



EXTENSION

2026

VOLUNTEER

AWARDS

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APPLICATION SUBMISSION OVERVIEW

Applications will be submitted through the OSU Extension InfoReady platform online. Extension employees will sign into the site with their Single Sign On (OKEY) email and password. Volunteers, OHCE members, or other individuals who would like to apply will create an account on InfoReady. See instructions below.

Link to Application Site: <https://okstate-ag.infoready4.com>

Application Due Date: March 31, 2026

Creating an account for non-Extension employees:

- Go to the InfoReady platform at <https://okstate-ag.infoready4.com>
- Click on the **Log In link** in the top right corner.
- Go to the gray box with the heading “**Login for Other Users**” and click on the “**Register**” button in the lower right corner. The system will prompt you to enter your first and last name, email and a password.
- Click “**Create Account**”.
- Once logged in, you can click on the Home link at the top. The table in the middle of the page has a list of the applications open. Find the one you wish to complete and click on the link.

The applications will be available on InfoReady February 15, 2026.

Contact for Questions and Help:

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AWARD REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements are expected for each award. Please adhere to the criteria, regardless of the award category.

- Counties may nominate a project/program only one time. The same project/program may not be entered in multiple categories.
- It is expected that the top three applicants (or a project/program designee) selected for each award will attend the Conference.
- Applicant will prepare a written narrative answering the questions under the Narrative Requirements section for the specific award.
- Narrative is limited to 3 pages and will be uploaded to the application.
- **Format requirements of the narrative include:**
 - 12-point font, Times New Roman or Arial preferred
 - Double-spaced
 - 1-inch margins
 - File format to upload may be in Word or PDF
 - Recommend using headings under “Narrative Requirements” for each award so that it is clear the nominator addresses the information that will be judged for the award.
- **Supporting materials** are required and should complement the content in the narrative. Support materials are to be combined into one Word or PDF document and are limited to 3 pages. Supporting materials will be worth 10 points on the judging criteria.
 - Examples of support materials include:
 - Photos – one page of photos, max of 3 photos with captions
 - Media coverage (written media, TV, radio, social media, etc.)
 - Marketing examples (flyer, social media posts, news release, etc.)
 - Testimonials, success stories, thank you notes, reports shared with stakeholders, etc.
 - Other appropriate materials that reflect the work featured in the application
- **Recognition of awards:** Each category will receive a cash award. Funds may be use to further efforts, whether by expanding an existing project or launching a new initiative, or for professional development.

EXCELLENCE IN EXTENSION VOLUNTEERISM AWARD

Purpose: The Excellence in Extension Volunteerism Award will recognize a county volunteer organization/group and their Extension educator(s)/county staff that has demonstrated service, community impact, and civic leadership through their volunteer contributions. This award will focus on efforts performed **from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2025**. County volunteer organizations/groups include Master Gardener Associations, 4-H Parent/Volunteer Associations, Master FCS Volunteer Groups, OHCE county programs, or specific OHCE groups.

Who Can Apply: Applications may be submitted by an individual involved in an Extension volunteer organization/group or County Extension Educator(s).

Nominator/Nominee Information: The following information will be requested in the application.

- Nominator's Name
- County
- Email
- Phone Number
- Nominated Organization/Group
- Educator(s) Name, County, and Title

Narrative Requirements: Please answer the following questions in the narrative—limit of 3 pages as outlined under award requirements on page 3. The maximum point value in judging the application is provided with each question.

1. **Teamwork Description (15 points):** Describe how the organizations/groups came together. What prompted this teamwork? How were shared leadership roles and responsibilities between the volunteer group and the Extension educator(s)/county staff determined?
2. **Project or Initiative Description (15 points):** Provide a detailed description of the project(s) or initiative(s). What were the goals, who were served, and what strategies or activities were used to achieve success?
3. **Community Impact (30 points):** How did this effort benefit the community? Include measurable outcomes if available (e.g., number of individuals served, community resources developed, educational outcomes, etc.).
4. **Teamwork and Civic Engagement (20 points):** Give examples of how the groups demonstrated exceptional teamwork and active civic engagement. How did this team model respect, cooperation, inclusion, or civic responsibility?

