attachment B for sample). This form will need a detailed description of what item(s) you will be purchasing. Make sure to designate on the form that this will be an Earth Team purchase.
2. Submit the form electronically to your Area Conservationist (AC) and Field Operations Assistant (FOA) for approval.
3. Once the form is approved, the AC/FOA will submit the form to the Budget Officer for funding availability.
4. Budget Officer will return the form to the FOA once funding has been approved.
5. The FOA can purchase the item(s) with their purchase card if the item is under \$3,000. If the item(s) exceeds \$3,000, the AD-700 will need to be sent to the Contracting Officer for purchase.

If you are a coordinator that is located in the State Office instead of a field office, then you will work with your Leadership Team member and State Office Assistant instead.

IASWCD Annual Conference

IASWCD holds an annual conference every January. This is a great opportunity to talk with County employees and NRCS District Conservationists about the Earth Team program. There will also be an awards banquet where an Earth Team award will be presented.

You will need to register a booth at the Conference. The “Early Bird” registration form is usually due in mid-September. Make sure you sign up by this deadline to get the best rate for the booth.

1. Go to <http://www.iaswcd.org> to obtain the registration form for the booth.
2. Use the purchasing instructions listed previously to purchase the booth space. Send the completed registration form in addition to the AD-700 to your AC/FOA for purchase. In some years, the State Office will make one payment for all registrations for the Conference. If this occurs, work with your FOA to make sure all the needed information is turned in.
3. Provide a copy of the booth registration form to Public Affairs. Public Affairs will keep a tally of the booths needed for NRCS.

You will also want a banner display for your booth. There are two ways to request a display. Either use Indiana’s displays by requesting them through Public Affairs or by requesting them through the National Earth Team office.

To use Indiana’s displays, contact the Public Affairs specialists. To request the National displays, you will need to contact the NRCS Distribution Center in Iowa:

To reserve an exhibit, send an email to NRCSDistributionCenter@ia.usda.gov or call 1-888-526-3227 and include:

exhibit title

dates requested (date of arrival and date it will be shipped back)

style: floor (approximately 10' x 8'); tabletop (5.3' x 5.5'); banner stand (84" x 31"); horizontal banner (dimensions variable)

The NRCS Distribution Center covers all shipping charges including a pre-paid return label.

The exhibition hall is open one day during the conference. Plan on having someone there to work the booth the entire day. The conference attendees will have a continental breakfast in the hall and will return various times during the day to have their breaks. This will be the time to promote the Earth Team program. In addition to the banner display, a computer display can be done showcasing Earth Team (i.e., website information, PowerPoint with pictures of volunteers, etc.).

You may also want to have handouts available for the attendees to have. You can order Earth Team brochures and bookmarks to handout directly from the NRCS Distribution Center in Iowa by visiting their

website <http://nrcspad.sc.egov.usda.gov/DistributionCenter/> and using "Earth Team" as the keyword to search. Give 1-2 weeks for delivery of the items. If you don't have that much time, the Public Affairs staff also maintains limited quantities of these same brochures at the State Office.

Awards Banquet

Indiana's State Conservationist will present an award to a volunteer/group during the Awards Banquet (see State and National Awards section). Once the winner(s) is selected a plaque(s) will need to be ordered. If the selected winner(s) is not going to be in attendance at the conference, then you can pay for the winner(s) to attend the awards dinner out of the Earth Team budget. Use the purchasing instructions listed previously to pay for these items.

Work with the IASWCD Communications Manager to get the Earth Team award on the Banquet Agenda. You should notify the Communications Manager in November to request time on the agenda and then notify them in December of the selected winner. You will be responsible for writing the script for the presentation. You will need to coordinate the review of the script with Public Affairs, ASTC-Operations, and IASWCD Communication Manager. See attachment C for a sample script.

Make a Presentation

This conference has District employees, District Supervisors, NRCS District Conservationists and other Partnership employees attending. These are some of your best resources in growing the Earth Team Program in Indiana! In addition to a booth about Earth Team, use this opportunity to make a presentation to the attendees. There are presentations on the National SharePoint site that you can use to give you ideas of topics to cover. Topics that could be of interest are creative recruiting, marketing, needs assessment, and a general overview of the Program.

Planning for the Conference begins as soon as the prior year conference is over. Contact the IASWCD Communications Manager in the spring to get on the agenda.

The Public Affairs staff can help with your presentation. Once you have developed your topic and key points, work with them to make the presentation dynamic and interesting!

