



VOLUNTEER EMPLOYEES

Volunteers are invaluable resources to Washington State University Cooperative Extension. Volunteers are members of the staff who give time and expertise without receiving or expecting monetary pay. They do this to support the mission of the organization, to help others and to reach personal goals that include educational opportunities. The experience, talents and time that volunteers contribute can strengthen all program areas by increasing the scope of programs provided, broadening the base of support, adding to the diversity of cultural backgrounds and making more effective use of limited resources. The purpose of involving volunteers in key roles is to multiply the outreach capacity to carry out the mission of Washington State University Cooperative Extension.

Volunteers should expect to:

- Share program ownership.
- Have worthwhile, appropriate jobs with clear expectations and adequate resources.
- Receive appropriate orientation , training, supervision, encouragement, evaluation and recognition.

Volunteer responsibilities include:

- Accept assignments suited to their interests, talents and skills
- Participate in appropriate orientation, training and evaluation.
- Learn about WSU Cooperative Extension policies, people and programs.
- Represent and promote Washington State University.
- Be a member of the team; one who is trusted; who listens to constituents, faculty and other volunteers; and who shares ideas with faculty and staff.
- Act in a professional manner which includes respecting confidences and communicating clearly.
- Be accountable to Washington State University Cooperative extension when involved in Extension work.
- Work within the policies of the organization and carry out the assignments expected of them.
- Recognize that volunteering for Washington State University, while a valued contribution, is a privilege not a right. Volunteers serve at the pleasure of the University and may be dismissed at any time.



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WSU Faculty and Staff Should Expect to:

- Learn how to work with volunteers
- Gain satisfaction from reaching more people through volunteer efforts.
- Expand their access to community resources.
- Experience an enhanced professional role.
- Receive merit recognition for quality management of volunteers to increase the effectiveness of priority programs.

WSU Faculty and Staff Responsibilities Include:

- Believe in involving volunteers in partnership roles.
- Develop job descriptions, contractual agreements and performance evaluation procedures.
- Adequately orient, train, supervise, encourage, evaluate and recognize volunteers.
- Increase their capacity and effectiveness in addressing issues of importance to their constituents through volunteers.
- Clearly communicate expectations and responsibilities to volunteers.
- Respect and trust volunteers and provide opportunities what will encourage personal growth.
- If necessary, deal with performance issues in a timely, professional and straight forward way.

Volunteer Liability.

In order for WSU to assume responsibility for liability protection for its volunteers, all volunteers must be trained, signed up formally with the Extension office as documented volunteers leading the event, and under the direction of a faculty member. Just being a Master Gardener, for example, is not adequate to be covered for liability; they must be listed as actually working this specific event.

Adult volunteers are protected under the state of Washington tort claims law for university volunteer liability and will be defended whenever an action or proceedings for damages are instituted arising from their acts or omissions while performing, or in good faith purporting to perform, their official volunteer duties. Volunteers are expected to act in good faith and without negligence in the performance of their duties



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in order to minimize any chance of creating a university liability. Volunteers are typically covered by the Department of Labor and Industries medical aid program. Participation allows an injured volunteer's medical expenses to be paid by the Department of Labor and Industries. In the event of such injury, the responsible faculty member should immediately contact the CAHE Business and Finance Office and notify their supervisor.

Specific policies for 4-H volunteers can be found in EM 0758.