



## All Reasonable Efforts

*Updated December 2021*

The intent of the Civil Rights Act is that all people have the opportunity to participate in educational programs and employment opportunities in federally assisted programs. The intent of the Civil Rights Act and the means for achieving that intent are consistent with the Extension philosophy that its programs are open to all persons and that those programs will be designed to best meet their needs. A sincere effort must be made to encourage participation by underserved audiences and to overcome barriers and concerns that might interfere with their participation. It is not enough to simply announce the program is open to all. An effort must be made to tailor the program to meet the needs and concerns of the target audience. Examples of barriers to participation include means of publication, location of meetings, etc., not normally used by the target audience.

"All Reasonable Efforts" are a combination of actions designed to communicate to all persons that VCE-sponsored club membership and program participation are open and that all are welcome and encouraged to become members or to participate in educational programs. The minimum reasonable effort required by Extension staff include three steps:

1. Use of all available mass media – including radio, newspaper, and television – to inform potential recipients of the program and of the opportunity to participate
2. Personal letters and circulars addressed to defined potential recipients inviting them to participate, including dates and places of meetings or other planned activities
3. Personal visits by the Extension staff member(s) to a representative number of defined potential recipients in the geographically defined area to encourage participation

Documentation is needed that "All Reasonable Efforts" have been made. Copies of mass media releases and circular letters must meet requirements for 1 and 2 above. Personal visits may be documented by making a record for filing of personal visits including visitor, dates, person reached, responses, and other related information. In addition, there is an expectation for affirmative action to achieve balanced participation and civil rights compliance in the form of "All Reasonable Efforts" to increase the level of minority participation in and integration of 4-H clubs, and other VCE-sponsored organizations.

The legal guidelines of eliminating discrimination in a state Cooperative Extension program require that, for each 4-H Club whose membership consists of one race and services a community or area of interracial clientele, steps must be taken to assure that membership of such clubs is interracial in composition. Extension assistance is to be discontinued to those clubs which remain all one race, unless it is established that "all reasonable effort" has been made to recruit individuals of racial groups not represented. In any such case, a record of effort made is required to be retained for audit purposes.

"All Reasonable Efforts" should be documented and maintained by program area in the unit's central Civil Rights files.

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