National Volunteer Appreciation Week

National Volunteer Appreciation week is held in April, usually in conjunction with Earth Week. This is a great opportunity to acknowledge all the volunteers in Indiana. Guidance, template letters, and themed thank-you wording will be sent out from the National Earth Team office. Typically this occurs during the last week in February, giving only a month to get small awards and cards ordered, printed, addressed and mailed out.

1. Have the State Conservationist send out a letter to all employees. See Attachment D for a sample of a previous letter.
 - a. Customize the template letter from National for Indiana.

- b. Give the letter to ASTC-Operations, at least two weeks before you would like it sent out so that it can be reviewed and edited.
 - c. Have the letter sent at least the week before Volunteer Appreciation Week.
 2. Send thank-you cards and small awards out to all volunteers.
 - a. In December, begin researching what type of small award that you would like to send out. The award may increase the cost to mail the card. Try to find a small/flat item i.e., seed packets, seed cards, sticky notes, etc.
 - b. As soon as the information is provided from the National Office purchase thank-you cards and small awards using the purchasing guidelines.
 - c. Two weeks before Earth Week, print thank-you cards (if needed) and envelopes. A narrative should be printed on the card listing the major accomplishment of the state volunteer program for the past fiscal year.
 - d. A week before, enlist the help of the area coordinators to help stuff and address envelopes for the thank-you cards.
 - e. Mail cards Friday before Appreciation week or the Monday of. Since you will be doing a large mailing, notify the Budget Officer and State Administrative Officer of the cost before you do the mailing. This cost should be accounted for in your Annual Budget. Volunteer group thank-you cards can be sent to the group manager or to the Area Coordinator if it is likely that they will be meeting with them that week.
 - If you choose to use the Post Office to do the mailing instead of the postage machine in your office, make sure to get a receipt. Submit a completed AD-1164 (attachment E) with receipt for reimbursement to your AC for approval. The Area Office will then send the form to the Finance department at the State Office. Make sure and designate on the form that the funds should come out of the Earth Team budget.
3. Have the area coordinators do a presentation to their areas at the area meeting that occurs before Appreciation Week (probably will be end of March/beginning of April) informing the District Conservationists about the week.
4. Since many District employees do not attend area meetings, have the coordinators send an email to the District Administrators in the area giving them the same information as presented at the area meeting.

State and National Awards

A great way to recognize all the effort your Earth Team Volunteers are doing is through awards. Each year several awards are presented to volunteers at the National level. Award nominations are due by October 31st of each year to the National office.

There are eight (8) National Earth Team Award Categories. Awards in four (4) of the categories are given to one in each region and from those regional winners, one national is selected. States may submit one nomination per award category. To see the list of possible awards, see the Awards section of the ETVCG.

A letter should be sent to all employees (NRCS and Partnership) in September asking for nominations. From these nominations, State awards should also be presented. The area coordinators should each pick a winner for their area to recognize. They should pick from the nominations received. If no nominations are received, then they should review submitted hours and success stories to make an award. Recognition for the winning ETV should be done at an area meeting. If possible, coordinate the presentation with the State Conservationist's Year End presentation at the end of October/beginning of November.

The State Coordinator and ASTC-Operations will then pick a State winner from the four area winners. It is recommended that the winner be involved with a SWCD office as the award will be presented during the IASWCD Annual Conference.

Promote awareness by encouraging the District of the four award winners to publish articles in their local newspaper. Have the Area Coordinators send out information about the award winner to all Partnership employees in their area.

Contact the Public Affairs staff about doing a news release about the State award winner. Have your Area Coordinators send this news release out to the Districts in their area.

Submit to the IASWCD Communications Manager the news release or information about the four award winners to be put in their weekly newsletter.

Small Awards

Volunteers can also be given small (keepsake) awards of non-monetary value. Per General Manual 360-414-C "Private citizens (volunteers) who contribute to the strategic plan, mission goals and objectives of the Agency or the Department, as a whole, may receive keepsakes". This award shall be given only to Volunteers that exceed expectations, increases productivity, etc.; not for just being a Volunteer.

1. The NRCS supervisor will need to fill out form AD-287-2 and sign it as the recommending individual. See attachment F for example.
2. The NRCS supervisor then submits it to their AC for review and signature.

3. The AC signs the form as the reviewing official and forwards the form to the State Conservationist.
4. The State Conservationist signs the document as the approving official and forwards it to Public Affairs.
5. The Public Affairs staff will contact the NRCS Supervisor to coordinate the actual type of award and delivery of the award.

Security Requirements

Earth Team Volunteers are treated just like NRCS employees when it comes to security. If a volunteer will be in our offices unescorted, touching producer's files, or using the computer then they are subject to the same security requirements as NRCS employees.

