

What Every UNHCE Volunteer Should Know

UNH Cooperative Extension's Mission (<http://extension.unh.edu/AboutUs/Mission.htm>)

UNH Cooperative Extension provides New Hampshire citizens with research-based education and information, enhancing their ability to make informed decisions that strengthen youth, families and communities, sustain natural resources, and improve the economy.

UNH Cooperative Extension Facts (<http://extension.unh.edu/AboutUs/fstfct05.pdf>)

UNH Cooperative Extension:

- Is a partnership of public, private and community resources focused on New Hampshire's natural resources, families, communities, and youth.
- Provides statewide and local educational delivery systems providing direct access for people throughout New Hampshire.
- Involves 140 County Advisory Council members who help identify local needs and priorities.
- Multiplies its educational efforts with more than 3,700 trained and dedicated volunteers.
- Is an equal opportunity educator and employer. University of New Hampshire, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and NH counties cooperating.

(See <http://extension.unh.edu/AboutUs/diduno05.pdf>)

A network of 180 professional Extension staff, located in all 10 New Hampshire counties, provide outreach from the university. Staff work with local volunteers, and program specialists to design and conduct educational programs that meet societal, environmental and economic needs. While many programs are conducted locally, current communications technology is also used including computer networking and interactive television. As part of the national land-grant university system, UNHCE accesses the knowledge and expertise of other state land-grant universities throughout the U.S.

Cooperative Extension derives its name from the partnership structure that combines federal, state and county funding. This "cooperative" effort ensures all people have local access to their state university and the knowledge and resources available to address needs and problems. The principal partner is the University of New Hampshire; as a state land-grant university, it is charged by Congress to conduct resident instruction, research, and outreach to people beyond the classroom.

UNHCE designs and conducts educational programs in the areas of:

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| 4-H Youth Development | Gardening |
| Agricultural Resources | GIS/GPS (geospatial technologies) |
| Community and Economic Development | Managing Money |
| Family & Consumer Resources | Marine & Fisheries |
| Food, Nutrition & Food Safety | Water Resources |
| Forests & Trees | Wildlife |

UNHCE Program Areas: What Do They Do?

4-H Youth Development

(See <http://extension.unh.edu/4H/4H.htm> and <http://extension.unh.edu/Youth/Youth.htm>)

- Delivers educational efforts focused on positive youth development to 22,500 youth through organized 4-H clubs, after-school programs, community youth efforts, 4-H camp, school enrichment, and short-term special interest programs.
- Uses an extensive network of more than 2,100 volunteers to deliver educational programming to NH youth.
- Provides positive youth experiences through a focus on both life skills and subject matter for all youth to develop their individual potential as caring and contributing members of an ever-changing world.
- Helps communities measure teen concerns, attitudes and behaviors, both positive and problematic. This increases community awareness and knowledge of teen issues, helping them collaborate and address the needs of teens.
- Conducts specialized educational programs for children, youth and families at risk, using research-based, proven core strategies.
- Delivers educational programs in positive youth development to adults working with youth through schools, childcare centers and youth organizations.

Agricultural Resources

(See <http://extension.unh.edu/Agric/Agric.htm> and <http://extension.unh.edu/FHGEC/FHGEC.htm>)

- Provides information through the Family, Home and Garden Education Center on “practical solutions to everyday questions” via a toll-free Info-Line, staffed by specialists and volunteers handling over 10,000 calls a year on everything from the ABC’s of raising children, household food safety and food preservation, water quality, family finances, gardens, lawns and landscapes, to child development and more.
- Provides educational training for Master Gardeners each year who then serve as volunteer educators in their communities and conduct a variety of community garden projects.
- Uses applied research, conducted at UNH and on farms throughout the state, to develop “Best Management Practices” to help New Hampshire farmers maintain profitability and protect the environment.
- Encourages expanded production and marketing of locally grown farm products and entrepreneurial efforts by working with state and local government officials, and improving general public understanding of New Hampshire agriculture and its role in the state’s economy.
- Reduces pesticide use through its Integrated Pest Management Program, teaching a holistic approach to pest problems, rather than relying on a single pest reduction method.
- Teaches New Hampshire residents how to use environmentally friendly solutions to yard and garden problems, resulting in healthier, valued-enhanced living environments.

