



MASTER GARDENER
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Colorado State Extension Master Gardener®

Volunteer Handbook

2024-2025

FOR CMG VOLUNTEERS

GardenNotes #14

WELCOME!

Welcome to Colorado State University Extension! We are thrilled you are joining the Colorado Master Gardener program. In your volunteer role, you serve as a Colorado State University authorized volunteer and your efforts contribute to an impressive and important statewide mission with over 45 years of history in Colorado.

As a Colorado State Extension Master Gardener®, your primary role is as a community educator – sharing knowledge and resources about horticulture and best practices for gardening in our state today within your local county or region. Your efforts are part of a much larger network of Extension Master Gardener volunteers – an incredible group of over 100,000 people serving across the nation and internationally.

Take the time to learn about this program through our online CMG Introduction course and this Volunteer Handbook. These resources will help you understand Extension and the Master Gardener program history and your role in educating and empowering Coloradans to improve our communities through horticulture. Consider this a guide to return to as you have questions and need a starting point. Your local county staff can answer additional questions or provide clarification.

Thank you for your service, time, and talent. Your role as a Colorado Master Gardener volunteer is important and valuable. Enjoy the adventures ahead... we are so glad you're with us!

In gratitude,

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Extension programs are available to all without discrimination, <https://col.st/OWMJA>.

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CHAPTER 1:

ABOUT COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY & THE COLORADO STATE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER® PROGRAM

Colorado State University's Mission & Values

Inspired by its land-grant heritage, Colorado State University is committed to excellence, setting the standard for public research universities in teaching, research, service, and extension for the benefit of the citizens of Colorado, the United States, and the world.

Colorado State University's Mission

Empower Coloradans to address important and emerging community issues using dynamic, science-based educational resources.

Colorado State University's Values

- Be accountable.
- Promote civic responsibility.
- Employ a customer focus.
- Promote freedom of expression.
- Demonstrate inclusiveness and diversity.
- Encourage and reward innovation.
- Act with integrity and mutual respect.
- Provide opportunity and access.
- Support excellence in teaching and research.



CSU Land Acknowledgment

Colorado State University acknowledges, with respect, that the land we are on today is the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute Nations and peoples. This was also a site of trade, gathering, and healing for numerous other Native tribes. We recognize the Indigenous peoples as original stewards of this land and all the relatives within it. As these words of acknowledgment are spoken and heard, the ties Nations have to their traditional homelands are renewed and reaffirmed.

CSU was founded as a land-grant institution, and we accept that our mission must encompass access to education and inclusion. And, significantly, our founding came at a dire cost to Native Nations and peoples whose land this University was built upon. This acknowledgment is the education and inclusion we must practice in recognizing our institutional history, responsibility, and commitment. A video version is available at <https://landacknowledgment.colostate.edu/>.

The Land Grant University System

Land grant universities have three primary missions: teaching, research, and outreach. Extension's start can be traced as far back as the early 1800s. When President Abraham Lincoln signed the **Morrill Act of 1862**, establishing the land-grant college system. Two additional acts fueled the creation of the modern extension system: the **Hatch Act of 1887** and the **Smith-Lever Act of 1914**. The former led to the establishment of agricultural research stations. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 formalized the extension

system across the nation. Horticulture Faculty/Specialists (or county-based faculty and staff) were placed in nearly all of Colorado’s counties and were supported by specialists on the main campus, often professors who provided research and tools to the community-based staff. This exchange of information between campus and community was a novel innovation and became an integral piece of the land-grant system’s outreach efforts.

CSU Extension’s Vision

CSU Extension is highly valued for inclusive, impactful community engagement in support of our land grant university mission.

What is Colorado State University Extension?

Colorado State University Extension is a joint agency between the **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)** (federal partner), **Colorado State University** (state partner), and **Colorado counties** (local partner). It is a nationwide system delivering research-based education at the county level with resources from the federal and county partners and the state’s land-grant university.

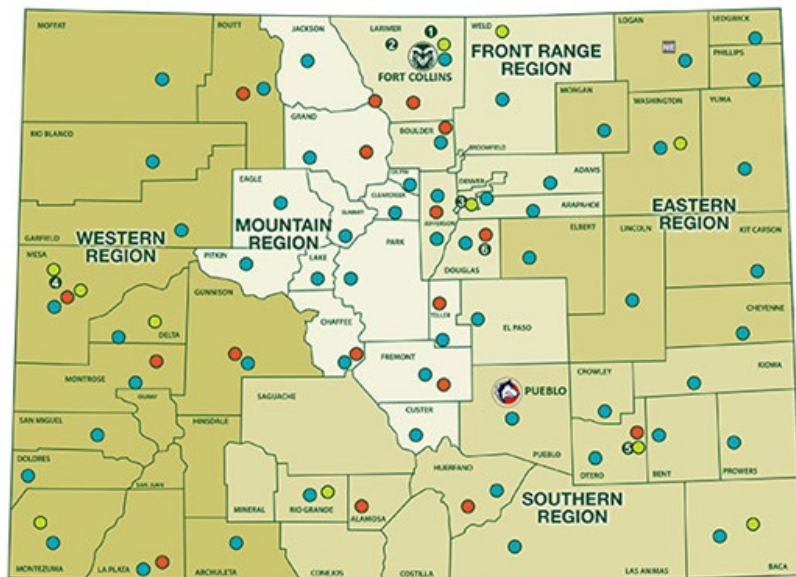
When referring to the organization, use the full name: **Colorado State University Extension**. After the initial use of the term, repeated referrals may be shortened to CSU Extension. **Extension** is an integral part of the larger **Office of Engagement & Extension** at CSU.

CSU Extension Funding

Current Colorado State University Extension funding sources include:

- 14% Federal funds (USDA budget).
- 33% State funds (Colorado State University budget).
- 41% County funds.
- 12% other sources (sales, fees, and program grants).

CSU Extension’s Regional Model
Colorado State University Extension is organized into five regions as shown on the map.



LEGEND

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| ● CSU Extension Offices | ① CSU Foothills Campus | ④ CSU Western Campus |
| ● Colorado State Forest Service | ② CSU Mountain Campus | ⑤ CSU Arkansas Valley Campus |
| ● CSU Agricultural Research Centers | ③ CSU SPUR | ⑥ Sturm Collaboration Campus |
| ■ NE Health Engagement Center | | |

CSU Extension’s Regional Structure as of January 2023

Staffing

County-based faculty/instructors/specialists and staff - The county is the basic program delivery unit for CSU Extension and is staffed around locally identified needs. County level staff includes Extension Faculty/Specialists (or county-based faculty/instructors), a County Extension Director, (an Extension faculty leading the local team), program coordinators and assistants and support staff. In Colorado, county-based educators may work across county lines in regional efforts or teams.

University-based faculty and specialists also support the local Extension program behind the scenes by providing leadership and research and by assisting with program delivery. Depending on assignment, Colorado State University campus-based, departmental faculty may split time between research, teaching, and Extension activities. Campus-based faculty with Extension appointments are known as Extension Specialists. Extension programs also work closely with Agricultural Experiment Stations, located around the state.

County Extension Advisory Committee provides input on current and emerging issues that need attention. Local citizens serving on the committee play a key role in helping staff identify and prioritize program needs at the local level.

Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® State Program is technically housed on the Main Campus in Fort Collins and is dedicated to serving the statewide needs to provide leadership, organization, and support for both local county programs as well as statewide initiatives specific to Extension and the CMG program.

History of the Extension Master Gardener Program

The Master Gardener program began in 1973, when it was founded in the state of Washington. With its success, it quickly spread to other states. In Colorado, the program began in 1975 in Denver, Boulder, Jefferson, and El Paso counties. Today, there are programs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, nine Canadian provinces, and South Korea. In Colorado, 46 counties have active Master Gardener volunteers (as of 2023). Volunteers in the Colorado program support gardeners from the plains to the highest elevations of the state. They support Colorado State University Extension staff through their participation in educational activities that expand the reach of local horticultural experts. Their journey begins with a rigorous 14 weeks of training on topics including everything from soils to plant diseases and insects. Volunteers then give back to communities through various activities.



Volunteers might teach public classes, respond to public phone calls and emails, staff booths at farmers markets and other events, teach youth and community gardening, maintain public research and demonstration gardens, write blogs, and develop videos. In 2023, 1,453 volunteers across 46 counties donated 53,161 hours, worth approximately 1.6 million dollars in community contributions.

Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® Program Mission Statement

The Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® Program volunteer network strives to enhance Coloradans' quality of life by:

- Extending knowledge-based education throughout Colorado communities to foster successful gardeners.
- Helping individuals make informed decisions about plants to protect neighborhood environments.

We are committed to using horticulture to empower gardeners, develop partnerships, and build stronger communities.

Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® Program Vision Statement

The Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® Program strives to lead educational efforts to nurture Colorado's natural environment and communities by:

- Collaborating with the green industry, public agencies, and nonprofits to provide current research-based information to the public.
- Developing educational programs for local needs such as water issues, alternative pest management and ecosystem characteristics, to encourage environmentally sound horticultural practices.
- Reaching out to new audiences through a variety of technologies.
- Providing lifelong learning opportunities and a variety of meaningful volunteer options for Colorado Master Gardeners, resulting in a committed, active network of horticultural educators who serve communities across the state.
- Cultivating long-term support and securing abundant resources from diverse constituencies for the Colorado Master Gardener Program by showing the differences that this program makes in Coloradans' quality of life.

Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® Funding

At the state level, the Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® program is completely self-funded.

FUNDING SOURCE	WHAT IT SUPPORTS
Green School Training Fees and CMG Annual Volunteer Dues	Two full-time state staff salary and benefits including professional development and travel. Operational expenses including office supplies, IT support, and educational course production.
Colorado Garden Foundation Annual Grant	Supplies and materials for training, annual VMS maintenance fees.
Foundation Accounts: Barbara Boardman CMG Endowed Fund, Colorado Master Gardener Endowed Fund	Professional development for staff. Special projects and volunteer mini grants.

