



Welcome to Module 1, Lesson 3: Extension Family & Consumer Sciences Volunteers. Committed and hard-working volunteers are an essential asset to the strengthening of our families, farms, communities, and our economy. Volunteers bring many benefits to Extension Family & Consumer Sciences and to themselves through human experience. From team work to the production of new ideas and from learning new skills to overcoming challenges, volunteers make a difference in our ability to identify and solve problems and to reach and serve a wide range of people. This lesson will discuss the value and function of Extension Family & Consumer Sciences volunteers.

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Lesson Objectives

After participation in this lesson, you will be able to:

- State the relationship between Cooperative Extension and Family & Consumer Sciences volunteers
- Identify two roles of Family & Consumer Sciences volunteers in their state
- Learn the history of the first Family & Consumer Sciences volunteer base
- Explore various opportunities for engagement



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There are four objectives for this lesson. First, you will be able to state the relationship between Cooperative Extension and Family & Consumer Sciences volunteers. Second, you will be able to identify two roles of Family & Consumer Sciences volunteers in your state. Third, you will learn the history of the first Family & Consumer Sciences volunteer base. Last, you will explore various opportunities for engagement.

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**Volunteer Experiences Vary By:**

- Tasks
- Time available
- Knowledge
- Public rapport
- Expertise and skill



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A volunteer who is knowledgeable in a particular subject can help an individual or a family with quality of living needs. Volunteer experiences vary by tasks, time available, knowledge, public rapport, expertise and skill. Master Volunteer Programs provide the opportunity for an individual that has a particular love or interest to share their talents, skills, and abilities with others.

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### Volunteer Opportunities



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There are many Family and Consumer Sciences volunteer opportunities. These range from Financial Mentors or Master Food Volunteers, to many others. As an Extension volunteer, your participation in this module will enable you to gain a greater understanding of Family & Consumer Sciences Extension programs and opportunities.

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**Volunteer Roles**

- Teaching
- Mentoring
- Coordinating
- Providing meeting space and materials





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As a Family & Consumer Sciences volunteer, you can assume many roles such as teaching or mentoring. Volunteers in Family & Consumer Sciences that teach often do this as part of a group, such as a Master Volunteer Program. But there are also volunteers that have a strong educational background in a particular area and share this in an educational program either as a stand alone program or as part of a series of programs. Volunteers do not always have to take on a teaching, mentoring, or assisting role. They also can help with coordinating and providing meeting places and/or materials. All of these are needed for effective programming.

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Volunteer Roles

Mentoring Individuals



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Very often, people who come to Extension need one-on-one help. A volunteer who is knowledgeable in a particular subject can often help an individual or a family. Master Volunteer Programs provide the opportunity for an individual that has a particular interest to take their knowledge to a higher level. Volunteer programs and experience vary by state opportunity and access to qualified local volunteer expertise, time, and knowledge. While many volunteer efforts can be short, one-time obligations, Master Volunteer Programs typically include anywhere from twenty to forty or more hours of in-depth training in a specific area, and in return for their training, the volunteer gives back a certain number of hours to Extension.

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**Examples of Family & Consumer Sciences  
and Related Master Volunteer Programs**

- Master Food Volunteer Program
- Master Clothing Construction Volunteer Program
- Master Wellness Program
- Master Gardeners Program
- Master Naturalist Program

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An example of a Family & Consumer Sciences Master Program is the Master Food Volunteers Program that provides a base of knowledge in food safety, food science, food preparation, and food preservation. Master Volunteers in Clothing Construction, Financial Mentors and Master Wellness Programs are other examples. Not every state, however, offers these Master Programs, but many states provide in-depth training in particular subject areas. Two other well-known Master Programs in Extension are the Master Gardeners Program, which trains volunteers in many aspects of horticulture, including vegetables, flowers, fruits, and also soils, pests, and lawns. The Master Naturalist Program trains volunteers to conserve and manage natural resources and public lands. Examples of Family & Consumer Sciences Master Programs will be discussed in more depth in the upcoming slides.

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Volunteer Roles

- Organize educational events and projects
- Assist with demonstrations





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Volunteers in assisting roles are essential. Organizing educational events and projects, like health fairs or field days, is another important role for volunteers and for the success of Extension programs. Organizing takes a special talent and skill. Volunteers are also great at assisting with complex demonstrations featuring multiple materials, steps, and processes.



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**Volunteer Roles**

- Serve on committees
- Set program priorities





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One role that people often do not think about as a volunteer role is serving on Family & Consumer Sciences and Extension committees. One type of committee that is particularly important is an Extension Advisory Committee. In your state, these committees may use a different name such as Extension Leadership Council. No matter what they are called, they are extremely important. Extension Leadership Council or Advisory Committees are usually active both at the state and local levels to help keep Extension programming relevant. They also help county and state Extension programs set priorities to be certain they are meeting the needs of the people.

