

Code of Conduct and Volunteer Agreement **Reassignment or Dismissal Guidelines**

Infractions, Reassignments, and Dismissals of Volunteers

Infractions of the Code of Conduct must be reported, by anyone observing them, to University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service staff. Consequences may include:

1. Discussion of the incident with the responsible leader and/or Extension staff member and clarification of the policy.
2. Releasing the adult to the appropriate law enforcement agency for appropriate infractions or violations.
3. Dismissal of the volunteer from the Extension program.

County Extension agents should provide volunteers with the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service Code of Conduct and Volunteer Agreement ([MISC-120](#)), which they agree to and sign. The original should be kept on file in the county Extension office and one returned to the volunteer. Volunteers are expected to participate in training necessary to carry out their responsibility. It is the responsibility of the adult volunteer to carry out the assigned responsibilities that he or she has accepted. Volunteers are expected to follow the Code of Conduct and conduct themselves in both public and private life as good examples. This includes appropriate dress, correct use of language and moral conduct in accordance with the generally recognized standards of our society. It should be understood by the volunteer that he or she is expected to pursue avenues of learning, training and teaching provided to them.

Cause for Reassignment or Dismissal of Volunteers

A volunteer may be reassigned or dismissed for a number of reasons which may include but is not limited to illegal activity, behavior which compromises the health and safety of program participants, violating an Extension policy, violation of the Volunteer Agreement, willfully violating or causing others to violate rules, being consistently disruptive to the overall program and being consistently unwilling or unable to work amicably with agents and other leaders, or failure to rotate the leadership role. The nature and seriousness of the infraction or violation will determine whether the option of reassignment or dismissal should be considered.

A volunteer who is unable to embrace and demonstrate the overall philosophy of the program may be counseled toward other avenues of volunteering, or dismissed as a volunteer.

Procedure for Dismissal

Before any official action is taken, county professional staff and their immediate Extension supervisors or the CES faculty member with the lead program assignment should counsel volunteers about problems. Always keep written records of discussion concerning volunteer performance. Utilize the following steps for a volunteers' removal only after extensive efforts have been made to help the volunteer improve his or her performance.

Step 1: County staff representative or Cooperative Extension Service faculty member with the lead program assignment meet with the volunteer to discuss problems with performance and/or any Volunteer Agreement or Code of Conduct violations. Specific areas for improvement are outlined and recorded. A written record of the meeting is kept and copies provided to all participants, including immediate Extension supervisors

Step 2: If problems continue, a second contact is made with the volunteer. The volunteer is given a probationary period during which performance must improve.

Step 3: If problems continue, the volunteer should be notified in writing of their dismissal as a volunteer. Copies provided as noted in Steps 1 & 2.

Extension reserves the right to impose, on a case-by-case basis, immediate dismissal or suspension for any infraction deemed by Extension to warrant such severe action.

Immediate Dismissal

Some actions by volunteers may warrant immediate dismissal or suspension without benefit of the step-by-step process. Conduct of this severity might include, but is not limited to, arrest or conviction for child abuse, negligence, violent crime, drug use, or other felony violations of the law. In some cases a volunteer may be suspended until an investigation is completed. A decision for immediate dismissal should be made with input from the appropriate Extension supervisor. Prior to dismissal, Extension Administration's appropriate District Director, Assistant Director, Associate Director, and the Associate Vice President for Agriculture - Extension must be contacted for counsel. Administration will discuss the infraction and make a determination. A written letter of dismissal will be sent to the volunteer by the appropriate administrator. See sample letters of suspension and dismissal.

Volunteer Resignation

Volunteers may resign from serving as an Extension volunteer due to family needs, health considerations, or other reasons. Volunteers should be asked to write a resignation letter to the appropriate administrator. If a resignation letter is received, the appropriate administrator should write a letter accepting the resignation to the volunteer.

Fund Management

Guidelines for County Financial Operations for 4-H (DIST-03) are available to provide direction to volunteer groups on relevant financial matters. A couple notes of particular attention are related to authorized signatures for bank accounts. At least two authorized signatures are advisable. Another discusses the dissolution of a Club or Foundation. These guidelines and many more are found on pages 1-5 of the Guidelines (DIST-03).

**SAMPLE LETTER
For
Accepting Volunteer's Resignation**

DATE

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE, ZIP

Dear _____,

I am in receipt of your written resignation dated _____.

The Cooperative Extension Service appreciates the service you have provided to our (4-H, Master Gardener, EHC) program.

Sincerely,

Name
Extension Title

Cc: Associate Vice President for Agriculture – Extension
Associate Director – Programs
Assistant Director
District Director

**SAMPLE LETTER
For
Volunteer Dismissal**

DATE

CERTIFIED MAIL

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE, ZIP

Dear _____,

This is to inform you that you are dismissed as a volunteer with the (4-H, Master Gardener, EHC) program of the University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service effective immediately.

The Guidelines for Volunteers and Volunteer Groups permit the dismissal of volunteers from serving in any program at any time.

Sincerely,

Name
Extension Title

Cc: Associate Vice President for Agriculture – Extension
Associate Director – Programs
Assistant Director
District Director

**SAMPLE LETTER
Of Suspension**

DATE

CERTIFIED MAIL

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE, ZIP

Dear _____,

This letter is to inform you that we are temporarily suspending your participation as a (4-H, Master Gardener, EHC) volunteer in _____ County. As you know, the (4-H, Master Gardener, EHC) program is committed to the development of (youth, adults) in technical skills, leadership skills and other professional improvement activities. Your recent (arrest, violence incident, etc.) concerns us.

Volunteering is a privilege and not a right. I have discussed this matter with Extension administration. We believe it is in the best interest of (4-H, EHC, Master Gardeners) to temporarily revoke your volunteer status until the above concerns are resolved. In the interim, your responsibilities will be assumed by other 4-H leaders, EHC members, or Master Gardeners).

Sincerely,

Name
Extension Title

Cc: Associate Vice President for Agriculture – Extension
Associate Director – Programs
Assistant Director
District Director

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.