



2026-2027: A YEAR OF GROWTH. A YEAR OF ACTION. A YEAR FOR ALL OF US.

by **Christine Hamp**
National Grange President

On July 1, we begin a new Membership Year for the National Grange - and we are stepping into it with clarity, courage, and purpose.

The 2026-2027 Membership Year will be defined by two bold, measurable goals:

1. **A minimum of one (1) new charter for every State Grange.**
2. **A collective 1,200-member NET growth in total membership.**

These are not aspirational ideas. They are commitments that belong to all of us.

Why These Goals Matter

Growth is not about numbers for numbers' sake. Growth is relevance. Growth is sustainability. Growth is future leadership. Growth is ensuring that the Grange is stronger tomorrow than it is today!

Every new charter represents a new community gathering place. Every new member represents renewed civic engagement. Every net gain strengthens our collective voice.

If we want the Grange to thrive - not just endure but thrive - we must intentionally grow.

One Charter. Every State.

There are communities across this country that need what the Grange offers - connection, leadership development, civic engagement, agricultural advocacy,

and a place to belong.

A new charter does not require perfection. It requires vision. It requires leadership. It requires someone willing to say, "Let's begin." Imagine what it will mean when every State Grange can say: "We planted something new this year."

1,200 NET Members - Together

1,200 new members across the nation is not overwhelming when we divide it:

- That's approximately 38 new members per State Grange.
- That's just 3-4 new members per month per State Grange.

Retention matters. Engagement matters. Invitation matters.

Every handshake. Every conversation. Every community event. Every invitation.

Every Grange. Every Member. One Team.

This is not a National goal. This is not a State goal. This is not the President's goal. This is OUR goal.

Every Grange can:

- Host an open house.
- Invite a neighbor.
- Start a conversation.
- Launch a new idea.
- Mentor a new member.

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NATIONAL GRANGE

Elevating rural interests since 1867

1616 H St. NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20006



RURAL LIFE INITIATIVE: BRIDGING THE GAPS

WHAT IS THE RURAL LIFE INITIATIVE?

The Rural Life Initiative is a flagship program of the National Grange, created to empower community-driven projects that strengthen and enrich life in rural and small-town America. Originally piloted in 2024 through seven State Granges and a holiday mini-grant program, the initiative expanded nationwide in 2025, opening the door for all Granges to get involved and make a meaningful local impact. **To date, more than \$175,000 has been granted to local Granges and projects.**

HOW CAN I RECEIVE A GRANT?

In January 2026, a new grant cycle, "**Bridging the Gaps**," was announced, with forty (40) \$1,000 grants available to Community or Pomona Granges who wish to create or expand an event or project that educates their community and addresses a local disparity.

- Grants are open to Community Granges or Pomona Granges
- All grants require a simple application form, due by **February 28, 2026**.
- Grants must include at least one non-Grange **partner organization**.
- Projects must educate the community and address a disparity their community faces.
 - Granges may choose their own projects, but funding is meant to support the project or event, and should not be used for Grange Hall improvements or supplies that do not directly support the event.
 - Grant may be used for new events OR to expand upon a pre-existing event.
- Projects must be completed by **August 31, 2026**, with final reports due by **September 30, 2026**.
- Projects must include a plan for recruiting and gaining members
- Additional can be earned for documented membership growth.

Grant applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. All Granges will be notified in mid-March with fund distribution by **March 31, 2026**.

ACCESS GRANT APPLICATIONS: www.nationalgrange.org/rural-life-initiative

www.nationalgrange.org



YEAR OF GROWTH

continued from page 1

Every member can:

- Share why they belong.
- Bring a guest.
- Post about the Grange.
- Volunteer visibly.
- Advocate proudly.

Growth is a team sport.

Accountability and Visibility

Beginning July 1 - the start of the 2026-2027 Membership Year - we will track both goals publicly:

- New Charters by State
- National NET Membership Growth

Progress will be updated regularly on our website and featured in *Grange Today!*.

You will see the numbers. You will

feel the momentum. You will be part of the movement because what gets measured gets accomplished.

This Is Our Moment

Our founders were not passive. They were bold and organized. They chartered and invited. Now it is our turn.

