

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program EFNEP Volunteer Policy – June 2017

Volunteers are important to the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). Former participants, partner agency staff, and others serve important roles as they reach out to potential program participants, provide opportunities and locations to teach, assist with class management, and facilitate program participation by offering transportation, babysitting, food supplies, and material resources to support EFNEP. Requests for a closer look at how volunteers might be used in EFNEP led to the development of this addendum to the national [EFNEP Policy Document](#). This addendum clarifies the appropriate involvement of volunteers and includes new ways of involving volunteers to extend and leverage the influence and effectiveness of EFNEP locally.

Volunteers can be used to support, but not replace paraprofessional staff. They may work alongside or under the direction of paraprofessional staff, or be supportive to paraprofessional staff in other ways determined by local or state program leadership.

- There are four volunteer designations within EFNEP: 1) formal volunteer program; 2) non-agencyⁱ/non-paid volunteers; 3) agency-paid volunteers; and 4) student/intern volunteers. Distinguishing details can be found in the *EFNEP Volunteer Criteria – June 2017 document*. Universities interested in using formal volunteers must submit a volunteer plan to the National EFNEP Office for pre-approval.
- Volunteers are subject to the same EFNEP policy, program expectations, and university requirements as employed staff. Partner agencies and internship/practicum programs may have additional stipulations that must also be followed.
 - Volunteers are responsible for staying true to the intent of EFNEP. Program policies, methods, content, and all related practices must be followed.
 - University policies must be followed for safety, security, liability, and similar concerns.
- Volunteers are to be supervised at all times, similar to paid staff. EFNEP volunteers must never work independently from EFNEP staff supervisors. EFNEP paraprofessional staff may provide limited front line oversight for volunteers, if in accordance with local and state program EFNEP oversight.
- EFNEP federal funds are not to be used to cover volunteer costs, such as background checks and transportation. They may be used to cover program costs, such as curricula and food supplies for teaching specific educational concepts, and training resources.

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

- In some cases, volunteers may assist with teaching or even teach some classes. However, they should not teach a full series of classes independently. See the “*EFNEP Volunteer Criteria – June 2017 document*” for additional details.
- Volunteers may assist in data gathering, but are not to facilitate entry and exit surveys and recalls or handle data sensitive records by themselves.

Acknowledgments: Special thanks go to the EFNEP national volunteer workgroup for conceptualizing and providing substantive content in developing this policy and to EFNEP Coordinators who responded to opportunities to provide comments. Members of the national volunteer workgroup were:

Lisa Benavente, North Carolina State University
Imelda Galdamez, Michigan State University
Mattie Rasco, Alcorn University
Cassandra Silveira, University of Minnesota
Chelsea Bishop Smith, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Sue Snider, University of Delaware
Dreamal Worthen, Florida A&M University
Kate Yerxa, University of Maine Cooperative Extension
Linda Boeckner, University of Nebraska, Co-Chair
Helen Chipman, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Co-Chair

If you still have questions after reviewing this program policy and associated EFNEP volunteer resources, please contact the National Program Office:

Helen Chipman, PhD, RD
National Program Leader, Food and Nutrition Education
USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture
hchipman@nifa.usda.gov
202-720-8067

Mallory M. Koenings, PhD, RDN
Interim National EFNEP Coordinator
USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture
mallory.koenings@nifa.usda.gov
202-401-5286

ⁱ Agency refers to any public or private entity with which EFNEP may partner.