

UConn Extension Faith Based Expression Guidelines

The first amendment of the United States Constitution requires governmental neutrality with regard to religion. Federal government requirements, related to secular issues, specify that religion must neither be advanced nor inhibited by government-funded programs. Additionally, State of Connecticut law mandates that all institutions supported by State funds must be free of sectarian control or influence.

UConn Extension receives both state and federal funds, and is required to uphold constitutional principles. Volunteers with Extension programs, such as 4-H, Master Gardeners, and EFNEP, function under the direct supervision of Extension faculty/staff members and sponsorship of the University, and are therefore similarly obligated to uphold constitutional principles. Privately incorporated organizations such as Extension Councils, 4-H Camps, 4-H Foundations, and the 4-H Education Center at Auer Farm are derived from and operate in support of Extension, and likewise cannot engage in activities prohibited by federal and state laws.

In practice, the principle of separation of church and state means that Extension faculty/staff members and volunteers shall not:

- Conduct Extension programs, projects, or events that either advance or inhibit religion;
- Conduct or incorporate into Extension programs, projects, or events any religious services or practices, including prayer or other forms of worship;
- Adopt, promote, or otherwise advance creeds in Extension programs, projects, or events that include sectarian references or language e.g. "ideals of (Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, etc.) life."

Extension events may be held in sectarian facilities provided that attendance is open to persons of all beliefs and that none of the above principles are compromised.

UConn Extension adheres to the University of Connecticut policy that supports all state and federal laws to promote equal opportunity and prohibit discrimination "The University of CT as well as U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment and program participation on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the state or federal government. In addition to the above, the State of CT has equal employment opportunities without consideration of ancestry, intellectual disability, learning disability, past/present history of mental disability or criminal record."

The University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System adheres to all policies of the University of Connecticut.

University of Connecticut policy information can be reviewed at <http://policy.uconn.edu/>.

This policy has been reviewed and approved by: The United States Department of Agriculture, The University of Connecticut's Department of Human Resources, Office of Diversity and Equity, and Office of Audit, Compliance and Ethics.