Let July 1 mark the beginning of a year where we grow with intention, lead with confidence, invite with courage, and build with purpose.

All of Us. Grange Strong - Rooted, Resilient, United.

2026-2027 NATIONAL GRANGE MEMBERSHIP GOALS

Minimum of one (1) new Charter for every State Grange

A collective 1,200 member NET growth in total membership

PIONEER GRANGE LAUNCHES COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

submitted by Joseph Miczak

Pioneer Grange #1, New Jersey

Dayton, NJ – Pioneer Grange #1 (NJ) has completed and opened a new outdoor community food pantry at the Grange Hall, located at 410 Ridge Road, Dayton, NJ.

The pantry provides 24/7 access to non-perishable food items and operates on a simple “take what you need, leave what you can” basis, offering discreet assistance to neighbors facing food insecurity.

This project continues the Grange’s long tradition of community service and support for local families. Donations of non-perishable food items are welcome.



STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITIES

A National Grange Webinar Series

MARCH

ENGAGING NEW ENERGY

10

60 MINUTES

Join Amanda Brozana to explore strategies for welcoming and involving new members who join through the Rural Life Initiative, fostering active participation, lasting connections, and stronger, more vibrant Grange communities.



Register: <https://grange.biz/RLIwebinar>

All webinars will begin at 8:30pm ET / 5:30pm PT. Can't make it? Recordings will be available following the event.



NATIONAL GRANGE

OF THE ORDER OF PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY



View from the Hill

NATIONAL GRANGE POLICY UPDATES & ISSUE NEWS

February 2026

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

Farm bill 2.0 starts moving on the Hill

The House Agriculture Committee will begin markup of the “skinny” farm bill (the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026) the week of March 1. This action is intended to complete action on the overall farm bill, which began with several titles of the farm bill (commodity programs, crop insurance, foreign market development, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) included in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act signed into law July 4, 2025. Major farm and commodity groups generally support the Ag Committee draft bill prior to markup. Several nutrition, environmental, and animal welfare groups oppose certain sections of the bill. The legislation includes reauthorization of the popular Conservation Reserve Program and increases USDA loan limits, but reduces funds authorized for the popular Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Pesticides, animal welfare, and nutrition programs could become divisive issues in the bill’s markup debate, with several amendments to be offered to the bill text. Here are some of the possible contentious provisions:

- SNAP restrictions. The bill contains provisions to restrict certain food purchases while tightening eligibility for the program.
- Pesticide liability shield. This provision prevents individuals from suing pesticide companies based on state-level health claims.
- Animal welfare/Prop 12 (EATS Act). Language is designed to override state-level animal welfare standards, specifically aimed at neutralizing California’s Proposition 12, which imposes stricter housing requirements for farm animals producing food products shipped into the state.
- Food for Peace transfer. The proposal moves the Food for Peace Program from USAID to the USDA, a move critics say risks the effectiveness and efficiency of international food aid.
- Climate and conservation. The bill decreases emphasis on climate-smart agriculture, reduces funding for certain conservation programs, and places restrictions on solar projects on certain farmland.
- Omission of E15 ethanol. Lawmakers from corn-producing states had hoped for language supporting year-round E15 sales.

Farmers can now apply for aid payments

Enrollment is now open until April 17 for the USDA’s \$11 billion Farmer Bridge Assistance Program, with applications available at local USDA Farm Service Agency offices. The one-time payments are available to row crop producers in response to temporary

trade disruptions to markets and increased production costs. These Bridge payments were authorized by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

Farm finances weaken

Farmers’ debt-to-asset ratios are increasing, loan volumes are rising, and bankruptcies ticked up in 2025, according to the USDA. Farm sector solvency is expected to weaken this year as producers increasingly turn to debt to make it through a challenging farm economy.

Half of U.S. ag production is by large family farms

Large-scale family farms with more than \$1 million in annual gross cash farm income account for 50% of domestic agricultural production, according to the USDA. They operate on 33% of the total U.S. agricultural land base, yet account for only 5% of all farms. Midsize family farms, which have gross incomes between \$350,000 and \$1 million, account for 18% of production and operate on 18% of the land base. They make up 6% of all farms. Small family farms with gross annual income less than \$350,000 operate on 46% of the land, produce 17% of our food and fiber, and represent 86% of all farms in the U.S.