GROWING PLANTS. GROWING PEOPLE.

We are committed to using horticulture to empower gardeners, develop partnerships, and build stronger communities.

CMG Mission

‘Colorado State Extension Master Gardener®’ Name

Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® is a federally registered trademark of Colorado State University and is used to identify volunteers as representatives of CSU Extension. **It may be used ONLY in connection with official CSU Extension activities.** In the past, we have had a state-registered ‘Colorado Master Gardener’ service mark, hence our acronym ‘CMG.’ We have clarified our name to include Colorado State and Extension to further clarify and protect this program title, including a federal trademark instead of a state service mark which provides no real safeguards. In print materials, the first use of the title **Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® (CMG)** should be written out and can be shortened to CMG after.

When CMG volunteers are not officially representing Colorado State University Extension, the general term “master gardener” without any verbal connection to the CSU Extension System may be used. Additionally, anyone trained through Green School can use the term ‘Certified Colorado Gardener.’

Use of Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® Name

Our program is known as the Colorado Master Gardener program. The term master gardener without any reference to the Colorado State University Extension System at the state or county level is considered generic and is used by many organizations and businesses. It may be used in situations not affiliated with the Colorado State University Extension System. However, use of this term is discouraged. When volunteers refer to themselves as members of our program, they should use the term Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® or Colorado State University Master Gardener. Extension Master Gardener Volunteer is a term commonly used nationally and in other states to identify trained and active Master Gardeners.

Since Colorado State Extension Master Gardeners represent the university as authorized volunteers, you may not use this title outside of CSU sponsored/affiliated projects. Extension volunteers, such as CMGs, provide a public service offering unbiased, research-based information. Representing yourself as a Master Gardener outside of your volunteer service in connection with commercial activity or personal financial gain is NOT allowed. Individuals are encouraged to list Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® on their personal resume as volunteer experience.

Colorado State University Branding & Logo Information

The CSU logo and brand is an important identity marker for the university and university programs, such as the Colorado Master Gardener program. As a volunteer, you have access to the current logos for CSU Extension and the CMG program specific to your county. Ask your staff as needed.

These are examples of current, official CSU Extension and CMG logos:



Conflict of Interest

Any situation that has the potential to infer that Colorado State University promotes or endorses a private business or product could be a conflict of interest. Most conflict-of-interest problems arise from implied endorsement, i.e., implying that the service is provided by or in collaboration with Colorado State University or implying that Colorado State University is recommending a business or product.

CMG volunteers are identified as Colorado State Extension Master Gardeners or otherwise affiliated with Colorado State University, ONLY while serving in authorized CMG activities.

Volunteers with green industry connections may NOT use CMG activities as a source of business contacts. CMG volunteers may not wear CMG name badges or CMG clothing items while working as employees or owners of a nursery, garden center or other business. **The title “Colorado State Extension Master Gardener®” or other indicators suggesting affiliation with Colorado State University, may NOT be used on any marketing materials for private business.** The Colorado Gardener Certificate implies participation in training only. Since it does not imply that the holder is representing the Colorado State University Extension system as a volunteer, it may be used for marketing purposes.

Copies

Copyright law prohibits the printing of PowerPoint presentations as class handouts unless approved by the instructor. This is only done when CSU Extension owns or has secured copyright approval on the pictures and artwork in PowerPoint. This does not exist on standardized CMG curricula.

Copyright Law

CMG volunteers must not violate copyright laws in their performance of volunteer service. CSU Extension gives permission to CMG volunteers to make copies of our Fact Sheets and CMG GardenNotes as part of their CMG work. They are generally available free from the website. Copies must be of acceptable quality, of the current version, and made without changes. Permission to copy Colorado State University materials does not extend to publications available for sale or other print materials.

Copyright law prohibits making multiple copies of any material for group distribution without permission of the copyright holder. For additional information on copyright, refer to GardenNotes #018, *CMG Program – Using Copyrighted Materials: Are You Legal?*

Chapter 2:

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES & CONTINUING EDUCATION

Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® Products &

Audience Colorado Master Gardeners assist Colorado State University Extension staff in delivering research-based gardening information to foster successful gardening in Colorado communities. **Activities must focus on education.** CMGs do not provide garden labor or consultant services without an educational purpose. The Colorado Master Gardener program is neutral and unbiased toward specific commercial products, services, and other groups.



Farmers Market Booth in Larimer County

Educational Products

Transfer of technical knowledge and development of

decision-making skills: Our role is to provide Coloradans with research-based information and relevant options, empowering them to make informed decisions customized to their situations and needs. These decisions can have economic, environmental and health related impacts. The product delivered by CMG volunteers is **education** through the transfer of knowledge and skills. Most CMG outreach falls into this type of activity.

Restorative gardening: This is the purposeful production, maintenance, and harvest of plants for individual and community resilience. Our educational product is **life skills**. The intended impacts are increased health and stability for individuals, families, and communities relative to their emotional, psychological, and physical well-being.

Audience

The CMG Volunteer's audience is exclusively non-commercial, individual gardeners. Green Industry or commercial growers are referred to Extension Faculty/Specialists.

Definition of a CMG Volunteer Activity

1. Activities must be **supportive** of CSU Extension issues.
2. Activities must be **educational** in nature. What knowledge and skills does the client develop?
3. Activities must have **advanced approval of designated county staff**. The local CMG faculty/coordinator makes the final decision about what is acceptable.
4. **Volunteers must be identified** as Colorado State University Extension, Colorado Master Gardeners.

How Do I Know if an Activity Is Educational?

Sometimes there is confusion about what makes an activity an educational one – or not. In an educational activity, participants gain knowledge or skills or both. Three components that further help identify an educational activity are:

- The activity has been **marketed**.
- The activity has a **defined audience**.

- The activity has an **intentional message**.

Difference Between Educational and Service Activities

This is a very important distinction to understand so here's an example: Let's say you are involved in a youth garden with the assignment of coaching youth to transplant cabbages; this is an educational activity. You are teaching them how, perhaps even demonstrating how, as they are learning the steps to transplant the cabbage and gaining the skill to perform transplanting. You do not transplant for them.

Another example may be demonstrating how to prune a tree as educational outreach to a local gardening club. Going to a gardening club member's home and pruning all their trees is NOT educational. Pruning trees for citizens is an example of a service activity where education or learning a new skill are not provided to the consumer.

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH	SERVICE ORIENTED OUTREACH
Share information about right plant - right place and Fact Sheets on landscape plants for Colorado's climate, soils, sun, etcetera.	Develop a landscape design.
Share information about plant species adapted to local growing conditions.	Call around to find nurseries that carry a product or certain plants for an individual.
Mentor a community group, working with them.	Maintain a garden for a group/organization.
Implement an educational demonstration/teaching garden that empowers viewers to adapt concepts demonstrated.	Maintain a garden to beautify an area.

What About Landscape Design?

It can be tempting to assist the public with landscape design. However, **this is not educational in nature and is outside the scope of CMGs**. Landscape design is a profession that requires site visits, time, and resources to do well.

CMG Volunteers can recommend resources to support in this work such as design ideas/templates from Plant Select®, Colorado Native Plant Society, and Garden in a Box. Other resources to include would be soil testing information, Colorado-hardy plant lists, climate considerations (zones), many Fact Sheets and research-based resources related to topics including Selecting Trees, Selecting Shrubs, Selecting Plants, how to plant a tree, etc.

Projects & Considerations

MENTORING

CMG volunteers can serve as mentors to other groups, like 4-H clubs and schools, or church youth groups, who are planting and/or maintaining parks, community gardens and other green spaces. Here the CMG serves in an educational role demonstrating a technique, coaching, or instructing clients.

DEMONSTRATION GARDENS

To be acceptable for CMG hours, the demonstration garden must truly empower the viewer to make knowledgeable decisions. This requires signage and print materials about the garden's educational objectives. For example, an attractive xeric garden does not give viewers the knowledge to adapt xeric principles in their home gardens. Signs need to identify xeric plants the viewer may want to purchase. Onsite printed materials, online links and/or QR codes should give additional information about techniques for reducing water usage. CMG programs should also consider sponsoring public educational activities in the garden. It could also be used as a backdrop or tool for blogs, newspaper articles, and you-tube video production.



Arapahoe County CMG volunteering at the Native Plants Pollinator Demo Garden.

When a demonstration garden produces food that is donated to a food bank or similar entity:

1. The demonstration garden must meet the above description of an educational demonstration garden.
2. **AND** must meet the definition of a CMG volunteer activity to be counted as a CMG activity.

Food raised in a church, school, or community garden may not be counted as CMG volunteer time unless there is an approved CMG educational activity affiliated with it.

FREE LABOR CREW

As Colorado Master Gardeners, **volunteers may NOT work as a free labor crew** to plant and/or maintain city and county parks, plant trees for community groups, or otherwise maintain private or public properties. These activities are not educational in nature.

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH EFFORTS

Interested CMG volunteers can become actively involved in university research efforts, working with state and county staff. In these projects, research staff work WITH Master Gardeners to create a two-way flow of information and a learning environment for all.

GROW & GIVE PROJECT

This CSU Extension program teaches all Coloradoans how to grow food in personal or community gardens and connects them locally with those in need. It includes several educational resources including a free download of the *Colorado Vegetable Guide* in English and Spanish. Each county determines if and how Grow & Give projects are counted toward volunteer credit. Beginning in 2024, CSU is partnering with Fresh Food Connect (FFC). CSU Extension is focused on education around Growing and FFC is focused on connecting gardeners with local food donation options and tracking donated produce. Gardeners can download the free Fresh Food Connect [mobile app](#) to log produce donations. If Fresh Food Connect is not active in your area yet, use the Fresh Food Connect online [donation form](#) to log donations. Your donations, big or small, make a difference in fighting hunger.