- Helps homeowners and commercial producers identify and manage plant problems to grow healthy plants.

Community and Economic Development

(See <http://extension.unh.edu/CommDev/CommDev.htm> and <http://extension.unh.edu/Energy/Energy.html>)

- Strengthens communities through its Community Profile process, involving local citizens in identifying community issues and creating strategies for working together to address them.
- Partners with communities to identify and address critical youth issues through its 4-H Youth Development program, which enhances the development of partnerships and coalitions.
- Helps communities build capacity to address high priority issues, using UNH resources, public deliberation, and group process expertise.
- Assists communities with research-based information on forestry, wildlife, land-use planning, estate planning, natural resource inventories, and land conservation.

Family & Consumer Resources

(See <http://extension.unh.edu/Family/Family.htm>; <http://extension.unh.edu/FoodNutr/FoodNutr.htm>; <http://extension.unh.edu/FoodSafe/FoodSafe.htm>; <http://extension.unh.edu/Age/Age.htm>; and <http://extension.unh.edu/Money/Money.htm>.)

- Conducts parenting education programs throughout the state that address effective parenting techniques, how family structure impacts parenting, and the availability of state and local resources.
- Teaches financial management skills that help individuals increase savings and reduce debt, make the transition from welfare to work, gain confidence in financial decision-making, and obtain accurate information regarding Medicare insurance benefits.
- Reaches at-risk families through its Nutrition Connections program to help stretch food dollars, practice food safety, and improve the health of pregnant and parenting teens, young families, the elderly, and children.
- Provides food managers and consumers with research-based information about food safety to reduce the incidence of food-borne illnesses.
- Provides professional development training to child care providers in family and group day care settings to enhance the quality of child care.

Forestry and Wildlife

(See <http://extension.unh.edu/Forestry/Forestry.htm> and <http://extension.unh.edu/Wildlife/Wildlife.htm>)

- Provides educational opportunities for New Hampshire residents and communities to learn about forestry and wildlife habitat through site visits, publications, workshops, and seminars.
- Works with landowners to identify objectives for long-term land stewardship, improving their ability to make wise land use decisions.

- Educates volunteers to promote wildlife habitat conservation and forest stewardship among their neighbors and in their communities.
- Assists communities with research-based information on forestry, wildlife, land use planning, estate planning, natural resource inventories, and land conservation.

Sea Grant, Water and Marine Resources

(See <http://extension.unh.edu/Marine/Marine.htm>;
<http://extension.unh.edu/WatRes/WatRes.htm>; and
<http://extension.unh.edu/GISGPS/GISGPS.htm>)

- Educates New Hampshire's residents in the conservation and wise use of water and marine resources.
- Trains volunteer Marine Docents and Great Bay Watch estuarine monitors to act as catalysts toward positive action to help solve problems involving our coastal resources.
- Helps aquaculturists make sound decisions that result in profitable operations.
- Offers coastal residents usable information to help prevent or reduce water pollution.
- Provides communities with training in Geographic Information Systems technology, allowing them to better manage and protect their natural resources.
- Monitors more than 300 lake sites and 370 tributary sites for over 120 lake watersheds, using over 500 active volunteers in a "neighbor-to-neighbor" approach through the NH Lakes Lay Monitoring Program, promoting watershed protection and educating volunteer participants.

About UNH Extension Volunteer Programs

(See <http://extension.unh.edu/Volunt/Volunt.htm>)

Volunteers are an incredible and vital resource for extending UNH Cooperative Extension's program efforts. Over 3,500 UNHCE volunteers help develop and implement programs to meet the needs of New Hampshire people and make a difference in their communities.