5. Innovation and Problem Solving (10 points)

Were there any challenges during the project? If so, how did the groups collaboratively address them? Share any innovative approaches used.

6. Supporting Materials (10 points): Upload as a separate Word or PDF Document. Max of 3 pages. Please refer to the guidelines on page 3.

Supporting materials are required and should complement the content in the narrative. Supporting materials should be a separate document from the narrative and will be uploaded in the application. Support materials are to be combined into one Word or PDF document and are limited to 3 pages. Supporting materials will be worth 10 points on the judging criteria.

- Examples of support materials include:
 - Photos – one page of photos, max of 3 photos with captions
 - Media coverage (written media, TV, radio, social media, etc.)
 - Marketing examples (flyer, social media posts, news release, etc.)
 - Testimonials, success stories, thank you notes, reports shared with stakeholders, etc.
 - Other appropriate materials that reflect the work featured in the application

EXCELLENCE IN TEAMWORK AWARD

Purpose: The Excellence in Teamwork Award honors exceptional teamwork demonstrated by a partnership of two or more Extension volunteer organizations/groups and their Extension educator(s)/county staff who have significantly contributed to their community through collaborative service, civic engagement, and impactful engagement. This award will focus on efforts performed **from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2025**. County volunteer organizations/groups include Master Gardener Associations, 4-H Parent/Volunteer Associations, Master FCS Volunteer Groups, OHCE county programs, or specific clubs. Organizations/groups may be from the same county or partner across county lines.

Who Can Apply: Applications may be submitted by an individual involved in an Extension volunteer organization/group or County Extension Educator(s).

Nominator/Nominee Information: The following information will be requested in the application.

- Nominator's Name
- County
- Email
- Phone Number
- Nominated Organizations/Groups
- Educator(s) Name, County, and Title

Narrative Requirements: Please answer the following questions in the narrative—limit of 3 pages as outlined under award requirements on page 3. The maximum point value in judging the application is provided with each question.

- 1. Teamwork Description (15 points):** Describe how the organizations/groups came together. What prompted this teamwork? How were shared leadership roles and responsibilities between the volunteer groups and the Extension educator(s)/county staff determined?
- 2. Project or Initiative Description (15 points):** Provide a detailed description of the project(s) or initiative(s). What were the goals, who were served, and what strategies or activities were used to achieve success?
- 3. Community Impact (30 points):** How did this effort benefit the community? Include measurable outcomes if available (e.g., number of individuals served, community resources developed, educational outcomes, etc.).
- 4. Teamwork and Civic Engagement (20 points):** Give examples of how the groups demonstrated exceptional teamwork and civic engagement. How did this team model respect, cooperation, inclusion, or civic responsibility?

5. **Innovation and Problem Solving (10 points):** Were there any challenges during the project? If so, how did the groups collaboratively address them? Share any innovative approaches used.
6. **Supporting Materials (10 points):** Upload as a separate Word or PDF Document. Max of 3 pages. Please refer to the guidelines on page 3.

Supporting materials are required and should complement the content in the narrative. Supporting materials should be a separate document from the narrative and will be uploaded in the application. Support materials are to be combined into one Word or PDF document and are limited to 3 pages. Supporting materials will be worth 10 points on the judging criteria.

- Examples of support materials include:
 - Photos – one page of photos, max of 3 photos with captions
 - Media coverage (written media, TV, radio, social media, etc.)
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 - Testimonials, success stories, thank you notes, reports shared with stakeholders, etc.
 - Other appropriate materials that reflect the work featured in the application

EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AWARD

Purpose: The Excellence in Community Partnership Award honors OHCE, Master Gardeners, and 4-H Parent/Volunteer groups, their Extension educator(s)/county staff, and their partners that have demonstrated outstanding efforts in building and sustaining partnerships to address educational or community needs within their county. A community partner could include cities, schools, other non-profit organizations, businesses, or individuals. This award will focus on efforts performed **from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2025**.

Who Can Apply: Applications may be submitted by an individual involved in an Extension volunteer organization/group or County Extension Educator(s).