Initiating Local Projects

Local community projects may be initiated by CMG volunteers. However, they must be educational in nature, follow CMG guidelines and use Colorado State University recommendations. Projects should provide educational value to participants such as sharing information, consulting and/or demonstrating techniques.

Projects discouraged include those where Colorado Master Gardeners provide only labor or involve commercial businesses where there appears to be a conflict of interest.

CMG volunteers desiring to initiate projects should contact the horticulture faculty/coordinator in charge of the local program and discuss it with them. Roles of volunteers, partners, funding, responsibilities, and operations should be identified in written form before approval is given. When a county has ample existing projects for the volunteer program, a project may be denied.

Cross-County Projects

Volunteer service may include special cross-county volunteer projects. There should be a memorandum of agreement that includes the following items:

- ✓ Statement clarifying the nature of a cross-county CMG outreach project, including:
 - Nature and scope of the work in the home county.
 - Communication plan, related to the special project between the volunteer and staff.
 - A statement clarifying any specific division of volunteer efforts and other program support concerns between counties, as appropriate.
 - A statement clarifying that volunteer engagement support will be provided through the host county and that the non-county resident/volunteer will be a regular, active member of the host county CMG Program including all communication and reporting.
- ✓ The memorandum of agreement is signed as part of the application process by the county CMG Program staff and county directors. It may be modified with the agreement of all parties.



**VOLUNTEER SERVICE:
50 HOURS IN APPRENTICE
YEAR. 24 HOURS PER
YEAR THEREAFTER.**

Larimer County CMGs volunteering at the CSU Research Farm

Continuing Education Requirement – 12 Hours Per Year

The continuing education requirement serves three purposes:

- Provides opportunity for continued learning.
- Defines a minimum participation level within the program.
- Reduces liability to Extension and faculty by expecting non-paid staff to be continually updated on research-based information.

A minimum of six hours must be of educational events specifically sponsored by Extension for CMG volunteers. All 12 hours may come from these events. Examples include:

- CMG Online classes. Counties are not to restrict the hours that volunteers may view these resources.

- A county may require that up to six hours of the continuing education be from other specific venues.
- County, regional, and state CMG updates by specialists, faculty, experienced CMG volunteers, Green Industry members, etc.
- State CMG conferences.
- Specialized training courses, like "Diagnostic Clinics".
- Volunteer development training.
- Writer's workshops.

Other educational activities may count if they relate to horticulture as a CMG AND with **prior approval** of local coordinator/admin staff.

Examples include:

- Distance learning opportunities.
- Job-related in-service.
- Special research projects.
- Independent projects.
- Public garden classes.
- Academic classes.
- Garden club speakers.
- Gardening videos.

Time *may* include preparation time for CMG outreach activities and reasonable travel time to and from CMG events unless prohibited by county drive-time policy. **It does not include personal study time.**

VOLUNTEER HOURS ARE COUNTED WHEN THE CMG PROVIDES EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS TO CLIENTS.

CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS ARE COUNTED WHEN THE CMG IS IN THE STUDENT ROLE, RECEIVING THE TRAINING.

Volunteer Commitment

The term “volunteer” is used to help the public understand that Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® volunteers are donating their time to assist them and are not paid staff of CSU Extension or the county. This is important in setting the public’s level of expectations. Coloradans are very appreciative of CMG efforts donated to assist them. This is important because some can become rather demanding of paid staff.

However, being a “volunteer” NEVER implies a lack of responsibility in fulfilling commitments. When a CMG volunteer fails to honor a commitment by not showing up, it may create serious problems for the program. A CMG volunteer who makes a habit of not showing up will be released from the program.

Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® Program Titles & Status

APPRENTICE MASTER GARDENER

- Applicants 18 years of age or older, that have been accepted into the program and are working towards completing their training and volunteer requirements. These requirements include completing CSU Extension's Green School Full Program, passing the final exam (70% or better), attending their local county’s CMG orientation, and completing 50 hours of volunteer service in 1 year, or 60 hours of volunteer service for 2-year apprentices.

- Receive Green School’s Colorado Master Gardener training at a reduced fee in partial exchange for their volunteer service. The volunteer service is considered part of the training received by Colorado Master Gardeners.
- Receive Colorado Gardener Certificate upon completion of Green School Full Program.
- Receive the Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® certificate upon completion of the required training, service, and reporting.
- CMG apprentice requirements or repayment in lieu of volunteer service. This certificate may be used to market your expertise.



CMG volunteer at a local event.

GREEN SCHOOL: COLORADO GARDENER CERTIFICATE FOR NON-VOLUNTEERS

- Adults, 18 years of age and older, who desire the Colorado Master Gardener training only, without a volunteer commitment.
- Pay Green School’s full tuition in lieu of the return volunteer service.
- Receive the Colorado Gardener Certificate upon completion of the coursework and passing the final exam with a score of 70% or better.
- Colorado Gardener Certificate students may apply to become a CMG within 3 years of their completed training without having to re-take Green School courses.
- Certificate may be used to establish training credentials and market expertise.

COLORADO STATE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER®

- Successfully completes apprentice requirements.
- Completes annual renewal forms and pays annual dues each year.
- Completes 12 hours of continuing education each year.
- Volunteers a minimum of 24 hours each year.
- Completes reporting in VMS each year.
- In good standing with local county program.

TEMPORARY INACTIVE CMG

- This status is determined by the local coordinator following request and consultation.
- Status can be in place for up to 12 months and *may be longer (up to 3 years) depending on circumstances.*
- Continue to receive emails and may choose to participate in meetings and volunteer projects as able.
- Must continue to complete annual renewal forms, pay CMG annual dues, and report any volunteer and continuing education hours completed.
- May reactivate as CMG after consulting with local coordinator/staff.
- This status cannot be used at the end of the CMG year due to incompleteness of commitments; rather it should be discussed with the local coordinator when a need arises and/or is anticipated.
- **NOTE: Years of inactive status do not count toward years of CMG service.**

AFFILIATE COLORADO STATE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER®

- CMG volunteers whose role has evolved from traditional CMG activities but continue to serve valuable roles in the program as community contact or collaborator.

- Must be in good standing with the program at the time of the designation.
- May be a CMG who speaks for the CMG program interests on an advisory board.
- May be a CMG in a green industry role who supports the program as a consultant, collaborator, or instructor.
- May be a CMG whose primary role serves as program contact for another organization in collaboration with the CMG program.
- Assigned this status by the local coordinator ONLY following consultation.
- Continue to receive emails and may choose to participate in meetings and volunteer projects as able and appropriate.
- Must continue to complete annual renewal forms, pay CMG annual dues, and report any volunteer and continuing education hours completed. No hours are required.

COLORADO STATE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER® EMERITUS

This title is award by the CSU Extension’s State Master Gardener office, after nomination by the county faculty.

- The individual must have a desire to continue their affiliation with the program; however, due to limitations beyond their control (such as health issues or family care issues) they must now limit participation in the CMG program.
- The individual will have completed a minimum of 5 years and 500 hours CMG volunteer work.
- The individual will have made a substantial contribution to the program, giving some long-term leadership and definition to the program. (Led a program to accomplish significant outcomes, created and/or spearheaded a project to a higher level, etc.)
- The local faculty/specialist submits a letter of recommendation outlining the individual’s contributions and situation to the state MG office for consideration.
- Emeritus CMGs continue to receive full program benefits (such as newsletters and updated Fact Sheets, training opportunities, outreach opportunities, etc.). They continue to serve the program as limitations allow. However, reporting of activities is encouraged but not required.

RELEASED

- Volunteer is no longer active or affiliated with the Colorado State University Extension CMG program.
- May not identify themselves as affiliated with Colorado State University Extension or identify as a “Colorado State Extension Master Gardener®.”
- Will be removed from the county VMS roster.
- May reapply for admission within 3 years without repeating Green School if they left in good standing at their own request.

Volunteer Release

Non-renewal, release, or dismissal of a CMG:

Under a ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court, volunteering for any organization is a privilege, not a right. Organizations have the right to select individuals they desire to work as volunteers in their organization. Organizations may release volunteers at the discretion of the organization.

According to CSU Extension policy, volunteers serve at the request of CSU Extension as non-paid staff. That request can be withdrawn for any reason or no reason at any time.

Examples of situations when CMG volunteers may be released/dismissed:

- Repeated failure to give knowledge-based information.
- Repeated failure to show-up for volunteer commitments.
- Repeated failure to turn in reports in a timely manner.
- When a volunteer oversteps their authority.
- When the safety of clients/staff/other volunteers is in danger i.e., abusive, bullying, disrespectful, hostile, or threatening behavior.
- Showing up for CMG activities under the influence of drugs, including marijuana or alcohol.
- Other situations where the actions as a Colorado Master Gardener does not reflect well on the University.
- At the discretion of the faculty/specialist or request of the volunteer.

Volunteer Reactivation Following a Leave of Absence

If a volunteer leaves the program [is released] in good standing, they may be reactivated to the Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® program in any county if these standards are met:

- The individual must have left in good standing and at their own request.
- If it is within a 3-year window, the individual may re-apply for admission utilizing the annual reappointment form without repeating Green School following a meeting/confirmation with the local county staff.
- If it falls outside of a 3-year window, the individual must re-apply to the program using the Apprentice Volunteer Application process. Re-taking Green School will be required. An exception to this would be requested at the local county level and approved by the statewide team.

