



# Volunteer Administration in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:

## Volunteer Associations and Groups

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**V**olunteer associations and groups are made up of volunteers with similar interests and education who come together for a common cause. Such groups support the mission of Texas Extension through their education and service. To be successful, these volunteers must receive training and support and their volunteer service must be put to the best possible use. These groups are separate from Extension, but partner with Extension to achieve common goals.

Associations are ideal for individuals who have shared interests and wish to meet regularly for education, social interaction and service. Associations can be a great source of help in raising money and finding other resources within community organizations, foundations and corporations. The funds they raise can help support the group's educational projects and activities and fund scholarships.

There are three types of volunteer groups.

- A volunteer **association** shares common goals with Texas Extension. Examples are TEEA, Inc.; county, district and state 4-H Volunteer Leaders

Associations; and county, district and state 4-H councils.

- A **master volunteer association** is connected with one of the master volunteer programs. Master volunteers differ from other volunteer groups in that individual members receive a specified number of training hours and commit to returning a designated number of hours in volunteer service. The minimum standards for Texas Extension master volunteers are 20 hours of training and 50 hours of service (or a combination of 80 hours). The resource *Master Volunteer Programs: an Orientation for Agents* is a great place to start in determining a county's needs in relation to master volunteer groups. Examples include Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists and TEEA Master Volunteers.
- The third type is **master volunteer groups** that are not affiliated with associations. Examples of these include Master Sewing Volunteers, 4-H Large Animal Master Volunteers, Shooting Sports Volunteers, and Sportfishing Volunteers.

## Chartering

Each volunteer group will be chartered through the Office of Volunteer Development. The only exception to this is a group that has a memorandum of agreement with Texas Extension. The chartering process ensures that each group will meet the minimum requirements of an association partner with Texas Extension. Charter applications are submitted to county Extension offices and then forwarded to the appropriate department or unit. The minimum standards include

- by-laws, which must contain a dissolution clause;
- officers (at minimum a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer);
- committees that support the goals and purposes of the association; and
- a commitment to using best practices for financial management according to the guidelines outlined by Texas Extension (<http://tce-employees.tamu.edu/frm/>)

## Role of Extension faculty

The main role of Extension faculty is to guide and support a volunteer association or group in meeting the mission of Extension. Extension faculty

- serve as advisors to the association;
- teach subject matter that supports the mission of Texas Extension and the association;
- provide and coordinate supporting services to the group; and
- maintain a county office, with the cooperation of the County Commissioners' Court, where people can learn about the association and where information related to the program area can be recorded and distributed.

In the case of master volunteer associations, faculty

- recruit and select candidates for the master volunteer program;
- fund and conduct training for master volunteer candidates;
- certify and recertify master volunteers according to the appropriate guidelines;
- help determine what activities and projects the master volunteer candidates will carry out to support Extension's educational mission;
- approve, record and report the service of master volunteers;

- recognize master volunteers for their service and leadership; and
- facilitate communication between Extension personnel and master volunteers.

## Volunteer application and qualifications

The first step in recruiting volunteers is to gather the following information

Name,  
Mailing address  
Residence address  
City and zip  
Home phone  
E-mail  
Gender  
Place of employment  
Employment address  
Years as a volunteer  
Volunteer interests  
Race/ethnicity  
Prior criminal background screenings  
Social Security number (if screening will be done through Texas Extension)  
Date of birth  
Self disclosure of criminal offenses  
Maiden and alias names

If possible, prospective volunteers should be interviewed one-on-one, either by an Extension faculty member or by a member of the volunteer group the person is interested in joining. During the interview, the person should be asked if he or she has a current/valid driver's license and automobile liability insurance. The prospective volunteer should be asked to sign a statement authorizing a criminal background check. If there is a code of conduct specific to the volunteer group, the interviewee should be asked to sign it as well. Codes of conduct are encouraged.

The interview process ensures that the best applicants will be selected, which results in the best service for customers. If interviews can't be conducted, using an application form with key questions regarding the volunteers' objectives and needs can help in the selection process. Questions should probe their interests and abilities and not be in a format that simply elicits stock answers.

## Youth protection standards

All volunteers 18 years of age and older who will have direct contact with young people must have a criminal background check. This is part of Extension's Youth Protection Standards program, which was implemented to ensure a safe and positive environment for young people and adult volunteers. Details may be found in the Youth Protection Standards Reference Guide.

## Position descriptions

Having volunteer position descriptions helps ensure that volunteers will be successful. Position descriptions make it clear what the responsibilities of a volunteer will be and what the expectations are for the volunteer's performance. The standard position description adopted for Texas Extension includes the following:

- Title
- Advisor
- Purpose
- Benefits to the volunteer
- Responsibilities
- Qualifications
- Time required
- Resources

## Additional reading

Texas Master Gardener Management Guide. 2002. Texas Cooperative Extension. <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>

Burkham, A. and M. Couch. 2004. Youth Protection Standards Reference Guide. Texas Cooperative Extension, The Texas A&M University System.

Other publications in this series on volunteer administration:

D-1451, Volunteer Administration in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Roles Volunteers Play in Texas Cooperative Extension

D-1452, Leadership Advisory Boards

D-1453, Program Area Committees and Youth Boards

D-1455, Understanding and Managing Direct and Episodic Volunteers

D-1456, Managing the Risk Associated with Volunteer Service



Cooperative Extension Program  
 Prairie View A&M University

# Chartering Application Volunteer Association or Group Texas Extension

County \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_

All of the following criteria have been met by the members of our association or group.  
 (The group president or club manager must initial each of the following criteria.)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Club or group name  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Five or more members
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting place (for at least the next 3 months)  
 Location \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Elected officers to fill at least the positions of president, vice president, secretary and treasurer
- \_\_\_\_\_ By-laws containing a dissolution clause
- \_\_\_\_\_ EIN number obtained through the IRS
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bank account  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Whose signatures are on the account? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is there an annual budget? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Copy (attached) of the annual financial review and report for all accounts

If the group or club has been chartered before, what was the date? \_\_\_\_\_

This form must be submitted to the county Extension office no later than September 30<sup>th</sup>.

President's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Charter expires on August 31, \_\_\_\_\_. Year group began \_\_\_\_\_ (If previously in existence)

**For office use only**

**Approved:**

Group chartered \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No      Group renewed \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**Not approved because the following criteria (from the list above) were not met:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Approved by:**

County Extension Agent(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Department/Unit approval \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Office of Volunteer Development \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Volunteer Position Description Template

Title:

Advisor:

Purpose:

Benefits to the volunteer:

Responsibilities:

Qualifications:

Time required:

Resources and support available:

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County Extension Agent

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Volunteer

This material was developed by the Texas Cooperative Extension Volunteer Steering Committee, chaired by Chris Boleman and Angela Burkham. Extension faculty who serve on the committee are Dirk Aaron, Michelle Allen, Joyce Cavanagh, Nelson Daniels, Darrell Dromgoole, Linda Lynch Evans, Alma Fonseca, Pam Foster, Elaine Fries, Richie Griffin, Rick Hirsch, Kit Horne, Shirley Long, Rick Machen, Linda Mock, Carolyn Nobles, Susan Richey, Bob Robinson, Renee Sanders, Robert Scott, Doug Welsh, Neal Wilkins and Ron Woolley. Administrative advisors are Kyle Smith, Associate Director for County Programs, and Martha Couch, Associate Director for 4-H and Youth Development.

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