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## Volunteer Roles

- Prepare media and materials
- Share information informally



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Some Extension volunteers prefer to work at home. In this role, a volunteer might prepare materials for a radio spot or news article, or they might be available in the office to informally help a client that comes in for advice.


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## Volunteer Roles

Lending a Helping Hand



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Another volunteer role is lending a helping hand, as needed. These are people who stay when a program is over to help clean up, put away tables and chairs, or the person who hands out the agendas or takes notes at a meeting. These are the volunteers who make everything easier and more enjoyable.

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Master Financial Education Volunteer



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Master Volunteer Programs provide the opportunity for individuals that have a particular interest to share their talents and abilities with others. As a financial mentor, a volunteer works one-on-one or conducts workshops with individuals that need help with budgeting, managing their credit, and other aspects of their home finances. Many people find this experience educational and enjoyable. Additional information can be found in the references for this lesson.


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**Seniors Home Energy & Safety Master Volunteer Program**




*A National  
Extension  
Homemaker  
Award Winner!*



**... a volunteer community program to help seniors understand the benefits of weatherizing their homes, inform them of local assistance programs, and to apply weatherization materials to their homes.**

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The Seniors Home Energy Project was designed as a volunteer community-based partnership of businesses, government agencies, non-profit groups, civic and religious organizations, and individuals who are concerned about the energy needs of senior citizens. Its goals are to help seniors understand the benefits of weatherizing their homes, to inform them of local senior assistance services, and to apply cost-effective weatherization materials to their homes. Services are usually free to seniors and are provided by local volunteers. This program evolved into the Master Volunteer Seniors Home Energy & Safety Program.

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**Master Food Volunteer**



The Master Food Volunteer Program helps Extension reach community members with up-to-date, research-based knowledge on food preparation, nutrition, food safety, and physical activity.

  
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The Master Food Volunteer Program helps Extension reach community members with up-to-date, research-based knowledge on food preparation, nutrition, food safety, and physical activity. A Master Food Volunteer said this about her experience: “I have always loved to cook. When I heard about the Master Food Volunteer Program, I knew it was for me, and boy was I right! The training was great. I learned things about food, food safety, food preservation, and cooking that I never knew. Then, I got to help other people learn these skills too. As an added bonus, I met lots of new people, and I’ve made a ton of new friends that also love food and cooking.”

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Volunteers in Action: Human Development



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In addition to other volunteer development programs, volunteers seize opportunities in Human Development. One volunteer said, *"I've taught a workshop at a Childcare Conference several times.* These workshops are always fun, and I learn as much from the providers as I hope they learn from me. For each conference, there are many different workshops dealing with children and childcare often taught by volunteers."


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**Master Wellness Volunteer Program**

Training topics:

- MyPlate guidelines
- Food safety
- Health and physical activity
- Finding reliable resources on the internet
- Nutrition across the life span



  
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Research shows at least fifty percent of health status is due to lifestyle factors such as not using tobacco, being physically active, having a normal weight, maintaining good nutrition, controlling alcohol consumption, and using seat belts. Having a healthy lifestyle reduces the risks of developing costly chronic diseases like heart disease, cancer, and type 2 diabetes. Avoiding chronic diseases, or minimizing their impact, produces significant savings since these diseases account for a large portion of all health-care spending. Volunteers minimize these health effects through conducting training on MyPlate guidelines, food safety, health and physical activity.




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Volunteers Enhance Extension Outreach Capacity



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These are wonderful examples of Extension volunteers today. Take some time to become familiar with Family & Consumer Sciences Master Volunteer Programs in your state or region. Now, look at how Extension volunteerism started.


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### Tomato Clubs



Club girls receive a demonstration on preparation for the canning of vegetables. May Quarles Collection, Extension Service History, Special Collections Department, Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University

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Volunteers and Home Demonstration Clubs played a vital role in the history of Family & Consumer Sciences. In fact, when Home Economics work started in Extension, it was based in Home Demonstration Clubs. The history or beginnings in each state vary slightly, but generally this is the story. In the early 1900s, under the General Education Board, young girls were involved in girls' tomato clubs, which helped instruct them on proper canning techniques.

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### Canning Clubs



This photograph shows the Rogers Minervian Club with their pressure cookers and canned goods, circa 1940. Negative# N008351  
Rogers Historical Museum, Rogers, Arkansas

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The mothers of these girls quickly became interested in what their daughters were learning, and they began going with them to meetings. These meetings evolved into canning clubs, and women became interested in learning not only about canning, but also about other areas in which they had responsibility in their homes. In 1914, with the passage of the Smith-Lever Act establishing Cooperative Extension, these canning clubs flourished. They were soon known as Home Demonstration Clubs. These clubs met, usually monthly, and a trained extension agent conducted a “demonstration” on a family or home issue. Then, club members passed this information along to neighbors, families, and friends.