CHAPTER 3:

EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER SELECTION & TRAINING INFORMATION

Apprentice Application Information

Newly accepted volunteers begin as Apprentices. Apprentices are volunteers in training to become Master Gardeners. The application and acceptance process occurs at the local county level. Like all programs, we have a few considerations for interested applicants:

- Applicants must be at least 18 years old to apply.
- Criminal background checks are required for all volunteers. These are initiated by the local county coordinator/faculty but facilitated through the University Human Resources department. Detailed results are not shown – only a pass or no pass.
- An interview with county staff is strongly encouraged prior to acceptance.
- Once accepted into the program, they pay for Green School the first year, and annual renewal dues are required every subsequent year (\$25-35 in most counties).
- We do offer financial need-based scholarships, reducing the training fee substantially. Details are in the application.
- Green School requires 80% minimum class attendance, completion of all on-line classes, completion of homework assignments and weekly reading, and pass the final exam with 70% or better.

- Reliable access to the internet is required. Accommodation can be made in local offices as needed. An email address is required to be successful in our program.
- Following Green School, apprentices are encouraged to engage in local projects which vary widely. Apprentice year requires 50 hours minimum volunteer time in a county/area CMG program by the end of the program year, October 31st.
- Our program does allow for a 2-year apprenticeship option, requiring 60 hours of volunteer service over a 2-year period and successful completion of all other requirements in the first year.

Failure To Complete the Apprentice Volunteer Requirements

As outlined and agreed to in the Apprentice Volunteer Application, Green School fees are reduced for future volunteer requirements in the first one to two years. These hours are considered “payback hours”. Those who fail to complete the minimum “payback hours” by October 31st of the training year will be billed for the class tuition.

The billing rate is \$15.00 per uncompleted hour, up to \$345 maximum (the cost difference between Green School registration for CMG apprentices and Green School registration for non-volunteers) initiated and collected by the local county. Individuals in special situations may be given an extension for up to 12 months at the discretion of the local staff based on extenuating circumstances and hardships.

Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® Certification & Recertification

New CMGs receive their Colorado Gardener Certificate upon completion of Green School. Once Apprentice volunteer requirements are completed, volunteers will “graduate” and become a Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® and receive their Colorado Master Gardener Certificate and official CMG name badge from the local county.

Continued, annual certification requires 12 continuing education credit hours per year and a minimum of 24 hours of volunteer service on authorized projects. (See *Volunteer Opportunities & Continuing Education* in Chapter 2 of this Volunteer Handbook.)

Annual dues are also required and collected locally when renewal forms are completed in VMS.

The Colorado Master Gardener Code of Conduct

The agreements, policies, and code of conduct below clarifies the scope and expectations of our program. CSU and local counties invest a lot in volunteers and volunteers in turn give back and invest in CSU Extension and their local communities. It's important for future and current volunteers to understand what our program is about and determine if it's a good fit. **CSU Extension values the service of CMG volunteers and commits to do our best to make the volunteer experience a productive and rewarding one. The information below is agreed to in the Apprentice application AND annually during renewal.**

In Applying To Become a Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® Volunteer:

- ✓ I understand that the decision to accept me or not accept me as a volunteer is the right of Colorado State University Extension. I understand that in many counties, more individuals apply than the program can accommodate.

- ✓ I understand my acceptance into the Colorado Master Gardener Program commits me to 1) CSU Green School, and 2) 50 hours minimum volunteer work in the CMG program during the CMG activity year (ending October 31st) OR 3) 60 volunteer hours over a 2-year commitment ending October 31 two years from start date.
- ✓ If I do not complete the 50 hours minimum volunteer work by October 31st, I agree to reimburse Colorado State University Extension for the course work at the rate of \$15 per uncompleted hour, to a maximum of \$345.
- ✓ I understand that Colorado State University conducts background checks on all volunteers. A criminal record will not necessarily bar me as a volunteer but will be considered as it relates to the specifics of the volunteer work. I understand that if I do not respond to the inquiry regarding background checks, my application will not be processed.
- ✓ I understand that volunteering for an organization is a privilege, not a right. If selected as a volunteer, I understand that I serve at the request of Colorado State University Extension and that the request can be withdrawn at any time.

In the Capacity of a Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® Volunteer:

- ✓ I agree to be civil and courteous towards Extension staff, other volunteers, and the public. Others may think and do things differently than what I personally prefer, but I will be respectful of their values and perspectives.
- ✓ I understand that as a CSU volunteer I am part of the larger CSU community and agree to uphold the Principles of Community. Read these at <https://inclusiveexcellence.colostate.edu/resources/principles-of-community/>.
- ✓ I agree to cooperate with and support the local Extension Office staff and volunteers to jointly further the missions and objectives of the CMG Program. In addition, I agree to comply with training, reporting, certification, annual renewal requirements, and other program directives as stated in CMG GardenNotes #14 (this publication).
- ✓ I understand that the title “Colorado Master Gardener” may be used only in connection with official Colorado State University Extension activities. The title may not be used to associate the Colorado Master Gardener name with commercial products or give implied endorsements of any product or place of business. The title may not be used to advance my personal political, religious, or environmental beliefs.
- ✓ I agree to disseminate information without regard to race, age, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender, disability, veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. Read CSU’s Statements on Access and Discrimination here <https://col.st/OWMJA>.
- ✓ I agree to follow federal, state, county, Colorado State University, and Extension Office policies and regulations appropriate to my role as a volunteer.
- ✓ I agree to provide research-based horticultural information from Colorado State University or other research-based institutions.
- ✓ I understand CMG volunteer clientele are non-commercial personal gardeners. I understand that as a CMG volunteer it is not my role to advise commercial growers or green industry professionals and will refer these clients to the appropriate Extension staff.
- ✓ I understand that as a CMG volunteer, I may not give advice that could be considered by the client as legal or medical in nature. I will not discuss the following issues: hazard trees, poisonous plants and mushrooms, medical use of herbs including growing and use of marijuana, pesticide toxicity and the misuse of pesticides. I will refer these issues to the appropriate Extension staff.

- ✓ I will follow pest management recommendations based on integrated pest management (IPM) strategies, allowing the client to select methods in harmony with their values. Any reference to the use of pesticides must come directly from Extension resources. All inquiries beyond this scope will be referred to appropriate Extension staff.
- ✓ I understand that I will not discuss or make comments about the toxicity of organic or synthetic pesticides. Inquiries about pesticide toxicity will be referred to the National Pesticide Information Center, found here: <http://npic.orst.edu/>.
- ✓ I will avoid being disruptive and distracted in Green School, classes, and volunteer events. I understand that the CMG email communication system (VMS) and membership lists are for internal Extension business use only. I will not use it for commercial business, share the information in it outside of Extension business, or send spam type communications.
- ✓ I will adhere to CSU's Social Media policy, <http://policylibrary.colostate.edu/policy.aspx?id=497>, and will avoid answering questions using the Colorado Master Gardener title or responding on behalf of CSU on my personal social media accounts.
- ✓ I agree to refrain from using or possessing alcohol or illegal substances while participating in volunteer activities. Being under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, or illegal substances during CMG service will result in disciplinary action.
- ✓ In support of the program operations, I agree to pay annual CMG fees and other expenses in regard to the program (i.e. books, transportation, course fees, clothing), as assessed by the state and my local county program.
- ✓ As non-paid staff, I understand that I am not covered by CSU worker's compensation or other medical insurance.

CSU's Minor's Policy

All Colorado Master Gardeners, regardless of status in the program, must read and agree to uphold this University policy designed to protect vulnerable populations:

<http://policylibrary.colostate.edu/policyprint.aspx?id=734>.

Colorado State University Extension to the Extent Possible Will:

- Provide opportunities for my continual learning through volunteer activities, classes, workshops, and online learning opportunities.
- Provide training, supervision, equipment, and direction to volunteers through the local Extension office.
- Communicate expectations and responsibilities of the program to volunteers.
- Uphold and cultivate a respectful relationship between staff and volunteers.
- Uphold CSU's Principles of Community.
- Provide access to CSU Extension reference materials and professionals.
- Provide a safe working environment within the Extension office and at CMG events.
- While serving in an official CMG capacity preapproved by the local faculty/CMG program leader, the university covers CMG volunteers with university liability insurance provided that the volunteer uses research-based information and applies good judgment.
- Match volunteer skills and interests with volunteer opportunities within the local program.

Colorado Driver's License and Automotive Liability Insurance

Volunteers who drive as part of their volunteer service must be in compliance with State of Colorado laws, including, but not limited to:

- ✓ Having a valid Driver's License with a relatively clean driving record.
- ✓ Having at least the minimum auto insurance required by state law.
- ✓ Complying with seat belt use and other traffic laws.

Furthermore, it is expected that any vehicle used to transport CMG volunteers is maintained so that it is "safe and reliable" for the conditions, weather, and distance in which it is to be driven. Most counties do not allow volunteers to include driving time as part of their volunteer hours. Check with your county for local guidelines.

What CMGs Cannot Provide: Legal & Medical Advice

While working as volunteers, Colorado State Extension Master Gardeners are **not authorized to give legal or medical advice**. Violation of this protocol by CMG volunteers is grounds for automatic dismissal from the CMG Program.

1. **Hazard Trees** - CMG volunteers do NOT address hazard tree issues. Concerns about the potential for a tree to fall on a house or other structure resulting in injury or property damage. Rather, they should refer the client to a certified arborist. [Legal issue]
2. **Poisonous Plants and Mushrooms** - CMG volunteers do NOT address poisonous plant or mushroom questions. [Medical issue.]
3. **Medical Issues including Human Health Entomology and Medical Marijuana** - CMG volunteers do NOT advise on medically related issues, including the influence of insects on human health and the medicinal use of herbs. [Medical issue.]
4. **Pesticide Misuse** - CMG volunteers do not advise on the misuse of pesticides by others. In these situations, customers should contact the Colorado Department of Agriculture. [Legal issue.]
5. **Pesticide, health, and environmental safety issues** - CMG volunteers are not authorized to discuss pesticide, health, and environmental safety issues. The role of CMG volunteers also does NOT include any discussion about merits or limitations of any type of pesticide. [Legal issue.]
6. **Commercial Horticulture/Green Industry inquiries** - The primary audience for CMGs are individual gardeners. These can be homeowners/renters/schools/community groups that garden indoors and/or outdoors on a small scale. Commercial questions are referred to Horticulture staff.