HEALTH CARE

Grange gets huge health care wins on the Hill

When Congress recently passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2026, several National Grange bipartisan health care priorities were included. Here’s a rundown:

- Multi-Cancer Early Detection (MCED) legislation that authorizes Medicare to cover the costs of the MCED screening that detects over three dozen cancers with a simple blood draw. This action will save lives in rural America, where cancer specialists and screening services are scarce. Passing the MCED bill has been a multi-year priority for the National Grange.
- Sweeping new disclosure requirements for Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs), which include all the different ways they get money from brokering prescription drug prices, brands, and plan coverage. Rebates will now be passed directly to patients and plan sponsors. PBMs have been a major driver in creating higher prescription drug prices for patients. PBM transparency and accountability have been another long-term priority for the National Grange.
- A new allocation of \$418 million for rural health (including hospitals), and maintains \$1.9 billion in funding for community health centers
- An allocation of \$1.4 billion is set aside to support the

- health care workforce and connect them with rural areas
- Expiring telehealth and virtual care programs are extended
- Provides relief from further cuts to tests and services reimbursement under the Medicare fee schedule for one year to give the clinical laboratory industry and Medicare time to evaluate service and cost data.

GRAIL President thanks the Grange

National Grange president Chris Hamp and Legislative Director Burton Eller received a personal note of thanks from Josh Ofman, President of Grail, the company that developed the MCEd cancer screen test, for their efforts to pass the MCEd bill. Ofman said, "On behalf of the entire executive leadership team at GRAIL, we want to extend our heartfelt thanks and admiration to you for your extraordinary leadership in passing the MCEd legislation into law. From the 2023 Cancer Report you published to your direct Hill engagements, you helped ensure policymakers understand why earlier detection for multiple cancers is not just a scientific breakthrough, but a moral and public health imperative. Your organization has been a true champion for the cancer community - especially those living in rural communities."

PBM group recognizes Grange

The PBM Accountability Project, the national coalition urging major Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM) reform, recently presented the National Grange with its PBM Accountability Grassroots Champion of 2026 award. In recognizing the Grange, the Accountability Project said, "In recognition of your sustained advocacy work, you are being honored with our PBM Accountability Grassroots Champion award for your critical role in transforming the PBM reform debate into a national movement and helping to advance key reforms."

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Grange supports FirstNet reauthorization

In preparation for the House Communications and Technology Subcommittee hearing on FirstNet reauthorization recently, the National Grange sent members of the subcommittee copies of Chris Hamp's op-ed in the Spokane Spokesman Review, which gave a first-hand critique of her experience with the success of FirstNet in disaster response. The FirstNet reauthorization bill passed the subcommittee unanimously. FirstNet is a nationwide public safety network designed by first responders for first responders.

Pole dispute resolution to speed broadband buildout

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has issued new enforcement guidance to resolve broadband pole attachment disputes in under 60 days. Cost allocation disputes between pole owners and prospective attachers have been slowing broadband deployment. A cornerstone requirement of the new guidance states that a new attacher is not required to pay the entire cost of pole replacement when the pole already fails to comply with existing safety or engineering standards. The National Grange has petitioned the FCC for the past two years to set standards to resolve pole attachment disputes in a timely fashion.

OF INTEREST...

Population shift could shrink rural clout in Congress

According to an analysis by the Brennan Center for Justice, population shifts over this decade could give Republicans a greater edge in presidential elections while reducing representation in rural areas and the Midwest agricultural belt in Congress. After the 2030 census, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and Texas are in line to gain a net nine electoral votes. For the House of Representatives, Texas would gain four seats, Florida three, and Arizona, Georgia, Idaho, North Carolina, and Utah would each gain one seat. California stands to lose four seats, while Illinois, Minnesota, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin each stand to lose one seat. The population shift is likely to reduce the number of rural districts with shrinking, stagnant, or slower-growing populations, compared with cities or suburbs. Southern states could control 40% of the House for the first time in history.

