

# KENTUCKY EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

## VOLUNTEER SERVICE UNIT (VSU) PROGRAM

The Volunteer Service Unit (VSU) program is intended to recognize individual volunteer efforts in your club and community. It is also intended to help you grow personally in volunteer leadership skills, and to show you how you might use those skills. For example, you might want to climb a “volunteer career ladder.” That is, you may want to go on to more responsible volunteer positions in KEHA or in other groups. In addition, volunteer experience is often accepted and equated to paid employment if described in comparable terms when seeking employment.

- 1) **What is a volunteer?** A volunteer is an individual who agrees to do a job or perform a service for others (not family) for which the only pay is the personal satisfaction of a job well done. A volunteer can share time, knowledge, skills, materials, etc. with others. A volunteer may be paid or reimbursed for out of pocket expenses related to volunteer work.
- 2) **What is a Volunteer Service Unit (VSU)?** A VSU is an hour of volunteer effort. These hours include hours spent in preparing to carry out a volunteer activity as well as the hours spent directly involved in volunteer work. This includes hours spent within the KEHA organization, in volunteer roles with Cooperative Extension and other community work.
- 3) **How can I earn VSU's?** By regularly recording volunteer service hours on the VSU log and submitting your log to your county club/county Leadership Development Chairman. VSUs should be reported in the KEHA year in which the service occurred.
- 4) **How are VSUs categorized?** The VSU program has been reworked and expanded to include four categories of service. Those categories include Extension, KEHA, Community and Personal.
- 5) **What counts as volunteer hours in each category?**  
Extension - All Extension Agent directed programs, including “train the trainer” lessons where you participate in agent-led training then teach the lesson to your club or other audiences. This category also includes assisting with any program organized and presented by an Extension agent like judging a 4-H event, leading a 4-H club, volunteering at an Extension field day, etc. This also includes volunteering for activities like 4-H Speech contests, Farm Safety Days, 4-H Reality Store, LEAP, or serving as a member or officer for the county Extension Council, county Family and Consumer Sciences Advisory County, County Extension District Board or State Extension Council. Counted hours should include your training, preparation time, travel time and delivery time to your audience. The key here is agent-led and directed programs where the KEHA member is a volunteer.

**KEHA** - Programs that originate and are directed by KEHA leaders and members. This includes service to a club, county, area, or the state as a committee member or officer. Participation in training sessions and organizing and leading KEHA-sponsored events should be counted. All volunteer hours from planning, preparing and conducting the meeting or activity should be included, as well as travel time, phone and/or messaging time and activity/presentation time. All volunteer time for club, county, area or state KEHA projects, fundraisers and special initiatives would be counted in this category. Examples include: making quilts for the Center for Courageous Kids, baking for local bake sales, planting trees, picking up trash in local clean-up project, etc.

**Community** - This category is for your service as a member or officer within community groups not Extension or KEHA coordinated or led. Examples include: local home owner's association, library board, Rotary or Kiwanis, Eastern Star, parent-teacher organizations, etc. This category is also for reporting volunteer time mentoring/tutoring students at school, with local literacy programs, senior home visits/music programs, American Cancer Society, Red Cross, local health departments, etc. as long as the volunteer role is not related to an Extension-led activity or Extension Homemakers activity. Also report serving as a volunteer first responder, on a local school board, any governmental appointments, jury duty, or any other similar roles. All volunteer hours from planning, preparing and conducting the meeting or activity should be included, as well as travel time, phone and/or messaging time and activity/presentation time.

**Personal** - This category is for discretionary reporting of any unpaid service to family, friends, and neighbors. It includes babysitting relatives not living with you, taking a neighbor or friend to the doctor and/or shopping, mowing the neighbors' lawn, shoveling their snow, raking leaves, etc. Church and faith-based participation such as choir member practice, Sunday school, transporting church members and other religious activities can also be included in this category.

- 6) **How do members report their individual hours?** The log for recording Volunteer Service Units (VSUs) can be found in the KEHA Manual Appendix. Make as many copies as necessary and total the number of hours per category before sending the log to the Club/County Chairman for Leadership Development.
- 7) Clubs may elect to report hours as an entity provided no individual member of said club is reporting individual hours as well. This eliminates the potential for duplicate reporting and confusion.
- 8) **How are hours reported to the state level?** The County Chairman must forward the compiled County VSU Report Forms to the Area Leadership Development Chairman by August 15. The Area Leadership Development Chairman then completes the area VSU Report Forms and sends the form to the State Chairman for Leadership Development by September 15.

- 9) Each hour of your service should be counted in only one category. In the case of projects or programs that may cross category lines, choose the category that best represents that activity.
- a. *Example:* Happy Homemakers Club partners with a 4-H agent to conduct a sewing camp for kids. If leadership is shared by an agent and a KEHA leader, count those hours as **EXTENSION** due to agent involvement.
  - b. *Example:* Country Ladies Club partners with a local school to teach basic sewing skills to students after school. Since the project is organized and presented by KEHA members, these hours count as **KEHA** hours.
  - c. *Example:* Susie H. Smith volunteers with the Cancer Society and provides local residents transportation to oncology appointments. These hours are reportable under **COMMUNITY** because it is a specific function through a community group. However, If Susie transports Aunt Lulu as a personal favor, the hours count as **PERSONAL**.

***Recognition:***

At the COUNTY level:

- a. A listing of all members with any hours reported by category should be shared via the annual meeting program, a newsletter, social media, website, etc. The county council, working with the County Leadership Development Chairman, should determine the most appropriate means to share the listing.
- b. The top three members in each category will be recognized and presented with a certificate at the annual county meeting. The County Leadership Development Chairman is responsible for this recognition.
- c. The county will send a report of all members in the county with more than 500 hours or more of total hours across all categories, as well as the listing of the top three individuals per category to the Area Leadership Development Chairman.
- d. It will no longer be necessary to hold hours over to the next year as all hours will be recognized at some level each year.
- e. If your county annual meeting is held before the end of the KEHA year when reports these reports are due, this information will need to be saved by the County Leadership Chairman for certificate presentation at the next annual meeting or at another time designated by the county council.

At the AREA level:

- a. The top three individuals reported from each county in each category will be compared with the other county individuals of the same honor to determine the top three from each category for recognition at the Area meeting. These individuals will be recognized with a special certificate.
- b. All members with 500 hours or more (across all categories) will also be recognized and receive a certificate as will any clubs reporting 1000 or more hours (across all categories). This will be the responsibility of the Area Chairman. If the area annual meeting is held before these numbers are known, the information will be saved and certificates presented at the next annual meeting.

At the STATE level:

- a. Area winners for each category as submitted by the Area Chairmen will be compiled in a booklet for recognition at State Meeting.
- b. The top category winners across the state will receive a plaque, with 2nd and 3rd place receiving a certificate.