Integrated Pest Management Statement

In 2021, a team of Extension staff created a Pest Management statement that can be used by all volunteers and Extension staff to clarify our approach on this topic.

Our Approach to Pest Management



Colorado State University Extension (CSUE) supports healthy environments for all Coloradoans. CSUE teaches and encourages the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles – employing a combination of cultural, mechanical, biological, and chemical practices. The use of IPM ensures a holistic approach, encouraging individuals to make informed decisions for minimizing or eliminating the use of pesticides. Any pesticide recommendations (synthetic & organic) made by CSU Extension are based on the best available science, without bias.



Pesticide Information

Provide Pesticide options - The role of Extension in pest management is to help clients understand non-chemical and chemical options, not to spread personal values or opinions about the use of pesticides.

Direct to Appropriate Pesticides - The role of CMG volunteers is limited to directing clients to appropriate pesticides, using Extension Fact Sheets and other Extension print materials. It is good practice to supply a print copy of the Fact Sheets when possible. Use of other reference materials is not acceptable for pesticide information.

Check with your county office program – Ensure compliance with CSU’s pesticide policies.

Pesticide toxicity information - Although CMGs may not discuss pesticide health and safety issues, a client may be directly referred to the National Pesticide Information Network (see following box for information). This program is sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in cooperation with Oregon State University.

Pesticide Use in Demonstration/Research Gardens - CMGs may use general use pesticides in these settings. All pesticides must be used in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations and the label directions. Volunteers must read and follow the label directions. No “home remedies” may be used as a pesticide unless Colorado State University has a published recommendation for the product.

NATIONAL PESTICIDE INFORMATION NETWORK

PHONE: 1-800-858-7378

EMAIL: npic@ace.orst.edu

WEBSITE: <http://npic.orst.edu/>

HOURS: 8AM-12PM Pacific Time, Mon-Fri

CSU Extension Protocol for Marijuana & Hemp

The General Counsel's staff at Colorado State University has informed CSU Extension of the following regarding marijuana. These restrictions apply to all Colorado State University Extension staff members and volunteers, including Colorado Master Gardener volunteers.

While the use of marijuana is legal in the state of Colorado, marijuana remains a Schedule 1 illegal drug under federal law and as such, Colorado State University Extension cannot be involved with this item. Assistance with Medical Marijuana plant health questions will not be provided. Individuals requesting such information will not be provided with referral information. CMG volunteers will not address the issue with the media.

Our offices are considered drug-free workplaces as CSU is a federal contractor. Marijuana plants and/or plant parts are not permitted in CSU Extension offices. Marijuana plants or plant parts delivered to or left at CSU Extension offices will be turned over to legal authorities for destruction.

If CSU Extension employees or volunteers, including Colorado Master Gardeners, assist marijuana growers, they will be acting outside the scope of their employee/volunteer role and assume personal liability for any legal action that may be taken against them.

While **hemp** is a legal agriculture crop that is grown in Colorado, it would be rare that CMGs would answer questions about this plant. It is typically grown for agricultural purposes and not in home gardens. Typically, Horticulture staff would answer these questions, not volunteers.

Assumption of Risk & Liability Waiver Incident/Accident

Authorized volunteers of Colorado State University are required to complete and sign a waiver annually acknowledging the inherent risks involved in volunteering. This is part of the annual renewal process in VMS that becomes automatically available November 1st each year. Additional waivers are available for activities outside the normal CMG service and for special circumstances or projects.

Liability

While working in an official CMG volunteer capacity as a non-paid University staff, CMG volunteers may be covered by university liability insurance for misinformation, **provided they are using research/knowledge-based information and applying good judgment**. This means that the university may assist with a defense if it is in the best interest of the university. CMG volunteers will not be covered if they go out on a limb with personal information or information from special interest groups.

A CMG would not be covered for information shared outside of official, approved CMG activities.

Worker's Comp and Medical Insurance

As non-paid staff, CMG volunteers are NOT covered by worker's compensation or other medical insurance.

Equal Opportunity

CSU Extension programs are available to all without discrimination. Colorado State University has zero tolerance for discrimination based on race, gender, age, disability, color, veteran status, religion, genetic information, national origin or ancestry, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, or expression.

Colorado State University Extension is an equal opportunity provider. CSUE does not discriminate on the basis of disability and is committed to providing reasonable accommodations. CSU's office of Engagement and Extension ensures meaningful access and equal opportunities to participate to individuals whose first language is not English. Read details here <https://col.st/OWMJA>.

Volunteer Accommodations

Volunteer requests for accommodations can be made verbally or in writing to a local Extension employee. Local staff must provide a written acknowledgement to the requester immediately upon receipt and OEE must respond to requests within 14 business days. Cost cannot be a reason to decline accommodation requests.

Volunteers (and staff/faculty) needing reasonable accommodations for disabilities should be advised to directly contact the Office of Equal Opportunity at 970-491-5836 or oeo@colostate.edu. Counselors in the office will hold a discussion with the volunteer and document the reasonable needs to accommodate the participation and determine how/what university resources can best serve the needs. After evaluation with the volunteer, the Office of Equal Opportunity will contact the Extension program staff to discuss what accommodations are needed and what can be realistically supported.

It is NOT the role of county staff to discuss needs for accommodation with potential volunteers. Again, refer the prospective student directly to CSU for accommodations. Please review this site on the ENGAGE intranet for the latest information on accommodations: <https://colostate.sharepoint.com/sites/OEE-Engage/SitePages/Language-Access.aspx#accommodation-request-form-and-request-tracking>.

Civil Rights & Equal Opportunity Handbook

This [Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity Handbook](#) for volunteers requires your attention and is found in its entirety at the end of this Volunteer Handbook.

State program leaders will ensure that this handbook is:

- Emailed in a PDF to all volunteers statewide.
- Uploaded as a PDF to our volunteer website.

Local program leaders will ensure that this handbook is:

- Printed and available for volunteers in the office.
- Discussed and/or communicated annually with volunteers including local details as needed.

Memberships, Transfers, & Cross-County Enrollment

Cross-county enrollment procedures were developed to address varying needs of CMG volunteers and ensure that each volunteer is engaged in an active local CMG Program.

RESIDENTS APPLYING TO A NEIGHBORING COUNTY'S CMG PROGRAM

Being accountable to local taxpayers and county budget support, **applicants must apply to their home county program**. Counties will give priority to local residents applying to their home county program.

Some potential applicants may better connect to a neighboring county (due to work, personal, or family needs) rather than their county of residency. Residents may apply for a transfer to another county by

creating a memorandum of agreement initiated with the home-county of residence. **This agreement, written by the applicant, must include the following:**

- ✓ A statement clarifying the situation why the applicant prefers membership in a program outside their county of residence.
- ✓ A statement clarifying that the volunteer work will be done in and on behalf of the host county. The volunteer understands and accepts the travel commitment between the counties. Travel time incurred for volunteer outreach from the home to volunteer activities does NOT count towards volunteer hours in most cases.
- ✓ A statement clarifying that the volunteer is not at will to float between the CMG Program in their county of residence and the host county.
- ✓ A statement clarifying that volunteer engagement support will be provided through the host county and that the non-county resident volunteer will be an active member of the host county CMG Program including all communication, continuing education, and reporting.

Upon acceptance into the host county's program, the memorandum of agreement is signed as part of the application process by the CMG applicant, the hosting county CMG program faculty/coordinator, and the county of residence faculty/coordinator. After the initial year, active membership continues with the host county program.

SERVING AS A MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER IN TWO COUNTIES:

CMGs must be committed to one county program. Volunteer service should be done in the home county program. Exceptions to this do occur but are managed by county staff based on program fit and extenuating circumstances. On a related note, cross-county projects do occur and can count for hours in your home county. (Read *Cross-County Projects* in Chapter 2.)

RESIDENTS OF AN EXTENSION COUNTY WITHOUT CMG PROGRAMS APPLYING TO NEIGHBORING CMG PROGRAM

Non-county residents may apply or transfer to a neighboring county under a written memorandum of understanding as follows:

Volunteering for the host county – work will be done for and on behalf of the host county. The memorandum of agreement includes the following items:

- ✓ A statement clarifying that the volunteer work will be done in and on behalf of the host county. The volunteer understands and accepts the travel commitment between the counties. Travel time incurred for volunteer outreach from the home to volunteer activities does NOT count towards volunteer hours in most cases.
- ✓ A statement clarifying that volunteer engagement support will be provided through the host county that the non-county resident volunteer will be a regular, active member of the host county CMG Program including all communication, continuing education, and reporting.
- ✓ The memorandum of agreement is signed as part of the application process by the CMG applicant, the hosting county CMG Program faculty/coordinator, and the county of residence faculty/coordinator. After the initial year, active membership continues with the host county program.

RESIDENTS FROM A NON-EXTENSION COUNTY

Counties where the County Commission elects not to fund the Extension Partnership.

Residents may not apply to or transfer to a neighboring county as CMG volunteers. If a county terminates funding of the Extension partnership, current CMG volunteers will be “released” from volunteer service. All CMG program outreach and training ends within the county.