To determine if a Volunteer will require a background investigation, LincPass ID, or computer access, answer the following questions:

1. Will the Volunteer be using the computer to scan documents, print labels, and use email?
2. Will the Volunteer be in the NRCS office unescorted?
3. Will the Volunteer be making copies of design plans?
4. Will the Volunteer be filing documents in producers' folders?

If you answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, the Volunteer will have to have a background investigation done and LincPass card issued. Computer access will be needed if you answered "Yes" to question one above.

1. Volunteer will only be in the office stuffing envelopes for the SWCD while the SWCD Administrator is present.
2. Volunteer will be helping at Field Days and won't be in the office.
3. Volunteer will be at office but will be maintaining the People's Garden outside.

If you answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, the Volunteer will not have to have a background investigation, LincPass card issued or computer access given.

If the volunteer needs to have a background investigation, LincPass Card, and computer access given, follow the steps below for this process:

1. NRCS Supervisor or Earth Team Area Coordinator contacts FOA for Background Investigation package. See attachments G-P for sample documents.
2. Volunteer will also need to complete the Certification of Natural Resources Conservation Service Acknowledgment of Section 1619 Compliance (attachment Q). This form can also be obtained from a FOA.
3. Background Investigation package is completed by Earth Team Volunteer.

4. Package is returned to FOA.
5. FOA reviews package and contacts Volunteer if any issues are found. Once complete, FOA forwards package to Human Resources Manager (HRM).
6. HRM reviews package; grades Computer Security Awareness Paper Based test.
7. HRM contacts Volunteer to get/verify e-mail address and explain the automated process.
8. NRCS Headquarter's sends Volunteer e-quip invitation with instructions to complete (attachment P).
9. Volunteer completes automated e-quip, prints out last two pages, signs and dates and then sends document to HRM.
10. HRM sends completed Background Investigation package to Headquarters and releases System Authorization Access Request (SAAR) forms to Human Resources Specialist to grant computer access.
11. Once Background Investigation comes back completed, HRM starts process to issue LincPass card.
12. E-mail is sent to Volunteer to schedule an appointment at an enrollment center for picture and fingerprints.
13. Once card is ready, Volunteer receives e-mail indicating card is ready for pickup.
14. When a Volunteer is no longer a Volunteer, NRCS Supervisor shall obtain the LincPass card from Volunteer. Supervisor shall provide card to HRM and notify HRM that Volunteer no longer needs computer access.

Driving a Government Vehicle

Volunteers may be authorized to drive a government vehicle. To do so, the following steps should be followed.

1. NRCS Supervisor determines that the Volunteer needs to drive a government vehicle.
2. Volunteer completes Safety and Health Form (attachment R).
3. NRCS Supervisor signs form and forwards to Area Office for AC approval.
4. AC approves document and forwards to State Office Assistant (SOA).

5. SOA issues Volunteer an employee identification card, also known as a “Green Card”.

Anytime the Volunteer is driving a Government vehicle, they must have in his or her possession this employee ID card.

Volunteers need to know what to do if they have an accident while driving a government vehicle. If an accident occurs, the Volunteer should immediately call the local police or 911. The volunteer should request that the attending officer complete an accident report. The Volunteer should also complete the SF-91 located in the vehicle and submit it to his/her NRCS Supervisor. The NRCS Supervisor should verify the information and sign the document and forward it to the AC who then forwards it on to the State Administrative Officer (SAO).

If the Volunteer is injured in the accident, the Volunteer should notify their NRCS Supervisor. The NRCS Supervisor should then notify their AC and get form CA-1. The Volunteer shall complete the applicable part of form CA-1 and submit it to their NRCS Supervisor as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after the accident. The NRCS supervisor will then complete the applicable parts and submit the form to the AC who forwards it on to the SAO. The Volunteer will then be contacted by the Human Resources Manager with details on how to proceed.

Tort Claims Act

Volunteers are not considered employees, except for the purposes of Worker’s Compensation Program (listed above under ‘Driving a Government Vehicle’) and Tort Claims Act. Tort claims are claims against the United States by a private person that has a complaint of injury, loss of property, or death alleged to be caused by the wrongful act of an employee (Earth Team Volunteer). If an individual wants to make a claim against the Government due to an Earth Team Volunteer’s wrongful act, they should be directed to contact the SAO. The SAO will then direct the individual to complete a SF-95 “Claim for Damage, Injury, or Death”.

Unless the private individual appears to have incurred damages and has expressed an intention to seek compensation from the Government, employees (Earth Team Volunteers) should not encourage the individual to file a claim.