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### Rural Electrification Outreach



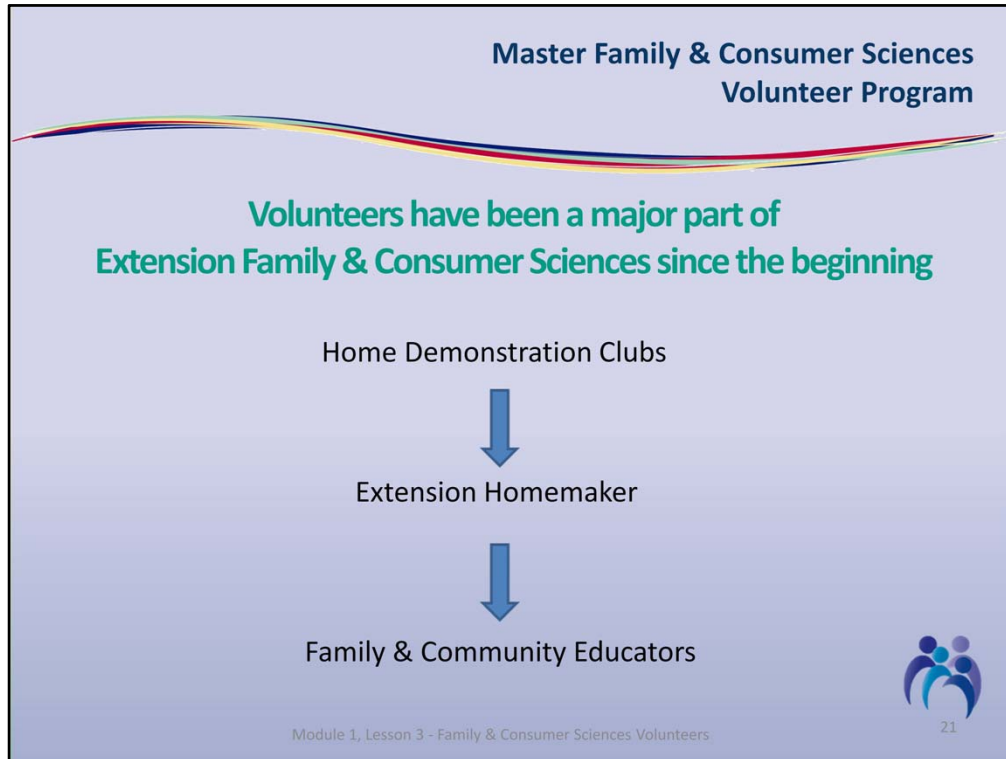
Farm wives learned how electric stoves, washers, and water heaters could improve their homes.



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Through Home Demonstration Clubs, farm wives learned how electric stoves, washers, and water heaters would improve their homes.




This is the beginning of volunteers extending the work of Family & Consumer Sciences Extension educators. Over the years, Home Demonstration Clubs expanded and flourished and continued to be a strong volunteer base and advocate for Extension. In the 1970s, Home Demonstration Clubs changed their name to Extension Homemakers, still meeting and extending the work of extension agents. In the 90s, some Extension Homemaker Clubs changed their name to Family and Community Educators. The name varies in some states that maintained the identity of Extension Homemakers, but both organizations provide education outreach as volunteers of Cooperative Extension.

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*The role of volunteers will vary by Family & Consumer Sciences program, time commitment, and by state. But volunteers, regardless of title or program affiliation, are vital to the Extension Family & Consumer Sciences program.*

**Agents /Educators+ Volunteers = Accomplish Extension Mission**





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There are numerous roles that volunteers might have within Family & Consumer Sciences programs, but all have not been mentioned. Regardless of what role a volunteer assumes, the main responsibility of agents or educators, volunteers, and other Extension staff is to work together as a team to help deliver research-based information to clientele.


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**In Review**

- Volunteers Take on Many Roles
- Volunteers Help Accomplish the Mission of Family & Consumer Sciences and Extension



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In review, you have learned about the relationship between Cooperative Extension and Family & Consumer Sciences volunteers. You have explored various volunteers roles in Family & Consumer Sciences and learned about the history of the first volunteer base in the discipline. Your role is important to accomplish the mission of Family & Consumer Sciences and Extension. Together, with your help, we are able to deliver research-based information to help individuals, families, and communities make informed decisions to enhance their quality of living.

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**Activity**

Identify two roles of Extension Family & Consumer Sciences  
Volunteers in your state.

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Activity: Identify two roles of Extension Family & Consumer Sciences Volunteers in your state.



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