VIEW FROM THE HILL

is written and compiled by

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PERSPECTIVES

"To maintain a joyful family requires much from both the parents and the children. Each member of the family has to become, in a special way, the servant of the others."

- Pope John Paul II

"It is of no consequence of what parents a man is born, as long as he be a man of merit."

- Horace, Ancient Roman poet

"The first half of our lives is ruined by our parents and the second half by our children."

- Clarence Darrow, American lawyer & politician

"If your parents never had children, chances are you won't either."

- Dick Cavett, American television personality & comedian

ADAM'S STORY: FREE RURAL MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR GRANGE COMMUNITIES

courtesy of Andy Tilton
Director, Adam's Story

Adam's Story began as a deeply personal journey of loss, love, and determination. Today, it has grown into a grassroots rural wellness outreach serving Kansas City and rural communities across Kansas and Missouri. Our mission is simple but urgent: to bring mental health education, suicide-prevention resources, and hope to the places where stigma, isolation, and limited access to care continue to put families, farmers, ranchers, veterans, and young people at risk.

What started as a father's promise to honor his son Adam's life has become a volunteer-driven outreach effort that meets people where they are—churches, community halls, VFWs, county fairs, farmers markets, school events, and rural main streets.

Through **Project Hope**, our mobile outreach initiative, we distribute free mental health materials, host community conversations, offer speaking engagements, and provide resource displays for events of every size. Our goal is to make sure no one in rural America feels alone in their struggle or unsure of where to turn.

Partnering With Rural Minds and a Broad Network of Agencies

Adam's Story is proud to partner with Rural Minds, a national nonprofit dedicated to improving mental health in rural America. Their rural-specific materials—covering suicide prevention, farm stress, addiction, and crisis support—are a central part of our outreach.

We also collaborate with:

- County health departments
- State and federal mental health agencies
- Veteran service organizations
- Rural school districts
- Faith-based ministries
- National suicide-prevention and addiction-awareness networks

These partnerships allow us to provide accurate, trusted, and accessible resources tailored to rural needs.

Why This Matters for Grange Members

Rural communities face unique mental health challenges: limited access to care, long travel distances, workforce shortages, and cultural stigma. Many families struggle quietly, unsure where to turn.

Grange members are uniquely positioned to help. Your halls, events, and networks are natural gathering places where trusted information can make a real difference.

Adam's Story can support your efforts by providing:

- Free mental health and suicide-prevention brochures
- Farm stress and rural-specific educational materials
- Addiction and recovery resources



Adam's Story
Building Resiliency
A TOOL FOR MENTAL WELLNESS

A Mental Health Advocacy of Resilience, Connection, and Hope for Urban & Rural

Supporting Kansas City and surrounding rural communities with free mental health resources, conversations, and compassionate outreach.

WHAT WE PROVIDE

- ★ **Free Educational Resources**
 - Suicide prevention materials
 - Addiction and recovery awareness tools
 - Grief and loss support resources
 - Faith-based wellness guides
 - Veteran and family resilience materials
- 🗨️ **Speaking Opportunities**
 - Churches, women's ministries, veteran groups
 - Civic organizations
- 🗨️ **Resource Displays for Events**
 - Conferences, health fairs, community gatherings
 - Rural outreach events
 - Eye-catching displays with free materials for community comert
- 🗨️ **Community Conversations**
 - Safe, stigma-free discussions about mental health
 - Support for families navigating loss, addiction, or trauma
 - Encouragement for rural communities with limited access to care.

CONTACT
Adam's Story andytilton454@gmail.com
Project Hope adamstorywellness@gmail.com

- Grief and loss support tools
- Event displays and speaking engagements
- Customizable resource tables for local Grange events

Everything we offer is free and designed to be easy to distribute.

How Granges Can Partner With Us

- Invite Adam's Story to speak at a meeting or event
- Request free materials for your hall or community outreach
- Host a mental health resource table at a fair or festival
- Share our contact information with members and local partners

We are here to support your work in strengthening rural communities.

Connect With Adam's Story

To request materials, schedule a presentation, or explore partnership opportunities, contact us at adamstorywellness@gmail.com.

