

General Manual
Title 360 - Human Resources

Part 428 - National NRCS Volunteer Services - Earth Team
Subpart A - Authorization

KS428.2 Authorization to Travel and Operate Government Vehicles

C. Volunteers may be . . .

- (1) Complete Form KS-PER-37, Authorization for Earth Team Volunteer to Drive Government Vehicle.

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Subpart A - Authorization

KS428.5 Kansas Apprenticeship Program (KAP)

- A. The KAP will follow all guidelines for the Earth Team (ET) volunteer program.
- B. The purpose of the KAP is to provide an innovative year-round program that provides successful, nontraditional students with work experience in natural resources.
- C. The goals of the KAP are to provide work experience for students in the natural resources environment while providing them with an opportunity for community service and to assist the student in making career choices.
- D. Participants will be counted as ET volunteers.
- E. The promotion and operation of the KAP will be administered by state and area ET volunteer coordinators.

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Subpart B - Program Responsibilities

KS428.12 State Volunteer Coordinators

- A. The Kansas Earth Team (ET) volunteer coordinator will:
- (8) Provide training to area and state office (SO) volunteer coordinators
 - (9) Keep the state conservationist (STC) and assistant state conservationists for field operations (ASTCs-FO) informed on the status of the program
- B. The STC will select a SO volunteer coordinator, and each ASTC-FO will select an area volunteer coordinator. The selected coordinators will:
- (1) Coordinate the state/area office (AO) volunteer program
 - (2) Coordinate state/area volunteer activities with the Kansas ET volunteer coordinator as appropriate
 - (3) Prepare recommendations to the STC/ASTCs-FO or Kansas ET volunteer coordinator for volunteer program activities within the state/AO
 - (4) Prepare records and reports as necessary
 - (5) Input, or assure that volunteer hours are input into the national ET tracking system.
 - (6) Recommend and implement volunteer program training for state/area personnel
 - (7) Coordinate the state/AO volunteer recognition program

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Subpart E - Documentation and Forms

KS428.44 Forms NRCS-PER-004 or AD-320, Timesheets

A. Kansas Earth Team volunteer hours will be reported on Form NRCS-PER-004, The Earth Team Time and Attendance; Form KS-PER-46, Individual Volunteer Timesheet; or Form KS-PER-47, Group Volunteer Timesheet. All paperwork, to include forms, job descriptions, timesheets, and any other volunteer information, will be maintained at the originating office.

Hours for state office (SO) volunteers are reported by the SO volunteer coordinator and should be submitted to him/her at the end of the month.

Documented hours for volunteers will be maintained for three years and then may be discarded.

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KS428.46 Recordable Volunteer Hours

The following volunteer scenarios will assist in determining recordable volunteer hours for the Earth Team (ET) Volunteer Program.

A conservation district (CD) board member spends time preparing for meetings, setting up a room, or attending tours, shows, and other meetings to gather information for the district management. Examples of such meetings would be attending a Kansas Association of Conservation District (KACD) meeting, the "Legislative Fair," or meeting with county commissioners on budget issues. The board member can receive mileage compensation and still be counted as a volunteer. These are examples of volunteer time. Attending scheduled monthly meetings and the annual meeting are **not** considered volunteer time; however, board members may count volunteer time for performing an activity or helping in some way outside of the annual meeting; i.e. serving food, set-up and tear down of tables and chairs, handling the voter registration table, preparing for the meeting beforehand and other speaker activities.

A board member of an established resource conservation and development (RC&D) area attending a council meeting as part of his/her appointed duties is not volunteer time. Any time spent on RC&D area activities, additional meetings, or functions outside of the council meetings can be recorded as volunteer hours. For activities such as these, count all board members' time even for those that may be paid by another entity, such as an economic development director.

There is a proposal for a new RC&D area. All time used establishing the program is considered volunteer time and is recorded by each individual county. For the proposed RC&D area, all time spent in meetings and activities should be counted as volunteer time for all of those participating, even those that are getting paid by another entity, such as an economic development director. Once established, the RC&D council reports volunteer hours for RC&D activities (other than council meetings) for the entire RC&D area; however, if the project is county or multi-county specific, the RC&D can work with offices to share the hours that will be reported. The RC&D office is responsible for monitoring this to ensure that there is no duplicate reporting.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and CD employees in a non-pay status elect to do volunteer work and would like to be able to report this time as volunteer hours.

- Example 1: A CD employee chooses to assist with a mission-related outdoor classroom activity on his/her day off, and no monetary compensation is received.
- Example 2: A soil conservation technician chooses to attend a CD board meeting on his/her own time and no monetary compensation is received.