Reimbursing Volunteers

Volunteers can be reimbursed for incidental expenses such as transportation, telephone, parking, meals, child care, etc. Payments of these items are at the discretion of the State Conservationist.

If there are volunteers who inquire about being reimbursed for incidental items, they must request it before the expense occurs. The request is subject to the discretion of the State Coordinator based on budget. The NRCS Supervisor/Area Coordinator shall contact the State Coordinator with the request for incidental expense, detailing the type of expense and estimated amount. If the State Coordinator

approves the expense, the volunteer's OF-301A (see Forms section of ETVCG) shall be updated to reflect the type of expense and amount.

If a volunteer is approved to get reimbursed for incidental expenses, they will need to fill out a SF-1164 (attachment E) to request reimbursement after the expense occurs. They will also need to complete an SF-1199a (attachment S) for electronic reimbursement. The SF-1164 shall be signed by the Volunteer and then forwarded on to the AC for signature as the approving official. Include with the document a copy of the OF-301A. Once the AC approves the form, it will then be forwarded on to the State Office finance department for payment.

The volunteers Social Security Number is required for reimbursement. This is their tax id number that must be recorded for tax purposes.

Filing Procedures for Volunteer Applications

The State Earth Team Coordinator and all the Area Coordinators shall have locking file cabinets to store volunteer information. Area Coordinators shall keep a copy of the application, hours and any agreements completed by a volunteer and submit all originals to the State Coordinator. Filing shall be done by Field Office name. The National Database is the official record keeping location for applications and hours.

Volunteer Web Database and Tracking of Volunteer Hours

Volunteers are tracked in a National Database (<https://www.volunteer.gov/gov/VT/>). This website logs how many Volunteers Indiana has and the hours worked. To gain access to the site, contact the National Earth Team Office.

The Volunteers and group coordinators can have access to the site. However, this is not required and should be determined on a case-by-case basis. Volunteer information and hours shall be entered in monthly. If the Volunteer or group coordinator is entering the information, have the area coordinator work with them to ensure that the information is entered in a timely manner. The National Earth Team office looks at the data periodically and pulls reports quarterly to submit to the Regional Conservationists. It is very important that Indiana's data is as up to date as possible. Year end hours must be entered by September 30th to ensure they are available for the October 15th report. See attachment T for the User Guide.

Recruitment of Volunteers

There are many ways to promote the program and gain more Volunteers. One method is by using the America's Natural and Cultural Resources Volunteer Portal (<http://www.volunteer.gov/gov/>). Access to the site is given by the National Earth Team office. This website is a partnership among several Federal Agencies. It is used to announce potential volunteer opportunities to the general public. As State Coordinator, you can work with the Area Coordinators to find out what activities, if any, should be publicized on the website. You should also have a general advertisement for the Indiana Earth Team program. Be descriptive in the various types of positions available around the state.

Success stories should be submitted to the national publication, Earth Team Connection, and Indiana's publication, Hoosier Headlines, to help promote the program. Success stories can also be sent to the IASWCD Communication Manager for inclusion in their weekly updates.

As State Coordinator, you can promote the program by speaking to college groups; Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs); and Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) students.

Yearly Timeline

January – IASWCD Annual Conference; Encourage Districts to recognize volunteers at Annual Meetings; provide ETV publicity item to SWCD's if possible. Publicize the ETV award winner to local and state media to recognize volunteer accomplishments.

February – Get ETV trinkets to Field Offices that request them for their volunteers.

March- Letter sent to all employees regarding National Volunteer Appreciation Week.

April – National Volunteer Appreciation Week, send out thank you cards and notice to employees.

May -Ongoing

June- Complete draft of ETV Plan of Work and Budget for upcoming fiscal year. Advertise to volunteers to help out with State Fair.

July- Submit ETV Plan of Work and Budget for approval and meet with State Leadership to finalize. Advertise to volunteers to help out at State Fair.

August- Attend state fair to promote Earth Team Volunteer Program. Make final purchases of Earth Team items with current fiscal year budget.

September- Send out letter to employees regarding ETV awards nominations, Attend National ETV Conference, if applicable.

October- National Award Nominees due; select the four area ETV nominations. Attend National FFA Convention if it is in state.

November- State award winner selected; Area award presentations.

December- order ETV Display for IASWCD annual conference

Ongoing:

- Enter ETV groups and volunteer applications into online database volunteer.gov
- Maintain ETV 301A hard copy files
- Plan and discuss operations with ETV area coordinators

- Request and enter volunteer time into database
- Order award items
- Promote the Volunteer program at events when requested
- Provide training to employees and volunteers