TRANSFER TO ANOTHER COUNTY WITHIN COLORADO

Colorado Master Gardeners may request a transfer to another county’s program. Consideration will be based on recommendations of previous county staff and the need for additional volunteers in the local program. Transfers are not approved for CMG volunteers who have not fully honored their volunteer commitment. In most situations, a transfer may be feasible only at the beginning of the calendar year when volunteer opportunities are readily open.

Transfers will be denied for volunteers who have failed to complete volunteer commitments of 50 hours volunteer service in the apprentice year and 24 hours each additional year, plus annual continuing education requirements.

Under a ruling of the US Supreme Court, volunteering is a privilege, not a right. A transfer is not guaranteed.

If a transfer is approved, the CMG volunteer should participate in some type of local orientation with staff. Volunteers need to understand that county programs may be vastly different in outreach focus and operational procedures. Procedures will be different than in the previous county and the volunteer will need to shift their mind-set to the new county’s procedures.

TRANSFER FROM ANOTHER STATE TO COLORADO

Nationally, MG training is not coordinated between states. States do not automatically accept training offered in other states. Each state varies greatly in the amount of training and subject matter covered.

In Colorado, important skills for CMG work include being familiar with local soils, insects, and diseases. **Our training content is Colorado-based.** Content even varies to some degree within different areas of the state to focus on local needs.

In order to have years of service in the Master Gardener program transfer, a recommendation and verification of years serviced in good standing are required from a previous state/county coordinator.

THERE ARE TWO OPTIONS FOR OUT-OF-STATE MASTER GARDENERS LOOKING TO JOIN OUR PROGRAM

1. Apply to the Colorado program as a transfer:

If active within the past three years, the individual may APPLY to become a CMG volunteer.

Acceptance is based on:

- Recommendation from state/county coordinator in previous state.
- Recommendation must include confirmation MG was active and in good-standing, starting/training year, total years in program, and any relevant information concerning leadership positions, contributions, certifications, etcetera.
- Interest and availability for volunteer work.
- Background check.

CMG volunteers should understand that they may request a transfer, but that there is nothing automatic or guaranteed in the process. Volunteering is a privilege, not a right.

Based on the area of the nation the volunteer is moving from, the county staff will require that the CMG volunteer participate in Green School where content would be different in Colorado. **At ending CMG Green School DOES require paying training fees.**

2. **Apply as an Apprentice CMG:** Go through the application and acceptance process, Green School training, and volunteer service.

SERVING AS A MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER IN TWO STATES:

If you live in two states and wish to be a Master Gardener Volunteer in both states, you are expected to meet all program requirements in each state. Volunteer hours done in another state do not count towards your Colorado Master Gardener volunteer service.

Chapter 4:

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT & RESOURCES

Volunteer Management System, VMS Online

The online Volunteer Management System (VMS) has many great features allowing CMG volunteers and coordinators to:

- Create and sign-up for CMG Projects.
- Advertise and register for volunteer CMG Events.
- Sign-up for CMG Continuing Education.
- View program calendars.
- Report/View/Edit hours and contacts.
- Email other CMGs.
- Update directory information.
- Change login password.

All CMGs are required to report their hours and contacts in the VMS system. Annual renewal is also done in VMS. **Login from the main site <https://cmg.extension.colostate.edu/> > Volunteer Resources > VMS.** You will be notified of your login and initial password once local staff sets up and account for you. Tutorials for using VMS will also be shared with you at that time. There is a Guide for CMG Volunteers that can be viewed online or in print. Both are available inside the Get Help section of VMS itself as well.

**VMS IS NOT TO BE USED FOR COMMERCIAL, BUSINESS,
OR SENDING SPAM TYPES OF COMMUNICATIONS! IT IS
FOR INTERNAL CSU EXTENSION BUSINESS ONLY.**

Answering Horticulture Questions

Helpdesk, plant diagnostic clinics and "Ask Extension" outreach are core projects and "products" offered by most county CMG programs. It's important that CMGs receive ample information about helpdesk policies, processes, and support. (See section below called *Master Gardener Tools & Links* for researching options.)

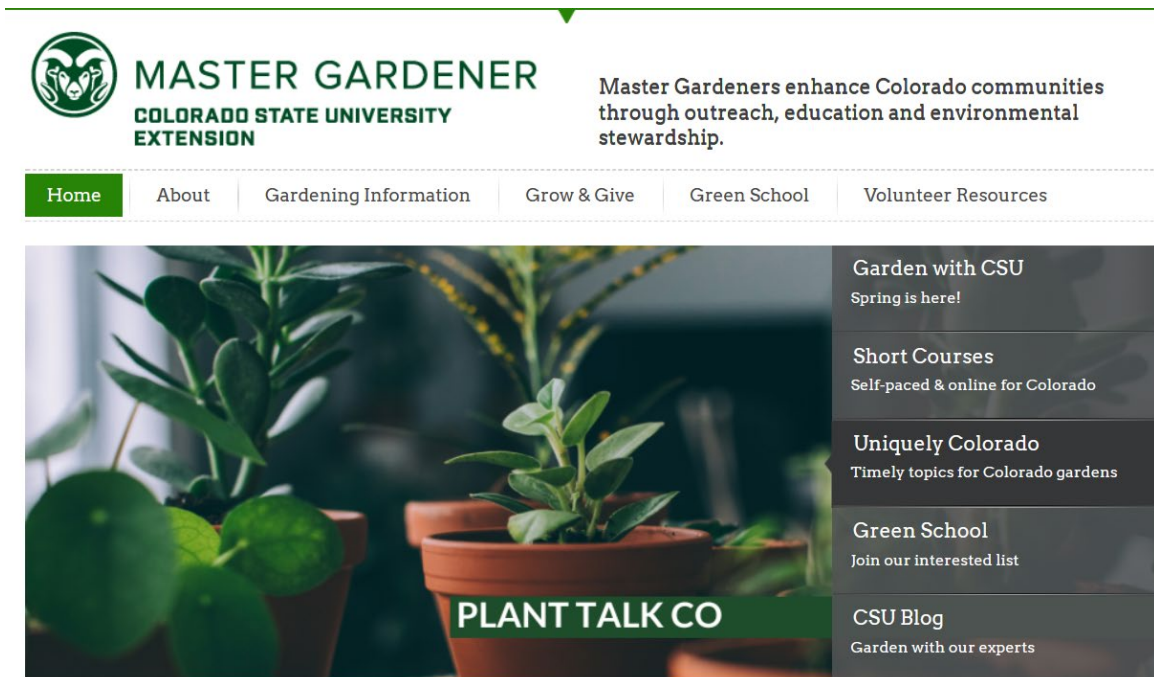
On-the-spot plant Q&A can be daunting and overwhelming - even experienced CMGs and county-based faculty and staff do not know everything and pouring through resources to find answers can be difficult. Here are a few important tips to seeking research-based information and providing solutions and resources to clients:

- Ask lots of questions to get a better understanding of the problem. Suggestions include: Do you know the plant name? Tell me about where it's planted... Tell me about how you water... etc. Many counties have protocols in place to ensure you get as much useful information as possible.
- Ask the client for pictures and samples if possible.
- Never be afraid to delay a response so you can research appropriate solutions/possibilities. "Thanks for this information. I'll need to research this situation and get back to you."
- Extension Master Gardeners are not expected to know everything! You should utilize the resources available to you and lean on your training, fellow CMGs, and county staff.
- Once you've researched possible researched-based solutions, follow-up with the client to provide answers, links, and other resources based on the information provided to you.

Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® Website:

<https://cmg.extension.colostate.edu/>

Our statewide website is your best tool for connecting with other resources.



Master Gardener Tools & Links

The following sites/links are resources you'll use often as CMG volunteers. Check them out so you're familiar with them as they are all commonly used by Colorado State Extension Master Gardener® Volunteers and should be communicated.

Ask Extension - <https://ask2.extension.org/>

Ask Extension, formally known as Ask An Expert, offers one-to-one expert answers from Cooperative Extension/University staff and volunteers within participating Land-Grant institutions from across the United States. Local county staff will provide specialized training regarding how to respond to these questions and use this system. The link listed is where the general public can ask questions.

Co-Horts Gardening Blog - <https://csuhort.blogspot.com/>

Advice and observations from CSU Horticulture Specialists and online webinars.

Colorado Climate Center - <https://climate.colostate.edu/>

Provides information and expertise on Colorado's complex climate.

CSU's Soil Testing Lab - <https://agsci.colostate.edu/soiltestinglab/>

CSU offers soil testing for home gardeners and professional growers. Detailed instructions for how to collect and send in samples can be found on their website. These tests have associated costs and do not evaluate everything. Learn more before recommending to clients.

GardenNotes - <https://cmg.extension.colostate.edu/volunteer-information/cmg-gardennotes-class-handouts/>

GardenNotes is your online text for Green School. It's also an excellent resource for answering client questions in your volunteer role. These are acceptable to reproduce, link to, and copy, so feel free to share these valuable resources.

Grow & Give - GrowAndGiveColorado.org

This CSU Extension program teaches all Coloradoans how to grow food in personal or community gardens and connects them locally with those in need. Find several educational resources here including a free download of the Colorado Vegetable Guide in English and Spanish.

Online Garden Publications - <https://cmg.extension.colostate.edu/gardening-%20resources/online-garden-publications/>

This landing page provides a simplified directory of Fact Sheets by topic.

Plant Diagnostic Clinic - <https://agsci.colostate.edu/agbio/plantclinic/>

The CSU Plant Diagnostic Clinic offers more in-depth plant pathology assessment. This service does have costs associated with it. Most gardeners will not require this level of testing, but it is available.

Plant Select® - <https://plantselect.org>

Plant Select® is the country's leading source of plants designed to thrive in the high plains and intermountain regions - more beauty, less work. This is a collaborative program between Colorado State University, Denver Botanic Gardens, and Green Industry growers.