4-H Youth Development (<http://extension.unh.edu/4H/4HVolunt.htm>)

4-H is the youth development and education program of UNH Cooperative Extension. The mission of 4-H is to help youth acquire knowledge, develop life skills and form attitudes to enable them to become self directing, productive and contributing members of society. 4-H emphasizes the importance of involving youth in the learning process. It is offered free of charge to youth ages 5-18. Youth from all cultural and economic backgrounds get involved in 4-H fun and learning. Members and volunteers live in towns, cities, farms, and suburbs.

NH Community Tree Stewards (<http://extension.unh.edu/Forestry/FORCTS.htm>)

The Community Tree Steward Program educates volunteers in community and urban forestry. It is based in New Hampshire's more highly developed counties of southern and central New Hampshire but open to all. The goals are to enhance ecosystems, strengthen

communities, and promote social change. Tree Stewards participate in an 11-session course in natural resources. In return, they spend 40 hours volunteering in their communities. Tree Stewards are involved in many projects such as protecting open space and establishing greenways, converting vacant lots into community parks and gardens, conducting tree inventories, improving wildlife habitat, educating youth and adults and managing the NH Big Tree Program. Many Community Tree Stewards also get involved in local government such as serving on conservation commissions or local land trusts.

NH Coverts Project (<http://extension.unh.edu/Wildlife/WLCoverts.html>)

The New Hampshire Coverts Project educates volunteers to promote wildlife habitat conservation and forest stewardship. The goals of the project are twofold: to enhance, restore, and conserve habitat for the rich diversity of native wildlife in New Hampshire; and to increase the amount of NH's public and private land managed with a stewardship ethic. Each fall, 25 trainees gather at a rustic camp and spend 3½ days learning about the latest concepts and issues in wildlife and forest ecology, habitat management, land conservation, community conservation planning, and effective outreach. In return, volunteers spend 40 hours over the next year volunteering in their communities and motivating others to become stewards of the state's wildlife and forest resources.

NH Outside Writers Collaborative (<http://extension.unh.edu/NHOutside/>)

This collaborative writing project features the work of Master Gardeners, NH Community Tree Stewards, Coverts Cooperators, Lay Lakes Monitors, and Marine Docents. A weekly column is written by UNH volunteers and reviewed by Extension specialists, then offered to print media statewide. Volunteer writers receive support for improving their writing skills and an opportunity to see their words in print. The NH Outside columns aim to connect readers to New Hampshire's wild and cultivated outdoor environments, motivating folks to get outside more often, to learn more about the topics we write about, and to become closer observers of the natural world.

Extension Advisory Councils (<http://extension.unh.edu/Volunt/VoIEACO.htm>)

The UNH Cooperative Extension County Advisory Councils are the vital link between the UNH Cooperative Extension, the local county, and its communities. The County Advisor Council members are volunteers who provide assistance to UNH Cooperative Extension staff in understand local needs, issues, for the development of Extension programming. They exchange and solicit ideas, identify major community needs, help implement programs that meet local needs and promote the University and Cooperative Extension programs throughout their counties.

Marine Docents (<http://www.unh.edu/marine-education/>)

The UNH Marine Docents are volunteers dedicated to the preservation and wise use of marine resources. They provide a lens through which the marine and associated environments can be viewed, understood and enjoyed by people of all ages. The Marine Docents, sponsored by NH Sea Grant and UNH Cooperative Extension, travel throughout New Hampshire teaching in classrooms, at education centers, and aboard boats. A five-month Docent training class beginning each September includes hands-on field experiences and lectures by University professors.

Great Bay Coast Watch (<http://www.gbcw.unh.edu/>)

The Great Bay Coast Watch (GBCW) is a volunteer program, which protects New Hampshire's coastal waters through educational outreach and monitoring water quality. "The Watch" is run by citizen volunteers who are dedicated to protecting the long-term health and natural resources of New Hampshire's coastal waters and estuarine systems. GBCW includes adults from many occupations, as well as teachers and students from local schools. Since 1990, GBCW has expanded water quality monitoring coverage from seven to twenty-one sites, and added six more sites for phytoplankton surveying. The data collected by "The Watch" is provided to government agencies, academic researchers, and private engineering firms.

