



# PHILADELPHIA ORCHARD PROJECT

## **Orchard Liaison – Role and Responsibilities**

Members of POP's Orchard Committee are expected to serve as Orchard Liaison for at least one community partner orchard site. The Orchard Liaison's primary role is to serve as the first point of contact for the orchard caretakers and to assist POP's Orchard Director in working with and supporting the partner group. This role gives the liaison an opportunity for both more intimate, long-term involvement with an orchard and for expanding his/her own knowledge and skills in orchard care. The role allows POP to provide ongoing support for its orchard partners and enables the Orchard Director to reasonably split time between both new and existing site partners.

## **Liaisons for Existing Orchard Sites**

For existing sites, the Orchard Liaison takes on the role of primary contact point between the orchard partner and POP. The orchard's caretakers are expected to report monthly on the status of the orchard to their liaison during the active growing season. If the liaison doesn't receive a monthly report, he/she should remind the caretakers and request an update. The liaison should attempt to answer any questions the caretakers may have about orchard care. That said, the liaison isn't expected to be an orchard expert. Questions beyond the liaison's expertise should either be referred to the Orchard Director or the caretakers should be encouraged to post the question to the PHOG listserv. The liaison is also expected to visit or attend one activity at the orchard quarterly, including follow-up plantings, orchard care days, harvests, pruning, etc. The liaison should update the Orchard Director quarterly on the status of the orchard.

Beyond these basic expectations, a liaison's involvement with the partner and site is determined by their own availability, interest, and the relative needs of the partner group. Although the goal is for all orchard partners to become more or less self-sufficient in caring for their sites, some may require more assistance, especially in the establishment years. Liaisons may assist with event organizing, creation of signage, acquisition of material supports, pruning and training, creation of value-added products like jams & jellies, etc. Again, the level of involvement is determined by the liaison with the ultimate goal of building the capacity of the partner group to care for the orchard.

If at any time an Orchard Liaison can no longer fulfill the basic requirements of the role, they should inform the Orchard Director so that a new liaison can be matched with the orchard partner.

## **Liaisons for New Orchard Site Applicants**

The primary role for liaisons working with new orchard site applicants is to assist POP's Orchard Director in working with the applicant partner. Upon receipt of a new application, the Orchard Director will inform the Orchard Committee and request volunteers to serve as the liaison. In most cases, the Orchard Director will serve as the primary point of contact for new applicants, with the idea that eventually that role will transition to the liaison once the intensive early phase of partnership is complete. After being assigned to a new applicant, the liaison will be included on all communications and encouraged whenever possible to participate in evaluation of the application, design of the orchard, preparations for the planting, and organizing the planting event itself. Liaisons of particular experience or knowledge may be delegated to lead parts of this process.

### **New Applicant Process (led by Orchard Director with assistance from liaison)**

- Establish initial contact with the community partner representative and confirm receipt of the application
- Meet the community partner and visit the proposed orchard site
- Ensure the application is accurate and all partnership criteria are met, including:
  - o Site control
  - o Site suitability: water access, security from vandalism, soil testing, etc
  - o Capacity of partner group to mobilize support and provide long-term care for the orchard
  - o Contribution to community food security
- Assist community partner in completing the requirements for receipt of an orchard including:
  - o Signing of POP Contract by orchard site owner and all site partners
  - o Attending TreeTenders or other trainings
  - o Understanding and committing to basic tasks of orchard care
- Develop orchard site design with input from community partner
- Acquire all necessary materials for preparation and planting, including plants, compost, cardboard for sheetmulching, etc.
- Set dates for site preparation and planting event(s)
- Inform POP volunteer list of event(s)
- Coordinate event(s), including:
  - o Represent POP at the event and introduce the group
  - o Manage volunteer waiver and sign-in sheets
  - o Supervise partner and POP volunteers in sheetmulching, planting, etc
  - o Assist community partner in providing food and/or other activities for volunteers

If you have questions about your responsibilities as an Orchard Liaison, please contact Orchard Director Phil Forsyth at [phil@phillyorchards.org](mailto:phil@phillyorchards.org).