Planttalk Colorado™ - <http://planttalk.org>

PlantTalk™ is a Colorado-specific horticultural resource site that features simplified information for home gardeners. Be sure to check out the video resources – these are especially useful. More in-depth resources are linked to most topics, including university Fact Sheets.

Trees Are Good - <https://www.treesaregood.org/>

Find a certified arborist in your local area to recommend to clients.

Yard & Garden Fact Sheets - <https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/yard-garden/>

Become familiar with Fact Sheets – you will use them often as a CMG. Fact Sheets are university bulletins that cover a specific topic and provide useful solutions, advice, information, and resources for common questions. **This is an excellent resource for CMGs to share with clients – especially useful for answering helpdesk questions – and provides an excellent first step when researching and providing links to clients.**

Social Media & Other Communication Tools

Instagram:

- Follow @ColoradoMasterGardeners <https://www.instagram.com/coloradomastergardeners/>
- Follow @JeffCoGardener <https://www.instagram.com/jeffcogardener/>

Facebook: Like/Follow <https://www.facebook.com/extensioncolorado/>

Blogs: Trendy, timely information posted regularly from statewide faculty & staff

- CSU Horticulture Blog - <https://csuhort.blogspot.com/>
- CSU Mountain Gardening Blog - <http://coloradomountaingardener.blogspot.com/>

Podcast: Find all streaming platforms for The Relentless Gardener here

<https://engagement.colostate.edu/relentless-gardener/>

Learn More About ‘Why Plants Matter’

Hidden Value of Landscapes - <https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/garden/landscapes.pdf>

Explore the environmental, community and health benefits of landscapes particularly as they relate to water use and drought. This document was created by Colorado State University Horticulture faculty.

Plant Blindness - <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20190425-plant-blindness-what-we-lose-with-nature-deficit-disorder>

Learn more about what 'plant blindness' is and why it matters.

Plants Do That - <https://consumerhort.org/plantsdothat>

Read about what wonderful things plants do in "Plants Do That" press releases from the National Initiative of Consumer Horticulture.

Placemaking - <https://doitgreen.org/topics/community/placemaking-designing-garden-community>

Learn about the art and science of improving communities through strategic greening and community gardening.

Important University Resources & Links

Principles of Community - <https://inclusiveexcellence.colostate.edu/resources/principles-of-community/>

Each member of the CSU community has a responsibility to uphold these principles when engaging with one another and acting on behalf of the university.

CSU’s Land Acknowledgment Statement - <https://landacknowledgment.colostate.edu/>

CSU’s land acknowledgment is a statement crafted by a variety of Indigenous faculty and staff, as well as other officials at CSU. The statement recognizes the long history of Native peoples and nations that lived

and stewarded the land where the university now resides. The land acknowledgment statement also maintains the connection Native people and nations still have to this land. We are enthusiastic about having the CSU Land Acknowledgment video available for the CSU campus and community. If your department is interested in sharing this video on your website or social media, please link to the official Land Acknowledgment website for complete context about the Land Acknowledgment. The website will contain ways for everyone to engage with the Land Acknowledgment and to keep updated to any possible changes.

CSU's Social Media Policy - <http://policylibrary.colostate.edu/policy.aspx?id=497>

We encourage CMGs to post about our program on their personal social sites but are NOT to post AS a CMG unless it's pre-approved by your county program.

CSU's Minors' Policy - <http://policylibrary.colostate.edu/policyprint.aspx?id=734>

Become familiar with this policy to ensure the protection and considerations necessary when working with vulnerable populations. All volunteers agree to this annually during their reappointment in VMS.

Concerned about someone? Tell Someone – <https://supportandsafety.colostate.edu/tell-someone/>

If you are concerned about safety or mental health – your own or someone else's, please tell someone locally in your CSU Extension office or through this site. Can also call 970-491-1350.

CSU's Bias Reporting - <https://biasreporting.colostate.edu/>

If you experience a bias-related incident in your role as a CMG volunteer or witness bias firsthand, use the CSU Bias Reporting System.

CSU's Office of Equal Opportunity - <https://oeo.colostate.edu>

Matters of discrimination and harassment based on protected groups must be addressed by the Office of Equal Opportunity. If your concern is about unlawful discrimination or harassment, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity at oeo@colostate.edu or 970-491-5836.

CIVIL RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY HANDBOOK

Next page.



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

CSU EXTENSION

CIVIL RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY HANDBOOK

FOR VOLUNTEERS AND ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS



CIVIL RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

CONTENTS



A NOTE TO OUR VOLUNTEERS AND ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS:

Thank you for serving as a volunteer or advisory board member for Colorado State University Extension. Without question, you play one of the most important roles in the delivery of our programs. We are grateful to have you as part of our team. The guidance that follows contains the information and resources needed to ensure that Extension meets the latest federal regulations and university policies. The continued funding of our programs and staff depends on how well each of us work to meet these requirements. More importantly, by fully implementing these measures, we will be able to ensure that CSU Extension is a welcoming place for all Coloradans. You are already proven leaders in your community. Please help us fulfill CSU's land-grant mission by leading in the incorporation of these civil rights, equal opportunity and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion measures across all our offerings.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND:

Page 2: Processes for filing Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Complaints

Page 6: Processes for Requesting Reasonable Accommodations and Language Access

Page 8: Strategies for Communicating with Spanish Speaking Communities

Page 9: Title IX and Sex Discrimination and Harassment

Contact your program leaders for more Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) resources such as:

- OEE's Civil Rights Plan
- DEI Training Plan
- REG Data Collection Template
- Translation/Interpretation Request Form
- Extension's nondiscrimination disclaimer - <https://col.st/II0t3>

IMPORTANT CONTACTS:

As a CSU volunteer or advisory board member, you have numerous county-based and campus-based resources available to you. Please note that you are always welcome to contact your local county-based program staff and faculty (Colorado Master Gardener Coordinator, 4-H specialists, County Director, etc.) and campus-based program leaders (4-H, Family Leadership Training Institute, Colorado Master Gardener, etc.) in addition to the contacts below.

OEE's DEI Specialist:

- Questions regarding Civil Rights, Equal Opportunity, nondiscrimination, reasonable accommodations, and data reporting for USDA-funded programs
- eric.ishiwata@colostate.edu

CSU Office of Title IX Program and Gender Equity:

- Questions regarding Title IX and sex discrimination and harassment
- titleix@colorstate.edu | (970) 491-1715
- <https://col.st/45c3D>

Local County Extension Offices

<https://extension.colostate.edu/contact-us/>

Colorado State 4-H Office

<https://co4h.colostate.edu/> | 970-491-1152

OEE's Language Access/DEI Program Coordinator:

- Questions regarding Language Access
- susana.guarado@colostate.edu with cc to eric.ishiwata@colostate.edu

Office of Equal Opportunity:

- Questions regarding CSU's discrimination complaint process
- oeo@colostate.edu or (970) 491-5836

CIVIL RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

RESPONDING TO AND PROCESSING DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS



Any faculty, staff, participant or volunteer may report what they believe to be an act of discrimination or harassment based on race/ethnicity, age, creed, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender, disability, veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression, or pregnancy to the CSU Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) as soon as possible after the alleged incident(s).

Formal Complaints

Formal Complaints seek official determinations as to whether respondents have violated CSU's Non-Discrimination Statement and/or Sexual Harassment Policy. OEO conducts a thorough investigation and concludes with an official report.

Informal Complaints

Informal complaints result in OEO attempting to facilitate mutually acceptable resolutions through conflict resolution techniques. The University does not determine if respondents have violated policies.

Have an Equal Opportunity Complaint?

Complaints must be submitted to the CSU Office of Equal Opportunity

- **(970) 491-5836**
- **oeo@colostate.edu**
- **101 Student Services Building, Fort Collins campus**

A detailed description of the process can be found here: <https://col.st/lb8j2>

Contact (970) 491-5836 for questions.

OEE recommends using CSU OEO's Complaint In-Take Form for internal complaints: <https://col.st/hRNzG>

CIVIL RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

RESPONDING TO AND PROCESSING DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS



INFORMAL AND FORMAL COMPLAINT REQUIREMENTS

Informal and formal complaints must contain:

- Names of the complainant and respondent(s) and the nature of their relationships to the University
- The type of discrimination alleged: discrimination, harassment, retaliation, race/ethnicity, religion, gender, genetic information, age, national origin/ancestry, disability, sexual orientation, color, sex, veteran status, gender identity or expression
- A description of the circumstances of the alleged discrimination, including the date(s) and location(s), witnesses, and supporting documents, if available
- A designation of whether the complaint is informal or formal

REPORTING TO EXTERNAL AGENCIES IS AN OPTION

Persons who believe that they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and/or retaliation are able to file a complaint with:

- Colorado Civil Rights Division
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights
- Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs

Information regarding reporting to any of these agencies may be obtained from CSU OEO.

- www.oeo.colostate.edu
- oeo@colostate.edu
- 970-491-5836



RESPONDING TO AND PROCESSING SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINTS

CSU's Sexual Harassment Policy prohibits "any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, education or participation in a university activity
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for, or a factor in, decisions affecting that individual's employment, education or participation in a university activity
- Such conduct is sufficiently severe or pervasive to unreasonably interfere with an individual's employment or academic performance or create an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for that person's employment, education or participation in a university activity

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Repeated and unwelcome sexually-oriented bullying, teasing, joking or flirting
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies
- Leering, touching, pinching or brushing against another's body
- Displaying objects or pictures, including electronic images, which are sexual in nature and which create a hostile or offensive work, education or living environment

Have a Sexual Harassment Complaint?