Master Gardeners (<http://extension.unh.edu/Agric/AGMastGD.htm>)

Extension Master Gardener volunteers share their knowledge and enthusiasm for gardening with the general public. After completing a comprehensive training program, Master Gardeners share skills with others in multiple program venues. Program participants learn how to grow and preserve crops, apply pesticides responsibly, and protect their environment. Master Gardeners volunteer more than 10,000 community hours annually. These highly respected volunteers garden with the elderly and physically challenged, work at county fairs and plant clinics, conduct gardening projects with youth, write gardening articles for local newspapers, speak to groups interested in horticulture, plan and complete community beautification projects, and answer thousands of questions from callers at the Family, Home & Garden Education Center's hotline.

Lakes Lay Monitoring Program (<http://extension.unh.edu/Volunt/docs/NHLLMP.htm>)

The New Hampshire Lakes Lay Monitoring (LLMP) is dedicated to preservation and sound management of lakes through citizen-based monitoring and research. Begun at the University of New Hampshire over two decades ago as one of the first citizen monitoring programs, the LLMP has been directly involved in the initiation and expansion of volunteer programs in 24 states and 11 countries. Through its integration of research, outreach and teaching, the LLMP provides valuable data on the lakes of New Hampshire, broad community service and a unique opportunity for hands-on learning and employment of students. The program continues to receive local and national recognition as one of the leading lake monitoring programs in the country.

Expectations of UNHCE Volunteers

Expectations will be specific to the experience and program area of the volunteer.

Volunteer Service Agreements and Descriptions

Each Extension volunteer shall have a Volunteer Service Agreement provided by the Extension Educator prior to any volunteer service. Each UNHCE Volunteer Program has specific service agreement forms that may include:

- Volunteer program title, position, and purpose

- Program supervisor
- Key responsibilities
- Term of appointment
- Qualifications
- Time required
- Specified Duties
- Benefits
- Signatures of both parties

Know Who to Ask

Each Extension volunteer shall have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for day-to-day guidance of the work of the volunteer, and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance. This is particularly important when a volunteer is in a position where people other than the supervisor may ask the volunteer to do a job.

Communication is Key

Volunteers and staff are considered to be partners in implementing the mission and programs of UNHCE. It is essential to this relationship that each partner understands and respects the needs, abilities, and responsibilities of the other. Lines of communication shall operate in both directions, and should exist both formally and informally. Volunteers shall be consulted regarding all decisions which would substantially affect the performance of their duties.

Volunteer Evaluation

Extension volunteers are expected to participate in periodic program or performance evaluations, as appropriate. This may include a yearly meeting with a supervisor to discuss their roles and contributions, to compare volunteer activities with volunteer service description, and/or to address areas of improvement. Volunteers may also be asked to participate in evaluations of the volunteer program itself, in such venues as yearly/monthly submission of volunteer hours or activity reports, contributions to newsletters, yearly reports, or comments on the administration, content, impacts of the program itself.

UNHCE Policies & Procedures Related to UNHCE Staff and Volunteers

As representatives of UNH Cooperative Extension, volunteers, like staff members, are responsible for presenting a good image to clients and to the community. This includes dressing and acting appropriately for the conditions and the performance of the volunteer duties.

Program Eligibility and Non-discrimination

UNHCE programs are open to all persons without regard to disability, national origin, race, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran's status. UNH Cooperative Extension volunteers must be officially accepted and enrolled by Extension prior to performance of the task. A signed agreement form is evidence of acceptance.

Representing UNH Cooperative Extension

Prior to any action or statement which might significantly affect or obligate Extension, volunteers shall seek prior consultation and approval from appropriate staff including their supervisor. These actions may include, but are not limited to public statements to the press, coalition or lobbying efforts with other organizations, or any agreements involving financial or contractual obligations. Volunteers are authorized to act as representatives for Extension as specifically indicated within their volunteer service descriptions.

Volunteers and staff have an obligation to act in a way that is neither reckless nor wanton. As Extension representatives they have the obligation to provide accurate and timely information. Only current resources, selected for use by UNH Cooperative Extension, should be used in programs and with clientele.