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KS428.46 Recordable Volunteer Hours (continued)

In both examples, the hours may be recorded as volunteer hours. Volunteer time cannot be counted for an NRCS employee in a non-pay status who elects to do work that relates directly to the work they are paid to do. For example, a DC cannot count volunteer time for working on the weekend to get caught up on work he/she is normally paid to do.

Parents and instructors that are not teachers are helping in an outdoor classroom. An NRCS employee, assuming the role of the instructor outside of his/her normal work day, is giving a demonstration on the advantages of no-till. The NRCS employee is volunteering his/her time since the act of providing a demonstration is outside of his/her normal day-to-day duties which he/she is expected to perform.

Hosted volunteers are volunteers who are paid by someone other than NRCS or the CD. Hosted volunteers may serve as ET volunteers.

Examples of hosted volunteers are: The Green Thumb organization, Veterans who are paid a stipend (a fixed amount of money paid periodically for services) by the Veteran's Administration. Another example of a hosted volunteer would be a group of individuals that work for a bank that have volunteered for the day on work time to assist with cooking a meal for a "Kid's Ag Day."

Although the volunteer is no longer identify as "hosted" in the tracking system, offices should still record the hours and establish them as a volunteer.

An NRCS employee's daughter (over the age of 14 for worker's compensation requirements) stuffs envelopes for a bulk mailing. The daughter is a volunteer. Any family member may be a volunteer.

Future Farmers of America (FFA) or 4-H conducts a tillage survey or other surveys for NRCS. It is suggested that NRCS pay mileage to the members for the use of a privately owned vehicle. FFA and 4-H members are volunteers, even though they have been reimbursed for mileage by NRCS.

A Boy Scout group volunteers to move boxes in the storage room. Volunteer hours may only be recorded for those participants over the age of 14. Boy Scouts under the age of 14 cannot be present due to liability issues.

Board members, church groups, or other organizations preparing food for meetings, such as an annual CD meeting, tours, tillage program, or other meetings, and not receiving monetary compensation, are considered volunteers.

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KS428.46 Recordable Volunteer Hours (continued)

Example: A cattlemen's group cooked hamburgers for a no-till tour where meat was purchased with donations from the exhibitors.

A farmer helps an NRCS employee layout or checkout a project. This is considered volunteer time. The planning time with the farmer is not volunteer time. If the planning and layout-checkout time overlap, the NRCS employee estimates the planning time and deducts that from the total time spent with the farmer. The difference (time used to layout or checkout the project) is recorded as volunteer hours. His/her time is added under the "Friends of Conservation" group as volunteer hours that will be recorded for the month.

A Kansas Apprentice Program (KAP) volunteer can donate his/her time while learning about the agency. Having a KAP volunteer is a great way to introduce people, who would not normally have contact with NRCS, to what the agency has to offer.

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Subpart G - Recognition of Volunteer Services

KS428.62 Volunteer Recognition and Awards

B. State office (SO) selected personnel and the state Earth Team (ET) volunteer coordinator shall disseminate nomination requirements for the following state awards:

- (1) Individual Volunteer Award: This award will recognize the ET volunteer who has contributed his/her time and abilities to promote and improve putting conservation on the land.
- (2) Group Volunteer Award: This award will recognize a group's contributions to the promotion of conservation and the proper use of our natural resources.

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KS428.63 NRCS Chief's Recognition and Awards

A. The National Volunteer . . .

- (1) Chief's Field Award - This award recognizes the most effective Earth Team (ET) program in a field office (FO), including the Plant Materials Center, demonstrated by shared leadership among Natural Resources Conservation Service and district employees and ET volunteers utilizing volunteer resources to accomplish FO goals.

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KS428.64 NRCS Employee Recognition and Awards

B. The National Volunteer . . .

- (1) NRCS Employee Earth Team (ET) Award - This award recognizes one employee in the state for their outstanding use of volunteer resources.
- (2) ET Volunteer Coordinator Award - This award recognizes one outstanding area, state office, or state volunteer coordinator.

C. Kansas ET award winners are submitted by the state administrative officer to National Headquarters to compete for national awards.

D. The Kansas ET volunteer coordinator will submit nominations for state awards to the state conservationist for review and approval.

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KS428.65 NRCS Partnership Recognition and Awards

B. The National Volunteer . . .

- (1) Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD)/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Earth Team (ET) Award - This award is presented to the conservation district board with the most effective volunteer program.
- (2) Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)/NRCS ET Award - This award is presented to the most effective ET program in an RC&D area.

E. Kansas District Manager ET Volunteer Award - This award recognizes one outstanding district manager. Nomination forms are available upon request from the area and/or state coordinator. This award is not nationally recognized.