Complaints should be submitted to the Office of Equal Opportunity:

- **(970) 491-5836**
- **oeo@colostate.edu**
- **101 Student Services Building, Fort Collins campus**

A detailed description of CSU's process can be found here:

<https://oeo.colostate.edu/sexual-harassment/>

Every Extension employee who is not officially designated as a "confidential resource" is required to report every instance of sexual violence, sexual harassment or other conduct prohibited by the policy to OEO.



KEY CSU CONTACTS AND OTHER REPORTING OPTIONS

Office of Equal Opportunity

Provides information on discrimination, harassment and consensual relationships policies; complaint procedures for formal and informal resolution processes related to discrimination, harassment and retaliation; support with disability status designations and reasonable accommodations

- **Contact Katherine Castaneda: oeo@colostate.edu or (970) 491-5836**

Human Resources Employee Relations

Consulting for employees, supervisors and managers regarding rule and policy interpretation, employee-supervisor conflict resolution and workplace behavior

- **Contact Eric Ray: eric.ray@colostate.edu or (970) 491-0538**

Office of Inclusive Excellence (OIE)

A neutral resource for faculty and staff encountering work-related issues and conflicts related to diversity and inclusion; responds to incidents of bias reported through the Bias Reporting System

- **Contact Shannon Archibeque-Engle: shannon.archibeque-engle@colostate.edu or (970) 491-2450**
- **OIE's Bias Reporting System: <https://biasreporting.colostate.edu/>**

CIVIL RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

REQUESTING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS



REQUESTING OFFICE OF ENGAGEMENT AND EXTENSION SUPPORT

Participant requests for accommodations can be made verbally or in writing to a local Extension employee. Local staff must provide a written acknowledgement to the requester immediately upon receipt and OEE must respond to requests within 14 business days. Cost cannot be a reason to decline accommodation requests.

For support with reasonable accommodation requests, please reach out to your local county or program faculty or staff who will work with OEE's DEI team.

Information obtained in connection with reasonable accommodation requests must be kept in secured files that are separated from the individual's other files.

REQUESTING TRANSLATION & INTERPRETATION SUPPORT

CSU Extension, as a recipient of NIFA funding, is required to take reasonable steps to ensure persons with limited English proficiencies (LEP) have meaningful access to programs and activities.

In areas where a significant proportion of the populations eligible to be served need services or information in languages other than English, OEE is required to take reasonable steps to provide information in those languages at no cost to participants. CSU Extension's education-based programs cannot turn-away prospective participants/volunteers due to their limited English proficiencies, nor can we ask participants/volunteers to provide their own interpreters.

Office of Engagement & Extension has resources to support Extension's language access needs.

- **Contact your county or campus program leader with any translation and interpretation requests who will submit a request to OEE's Language Access/DEI Program Coordinator, Susana Guardado.**
- **Please allow a minimum of 14 business days prior to your deadline for translation and interpretation requests.**

CIVIL RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

COMMUNICATING WITH SPANISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITIES



Strategies for Communicating with Spanish-speaking Communities

Trusted Messengers: Word-of-Mouth

For Colorado's Spanish-speaking communities, word-of-mouth from "trusted messengers" remains the most effective means of recruitment.

Trusted Messengers: Text/Instant Messages

A somewhat distant second would be invitations sent via texts/GroupMe/WhatsApp, again from trusted messengers. Please note: effective electronic communication includes texts and instant messages, not email, social media, or websites.

Who are “Trusted Messengers”?

Examples of trusted messengers include: community-serving nonprofit organizations, the school district's family liaisons, Spanish-speaking health care providers or “promotores” (health promoters), grassroots/neighborhood leaders, Spanish-speaking public educators, faith leaders and trusted business leaders.

Trusted messengers do not necessarily carry titles. They could be anyone with influence in the community. Think of trusted messengers as gatekeepers.

It goes without saying, it is always easier to recruit participants when you have already-established relationships that are built on trust, which can only be cultivated over time.

Radio

Among Colorado's Spanish-speaking communities, radio is heavily used for entertainment, news and sharing information. Communicate via Spanish language radio stations in order to reach a broad audience. When speaking on Spanish language radio, you can speak in Spanish or English, most stations will interpret for you. You can either contact the radio station ahead of time and schedule a guest spot or simply call in to make an announcement.

Univision

Local Univision stations are another powerful tool for reaching Spanish-speaking communities.



Strategies for Communicating with Spanish-speaking Communities (continued)

Ineffective Outreach Strategies

Outreach strategies that proved to be ineffective include flyers or webpages translated into Spanish, text-heavy emails and social media accounts not already part of residents' established feeds.

Building Trust Takes Time

Instead of attempting to establish new methods of communication (ex: new social channels or translating websites to Spanish), rely on established messengers within the community.

Consider existing relationships within the community and actively work to strengthen and expand those relationships, while also establishing new relationships. Building trust takes time but, once established, can be a powerful tool for effective outreach and communication.

Additional Tips

- When printing or publishing a document that feature Spanish-speaking participants' work and accomplishments, it is critical to have reputable translation for the document and not rely upon auto-translate services. Please refer to page 6 to request translation services.
- When possible, publish bilingual documents with both Spanish and English on the same page. This is more inclusive than Spanish-only and English-only documents.
- When web communication is used (remember that this is not a preferred method of communication and should only be used when strictly necessary), note that any graphics with text in them do not translate if a user is looking at the page with a web-translator extension.
 - For example, a graphic created for social media that has text on the image will not translate if the user is utilizing the Google Translate browser extension (or similar software).
 - If you must use graphics, include both English and Spanish versions on the webpage.
- Use vivid colors, big bold lettering and break up block text with images and visuals.

CIVIL RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

TITLE IX AND SEX DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT



Title IX and Sex Discrimination and Harassment focuses on gender equity. For issues related to sexual harassment, please report to CSU Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO). To report gender discrimination, in terms of access to education-based program or activities, please report to CSU Office of Title IX Programs and Gender Equity (see contact info below).

- **Sex, according to the USDA, refers to the “biological determination as female, male and other.”**
- **Gender refers to “one’s concept of self as a man, woman, a blend of both or neither, such as genderfluid, transgender and/or nonbinary.”**
- **Both sex and gender are covered by CSU’s Nondiscrimination Statement, therefore, CSU Extension programs and workplaces are required to be open to all, regardless of how they identify in terms of sex, gender, sexual orientation and gender expression.**

There are three policies related to Title IX:

1. Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

2. CSU’s Sexual Harassment Policy, which prohibits:

“...any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors or other conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment, education or participation in a university activity;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for, or a factor in, decisions affecting that individual’s employment, education or participation in a university activity; or
- Such conduct is sufficiently severe or pervasive to unreasonably interfere with an individual’s employment or academic performance or create an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment for that person’s employment, education or participation in a university activity.
- Examples include but are not limited to: unwelcome sexual advances; repeated and unwelcome sexually-oriented bullying, teasing, joking, or flirting; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; commentary about an individual’s body, sexual prowess, or sexual deficiencies; leering, touching, pinching, or brushing against another’s body; or displaying objects or pictures, including electronic images, which are sexual in nature and which create a hostile or offensive work, education, or living environment.”

3. CSU’s policy on “Responsible Employees,” which states:

“...any CSU employee who is not identified as a confidential resource is required to report sexual violence, sexual harassment or other conduct prohibited by the policy to CSU’s Office of Title IX Programs and Gender Equity.”

When in doubt, it is wiser to send the details to OEO and let them make the judgement call. The only exceptions for mandatory reporting would be if you are officially designated as a “confidential resource,” someone like a mental health counselor or OEO officer.

CIVIL RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

TITLE IX AND SEX DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT



Who Can File a Complaint and How?

CSU's complaint process for Title IX-based discrimination cases is open to all staff, program participants, committee members and community partners. Examples of grounds for an investigation include girls or women-identified participants not being afforded the same opportunities to participate in Extension's education-based programming or office funds being allocated in ways that deny girls or women-identified participants full participation in Extension programming. Discussions will be kept confidential to the full extent permitted by the law. CSU's Office of Title IX Programs and Gender Equity need to be notified of incidents as soon as possible.

Likewise, CSU's complaint process for sexual harassment is open to all staff, program participants and community partners. Reports must be sent to OEO no later than 180 days after the last incident considered to be sexual harassment. A detailed description of the filing process can be found here: <https://oee.colostate.edu/sexual-harassment/>. You also have the option to file an external complaint to the USDA in the form of a letter or you can request an official intake form from the USDA via email. Contact information, for all options, is posted on the OEE intranet's DEI portal.

If you need additional guidance or resources, contact Eric Ishiwata (eric.ishiwata@colostate.edu). Do not, however, share any case-specific, confidential information with Ishiwata or OEE HR. If the issue is related to discrimination, take it directly to OEO. If it relates to Title IX and Sexual Discrimination and Harassment, take it directly to CSU's Office of Title IX Programs and Gender Equity.

CSU's Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO): oeo@colostate.edu or (970) 491-5836
CSU's Office of Title IX Programs and Gender Equity: titleix@colostate.edu or (970) 491-1715

Building Title IX Requirements into Programs

All programs and activities must be offered in a manner that ensures non-discrimination on the basis of sex/gender identity, marital/parental status and/or pregnancy, childbirth or related condition.

No program, activity, club, or group name may contain sex-stereotyped names or illustrations. This includes marketing materials, presentations and other digital media related to the program, activity, club or group. There can be no sex-separate programs, activities or awards. All offices and programs are required to conduct thorough reviews of their programming and materials to ensure Extension is in 100% compliance with these guidelines by the end of October 2022.

EXCEPTIONS for prohibition on gender-based programs are made for programs specifically designed to address historical imbalances in participant representation on the basis of gender and/or gender identity (i.e., Annie's project, Youth STEM programming for girls or FCS support for teen parents, etc.).

All program staff, participants, committee members and volunteers must have access to CSU Extension's sexual harassment and Title IX policies and have an understanding of the complaints process.