Together—with Rural Minds, the National Grange, and local leaders—we can build stronger, healthier, more resilient rural communities.

PROMOTE NATIONAL AG DAY WITH YOUR GRANGE

On March 24, 2026, communities across the country will come together to recognize [National Ag Day](#), a special occasion dedicated to honoring the farmers, ranchers, and agricultural professionals who help feed, fuel, and clothe our nation. For the Grange, this day is more than a celebration—it is an opportunity to highlight our long-standing commitment to agriculture, education, and rural prosperity.

National Ag Day reminds us that agriculture touches every part of our daily lives, from the food on our tables to the clothes on our backs and the fuel in our vehicles. Yet many Americans are increasingly disconnected from where their food comes from. That makes this an ideal moment for Granges to step forward as trusted local voices, sharing accurate information and personal stories about modern agriculture and rural life.

Local and State Granges are encouraged to mark the day with activities that engage their communities. This might include hosting an open house, partnering with a local school for an agriculture lesson, sharing



farmer spotlights on social media, organizing a community meal featuring local products, or inviting a producer to speak at a meeting. Even small efforts can make a big impact when they help someone better understand and appreciate agriculture.

As an organization founded by and for agricultural families and rural citizens, the Grange has always stood at the intersection of farming, education, and advocacy. National Ag Day is a chance to reaffirm that role and show how agriculture continues to evolve while remaining rooted in strong values of stewardship, innovation, and service.

This March 24, let's use National Ag Day to tell our story, celebrate our members, and strengthen the connection between agriculture and the communities we serve. Together, we can help ensure that the voices of rural America and agriculture remain strong, visible, and respected for generations to come.

Learn more about National Ag Day at agday.org.

SUPPORT THE GRANGE FOUNDATION THROUGH THE COMMON ROUTES CHALLENGE

Through April, the Grange Foundation is encouraging members and friends of the Grange to celebrate unity through movement by participating in the [Common Routes: Choose Your Challenge](#) event.

This virtual *-thon* allows individuals to support the work of the Grange Foundation at the level and with the activity of their choice, from running a 10K to taking a few long Sunday drives. Pets and children can even take part!

"The idea is simple - use your time on the move to reflect on the impact the Grange has had on your life or community and share that with others," Grange Foundation Chairman John Benedik said. "You can choose how you want to participate, when you want to participate and in doing so, you'll move the Grange Foundation forward into 2026 and beyond."

Adult and Junior racers will receive a cooling towel and sticker pack. If you sign up a child under 5, you will receive a special waterproof "Baby's first 5k" sticker.

You can even choose to have your pets get in on the fun by signing them up to take part in the pup strut - though it's



open to any pet you'd like to participate. They will receive an event-branded pet bandana.

Racers are encouraged to have friends register and enjoy being on the move together, but they may also want to secure sponsors. By encouraging people who do not wish to race to sponsor you, you'll be helping the Foundation and entered into our contest for "biggest fundraisers." Just tell your friends and family to click the donate button on the website, select their amount and choose "Other" and enter your name under the On Behalf Of option.

To honor the idea that you can choose your challenge and move any way you'd like, we've also created a Sunday Driver

and passenger category. Sunday drivers will receive a keychain and sticker pack. Passengers will receive an event sticker pack.

Finally, if you don't want to race or drive but still wish to support the Grange Foundation and have your name added to the event supporters, you can register as a cheerleader.

Registration is open through Grange Month (April)!

When you register however, you will receive a digital bib so you can show your support and participation on social media platforms. Print the bib and hang it at your hall or office to encourage others to take part. Swag items will be sent by mail.

"This is a great way to get a friend to support the Foundation and learn why the Grange is important to you while walking, running, biking, riding or doing any other type of movement that you choose," Grange Foundation Associate Amanda Brozana said. "No matter what mode of movement you choose, we challenge you to share the value of Grange with others through this event."

Register here: <https://runsignup.com/grangefoundation>

LIFE LINE SCREENING - A NEW NATIONAL GRANGE BENEFIT

We're helping you take a proactive step for your health.

As a valued National Grange member, you have access to convenient, painless preventive health screenings that can help detect risk for stroke and cardiovascular disease. Screenings are non-invasive, take about an hour, and results are easy to understand and share with your doctor.

