



VMN Volunteer Info Sheet

Annual Re-enrollment in the VMN Program

*This Info Sheet is intended for all VMN volunteers in the VMN Program
Info Sheet authored by Virginia Master Naturalist State Office*

Overview

Beginning with the 2023 calendar year, the VMN Program instituted an annual Re-enrollment policy. All VMN volunteers must individually complete the Re-enrollment process in Better Impact during the annual Re-enrollment Period, December 1 to January 31. The VMN State Office will determine who needs to complete Re-enrollment each year based on when they joined the Program. Information and instructions for how to Re-enroll will be emailed from the VMN State Office to every VMN volunteer annually at the beginning of the Re-enrollment Period.

The Re-enrollment process should take a volunteer 5-10 minutes to complete. If a volunteer does not have access to Better Impact, they may request a paper form from the VMN State Office by emailing masternaturalist@vt.edu or calling 540-231-0790.

It has happened during the Re-enrollment Period that some VMNs choose not to Re-enroll because they can no longer do the volunteer work they've always done. This situation does happen, but it does not need to be a reason for a volunteer to leave the program. A volunteer's participation in the program may change over time and that is ok! If a volunteer finds that they cannot do their usual activities due to health reasons or personal obligations, there are likely to be other opportunities that are a better fit for their current circumstances. A volunteer in this situation should reach out to their chapter leaders and ask what volunteer opportunities might be available that fit their current situation.

In this document, you will find information on the following items:

- Explanation
- Annual Timeline for Re-enrollment
- Requirements for Re-enrollment

Explanation

Re-enrollment is the practice of asking every VMN volunteer to renew their membership in the program on an annual basis. Annual Re-enrollment is a requirement of all Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) master volunteer programs. Each VMN volunteer will need to complete their Re-enrollment in Better Impact on an annual basis to remain a volunteer in good standing of the VMN Program.

What are the Benefits of Re-enrollment?

- Ensures VMNs login to BI at least once a year.

- Allows us to ensure up-to-date contact information for all volunteers.
- Reminds volunteers to enter their hours.
- Reminds VMNs of the code of conduct and VMN volunteer agreement they should be abiding by.
- Catches anyone who might have had a criminal conviction in the last year and requires a background check per VCE volunteer protocols.
- Keeps our VMN program roster current.
- Program data indicates that re-enrollment increases retention of engaged volunteers and increases compliance with reporting their hours.
 - Prior to having Re-enrollment, only about 2/3 of enrolled volunteers were entering hours. Since re-enrollment, that percentage has increased to more than 80%.
- Gives volunteers a graceful way of exiting the program when they are ready/need to do so.

What Happens if a VMN Volunteer does not Complete Re-enrollment?

If a VMN Volunteer does not complete their Re-enrollment in Better Impact by the deadline (see “Annual Timeline” section below), then they will be ‘archived’ in Better Impact. This means the individual is no longer enrolled in the VMN program, may not represent themselves as a VMN volunteer, and is no longer covered by the VCE liability insurance. The VMN State Office will inform any individuals who are archived what that change in status means.

If a VMN Volunteer has been archived for any reason, including not completing Re-enrollment, and they are interested in being reinstated in the VMN Program, they should contact the VMN State Office by email at masternaturalist@vt.edu or by phone at 540-231-0790.

Annual Timeline for Re-enrollment

- December 1 – Re-enrollment for the upcoming calendar year opens
- December 1-January 31 – The VMN State Office will, on an ongoing basis, confirm Re-enrollment status for volunteers who have completed the process and mark them as Re-enrolled in Better Impact
- January 31 – Re-enrollment for the calendar year closes
- February 1 – The VMN State Office will do the following: 1) Begin the process of archiving all volunteers who did not complete the Re-enrollment process and notifying them what the change of status means; 2) Reach out to any volunteers whose answers to the Re-enrollment questions require follow up.
- March 1 – All Re-enrollment follow-up is complete

Requirements for Re-enrollment

Who needs to Re-enroll?

Any VMN Volunteer who was enrolled in the VMN Program the previous year in any capacity. Re-enrollment does not have anything to do with whether a VMN Volunteer is certified or not or how many hours they have logged in the last year(s).

As far as the VMN State Office is concerned, dues are not required to be enrolled in the VMN Program. However, some chapters may require volunteers to be current on their dues payments to remain an active member of that chapter.

Steps of the Re-enrollment Process

1. The VMN State Office sends an email to everyone in VMN to tell them whether they need to Re-enroll.
2. VMNs who need to Re-enroll login to BI and complete the Re-enrollment questions before January 31 (instructions will be provided by the VMN State Office).
3. During the Re-enrollment Period, a VMN State Office staff member will perform a daily check to see who has completed the Re-enrollment questions and verify their answers. When the verification is complete, the VMN staff member will update the Re-enrollment qualification and badge accordingly for each VMN.

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