Confidentiality

Paid and volunteer staff shall be responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving in their respective role, whether this information involves single staff, volunteer, client, or other person or involves overall Extension business.

Legal Protection for Volunteers

UNH Cooperative Extension paid and volunteer staff acting within their position responsibilities are covered by the University System's comprehensive general liability insurance policy, and are subject to the exclusions provided therein, including the exclusion for injuries resulting from the use of automobiles. Volunteers are named additional insured under the policy. They receive defense and indemnification up to the limits of the policy. (Volunteers are encouraged to consult with their own insurance agents regarding the extension of their personal insurance to include community volunteer work.)

Volunteers are not covered by Workers' Compensation.

UNHCE Transportation Policy

(See http://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource001037_Rep1193.pdf)

UNH Cooperative Extension staff and volunteers are encouraged not to arrange transportation for others. In most situations, transportation is the responsibility of the participant's family; including transportation to and from Extension program/activity sites. In rare cases where transportation in personal vehicles is arranged by Extension staff or volunteers as a part of their responsibilities with UNH Cooperative Extension, the

driver must be an enrolled volunteer who has signed a Volunteer Agreement Form or an adult who has signed a trip-specific Activity Driver Form prior to transporting others. Do not permit anyone to drive whose driving you know to be dangerous.

Volunteers must rely on their own automobile insurance when using personal vehicles while performing their volunteer duties. Volunteers who use their personal vehicles while performing their assigned duties shall be in compliance with all federal and state laws pertaining to use of such vehicles, including but not limited to, possession of a valid operators license, vehicle registration and inspection, and availability and use of safety devices. They must also have personal automobile liability coverage.

All drivers for Extension functions will be at least 21 years of age if transporting others or be either a certified school bus driver or a commercially licensed driver and employed in that capacity. The use of full-size 15 passenger style vans is prohibited. Seat belts must be worn by all passengers. The number of passengers will not exceed the number of properly functioning seatbelts in the vehicle. Do not allow passengers to ride in the back of pickup trucks. Youth who are known to cause trouble for drivers should be driven by their own parent or left at home.

Complaint & Grievance Process

Volunteers are entitled to feedback and/or evaluation by their volunteer supervisor. If a volunteer is not performing the requirements outlined in their volunteer service agreement and/or are not in compliance with UNHCE policies and procedures, volunteers should be notified by their supervisor and provided steps to take and a time line for improvement. If significant improvement is not made, a volunteer should know that he/she may be asked to leave.

Political Activities

In a spirit consistent with UNHCE Policy USY.V.D.9.1.1 (<http://usnholpm.unh.edu/USY/V.Pers/D.9.htm>), volunteers are strongly discouraged from actively conveying partisan opinions (e.g. voting a particular way in an election; supporting a particular candidate) *while performing their role as an UNHCE volunteer*. Volunteers should endeavor to minimize the risk or perception that Extension is associated with or endorses the “platform” of a particular political party.

Child Abuse

Volunteers should avoid the potential of child abuse allegations (real or perceived) by having at least three people (adults and/or youth) present during all volunteer activities involving youth.

If you suspect that a UNHCE program participant is being abused, contact your volunteer supervisor for guidance in reporting. By law (RSA 169-C), any suspected child abuse must be reported to the Bureau of Child and Family Services, New Hampshire Division of Children, Youth and Families. Failure to report is a misdemeanor.

Conflict of Interest Policy

See <http://extension.unh.edu/Intranet/UNHCEPP/EmpConfl.pdf>

Emergency Procedures

See <http://www.unh.edu/emergency/>

Harassment/Discrimination

See <http://usnholpm.unh.edu/UNH/V.Pers/B.htm#5>

Safety Guidelines

See the following web pages for information as it is written for 4-H Youth Development but is applicable to all program areas:

http://extension.unh.edu/resources/files/Resource000180_Rep198.pdf

<http://extension.unh.edu/4H/4HVol/WPGuide1.pdf>