Phone: 1-888-787-3294

Priority code: BHUS001



National Grange has partnered with Life Line Screening to provide convenient, preventive health screenings to help detect risk for stroke and cardiovascular disease at a special rate for our members.

4 Vital Screenings for \$135

- Carotid Artery Ultrasound
- Atrial Fibrillation
- Peripheral Artery Disease
- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm

Because you are a valued National Grange member, you also receive the Osteoporosis screening for only **\$10**.



Call today for more information or to schedule an appointment near you:
1-888-787-3294 • Priority Code: **BHUS001**



Save the Dates!

November 9-14, 2026
Broken Arrow, OK

Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center
Secure your hotel room: <https://grange.biz/160hotel>

Submit your stories, events, and ideas to...



<http://grange.biz/grangetodaysubmit>

Recipes from the Heartland

The America's 250th Grange Workgroup is celebrating our country's 250th Anniversary by "throwing back" to some classic recipes from Grange cookbooks. Do you have favorite recipes that evoke the American spirit which you would like to see published again? Send them to Lew Gaskill at olgaskill@comcast.net. Please include which Grange cookbook your recipes come from.

This week's recipes come from the **Country Classics 1993 Cookbook** from Boylston Grange, Boylston, MA



Snowballs

Courtesy of Helen Young
Sterling, Massachusetts

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1/2 cup butter | 1/2 cup chopped nuts |
| 1 (8 oz) package dates, cut small | 1/2 teaspoon vanilla |
| 2 cups Rice Krispies | Flaked coconut |
| 1 cup sugar | |
| 1 egg, beaten | |

Mix the butter, sugar, dates and egg and cook 10 minutes over low heat, stirring constantly. Cool and add Rice Krispies, nuts and vanilla. Form into small balls. Roll in Angel flaked coconut.

Stained Glass Windows

Courtesy of L. Vera Brigham

- 1 bag-colored mini marshmallows
- 12-ounce bag Nestle semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup butter or 1 stick margarine
- 1/2 cup walnuts, chopped fine

Melt butter and chocolate chips together. Stir up; let cool. Add marshmallows and nuts. Mix thoroughly. Drop by spoon onto waxed paper and form balls. Refrigerate for 24 hours, then slice. Put remainder back in refrigerator until ready to use.



GRANGE MEMBER BENEFIT: MEMBERDEALS



Access exclusive savings on everything from car rentals to hotels, even tickets to theme parks, performances, and sporting events.

Shop savings and deals on computers, jewelry, phones, vision, and more! There's no end to the things you can find at MemberDeals.

Savings include:

- Walt Disney World & Disneyland
- Universal Orlando & Universal Studios Hollywood
- Sea World
- Six Flags
- Busch Gardens
- Knotts Berry Farm
- LEGOLAND
- Hersheypark
- Sesame Place
- Water Parks
- Zoos & Aquariums
- Hotels
- Shows, Sports, & Concerts
- Movie tickets at AMC, Regal and more
- Rental Cars (Avis, Budget, Hertz, & others)
- Shopping Deals
- *and much more!*

Visit

<https://www.memberdeals.com/nationalgrange/?login=1>

today to start saving.



VETERAN RECOGNITION PIN

Are you looking to honor a veteran in your Grange? This special .75" pin combines honoring their service in the military as well as honoring their Grange membership. Perfect for adding to a Quilts of Valor presentation or Veteran recognition ceremony.



Order online through the Grange Supply Store at grangestore.org or by calling Loretta at (202) 628-3507 ext. 109.

5 for \$25.00
PLUS SHIPPING

Supply Store notice: Price Change Effective May 1!

The price of Golden Sheaf, Silver Star, and 75-year Awards, as well as 80- and 85-year letters will increase to \$15.00 each *plus shipping*. Thank you for understanding!

NATIONAL GRANGE

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Leadership Training & Membership Development - Amanda Brozana, National Grange Membership and Leadership Development Director. Contact us to learn more about membership recruitment or how to start or reorganize a Grange, leadership training, and more. Email abrozana@nationalgrange.org or call/text (301) 943-1090

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