Nominator/Nominee Information: The following information will be requested in the application.

- Nominator's Name
- County
- Email
- Phone Number
- Nominated Organization(s)/Group(s)
- Nominated Community Partner(s)
- Educator's Name, County, and Title

Narrative Requirements: Please answer the following questions in the narrative—limit of 3 pages as outlined under award requirements on page 3. The maximum point value in judging the application is provided with each question.

- 1. Community Partner Description (15 points):** Describe how the partner shows a strong commitment to its community. Share specific examples of how they stay involved, stay connected to the community, and work with others (like schools, nonprofits, or local government).
- 2. Community Building Activities (30 points):** List the different types of programs or activities that the community partner, volunteer group(s), and Extension educator(s)/county staff conduct. Include examples of year-round or seasonal projects, and how they adjust to meet the community's needs.
- 3. Teamwork (15 points):** Describe how the community partner, Extension volunteer group, and Extension educator(s)/county staff work together to build a stronger, more unified, and resilient community.
- 4. Impacts and Outcomes (30 points):** Summarize the impact of the community partner, volunteer organization/group, and Extension educator(s)/county staff. Include testimonials, quotes, or stories that highlight meaningful change from beneficiaries or community members. Include statistics such as:

- Number of Extension Volunteers involved in efforts
- Estimated Total Volunteer Hours contributed to this project/partnership
- Estimated Number of Individuals reached or benefited

5. Supporting Materials (10 points): Upload as a separate Word or PDF Document. Max of 3 pages. Please refer to the guidelines on page 3.

Supporting materials are required and should complement the content in the narrative. Supporting materials should be a separate document from the narrative and will be uploaded in the application. Support materials are to be combined into one Word or PDF document and are limited to 3 pages. Supporting materials will be worth 10 points on the judging criteria.

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EXCELLENCE IN VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

Purpose: This award is to recognize a county Extension educator who has strengthened their ability to engage volunteers and build the capacity of their educational program to serve more clientele. There is no time limit for implementation of an effective volunteer management program for this award. Nominators should gather information on the nominee that reflects how the educator's volunteer program has grown and evolved.

Who Can Apply: This award requires nomination by an Extension volunteer or Extension volunteer organization/group to recognize an Extension educator. Self-nominations are not permitted.

Nominator/Nominee Information: The following information will be requested in the application.

- Nominator's Name
- County
- Email
- Phone Number
- Nominating Organization(s)/Group(s)
- Nominee's (educator) Name, County, and Title

Narrative Requirements: Please answer the following questions in the narrative—limit of 3 pages as outlined under award requirements on page 3. The maximum point value in judging the application is provided with each question.

- 1. Introduction (10 points):** Briefly describe the history of how volunteers have been involved in the educator's current role. Include details like the number and types of volunteers (such as Master Gardeners, 4-H, FCS Master Volunteers, or OHCE).
- 2. Volunteer Recruitment and Training (20 points):** Describe how the Extension Educator recruits and trains volunteers. What unique strategies have been used? What innovative training has been provided?
- 3. Volunteer Engagement and Program Management (30 points):** Explain how the educator's programs have changed as volunteers have taken on more leadership or responsibilities. Share how volunteer roles or behaviors have evolved, and how they now work together with the educator or with others in the community.
- 4. Program Impacts (15 points):** Describe how the program has improved because volunteers took on more leadership. Include specific results like new member recruitment, higher attendance, increased community involvement, more publicity, or other signs of growth. You can also mention any new or creative programs that have started.

5. **Innovation and Problem-Solving (15 points):** Were there any challenges/barriers the educator had to overcome? If so, how did they address them? Share any innovative approaches used.
6. **Supporting Materials (10 points):** Upload as a separate Word or PDF Document. Max of 3 pages. Please refer to the guidelines on page 3.

Supporting materials are required and should complement the content in the narrative. Supporting materials should be a separate document from the narrative and will be uploaded in the application. Support materials are to be combined into one Word or PDF document and are limited to 3 pages. Supporting materials will be worth 10 points on the judging criteria.

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