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## **I. POLICY SUMMARY**

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### **A. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish official procedures for the initiation and operation of volunteer organizations by Cooperative Extension. This policy does not apply to establishment and operation of 4-H volunteer organizations.

### **B. Authority, Responsibility, and Delegation**

1. Cooperative Extension has legal authority and responsibility for the conduct of adult volunteer programs. In many instances, however, Cooperative Extension staff may need to manage programs in such a way that major responsibilities for day-to-day program operations are delegated to a volunteer organization.
2. Such organizations operate under the general direction of staff and must be in compliance with these policies.

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## **II. DEFINITIONS**

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## **III. POLICY TEXT**

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### **A. Organization**

Organizations for Cooperative Extension volunteers may be formal or informal depending upon need. Volunteers participating in such organizations must have a current volunteer appointment card. These organizations are in addition to program advisory committees, whose members may be casual volunteers (see Section 441).

#### **1. Informal Organizations**

Volunteer programs may be conducted by an informal organization. Such organizations may be used for short-term projects, development of new programs or in any other instance where a formal structure is unnecessary. Informal organizations generally lack a constitution, bylaws, elected officers, and separate bank accounts. They are formed to carry out a specific task and then disbanded.

#### **2. Formal Organizations**

Formal organizations may be established to conduct ongoing programs, to provide opportunities for long-term volunteer participation and recognition, and to increase the capabilities for self-management in accordance with the following policies.

##### **a. Charter**

County Cooperative Extension volunteer organizations may be formally

chartered by the County Director. The charter recognizes the county-based volunteer organizations within the Cooperative Extension. Each volunteer program may require a separate charter, or several volunteer groups in a county may be combined under one charter and organization, depending upon circumstances and need. Regional and statewide organizations are also possible. To qualify for the charter, each county Cooperative Extension volunteer organization is required to have a constitution and bylaws that are approved by the Office of General Counsel of the University. Model constitution and bylaws are available from the Assistant Vice President--Administration.

All revisions of the constitution or bylaws must be submitted via the County Director to the Assistant Vice President--Administration for legal review and approval before the final acceptance of the proposed changes by the county volunteer organization.

b. Membership

Membership categories shall be active, ex-officio, and honorary. Membership in a formal volunteer organization shall consist of all volunteers with a current appointment card. Active membership shall continue in force until terminated by the volunteer or by Cooperative Extension.

The County Director and involved staff shall be ex-officio members of the volunteer Board of Directors.

A volunteer organization has the option of electing honorary members. Any person who is not an active or ex-officio member and who has made an outstanding contribution to the volunteer program may become an honorary member at the discretion of the voting members. Honorary membership shall be designated by the issuance of a certificate by the county volunteer organization.

c. Committees

Each chartered volunteer organization shall have an executive committee, a program committee, a finance committee, and other committees determined by the responsible staff and representatives of the volunteer organization as necessary for conducting organizational affairs.

d. Reports

Occasionally, volunteer organizations may be requested to provide reports that cover affirmative action data and financial or tax information.

i. Attendance

Attendance and hours devoted to volunteer program activities shall be reported to meet current planning and evaluation requirements.

ii. Minutes

The volunteer organization secretary should provide the County Director with a copy of the minutes soon after each meeting for retention by the responsible Cooperative Extension office.

iii. Finances

- iv. Procedures for handling finances will be included in the chartered volunteer organization bylaws. Policies governing fund-raising by the county chartered volunteer organizations and by volunteer groups are found in Section 234. An annual financial report should be made by the treasurer to the chartered volunteer organization and a copy sent to the county office at the close of the volunteer year. The treasurer's books should be examined annually by an auditing committee appointed by the volunteer organization President. The auditing committee should report to the volunteer organization with appropriate recommendations.

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**IV. COMPLIANCE / RESPONSIBILITIES**

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**V. PROCEDURES**

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**VI. RELATED INFORMATION**

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**VII. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

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**VIII. REVISION HISTORY**

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