



ENERGY MASTERS

2020-21

Community Volunteer Program Overview

The Energy Masters Program...

1. **Trains volunteers** in energy efficiency and water conservation through an intensive seven session training program.
2. **Helps low-income residents** to reduce their water and energy use, save money on their utility bills, and improve the comfort of their homes.
3. **Creates a more sustainable community** by reducing carbon emissions through energy and water conservation improvements.

Since the program launched in 2011, we have trained more than 265 volunteers who have provided thousands of hours of community service to improve the lives of over 1,000 families living in affordable housing developments in Arlington and Alexandria. Energy Masters is a program operated jointly by EcoAction Arlington and Virginia Cooperative Extension.

**Are you ready to become part of this
highly motivated and engaged community of volunteers?**

Although our work will be performed in Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, residents from neighboring jurisdictions are welcome and encouraged to apply.

Volunteers who:	Will then:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete an online application ● Successfully complete a brief telephone screening/interview, and ● Pay a \$75 registration fee (Early Bird rate of \$60 by August 15), plus \$10 fee for a required background check* to help defer the cost of the program (Needs-based waivers available. Just ask!**) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Train 2. Serve 3. Report

* Background check is required for participation. Once accepted into the program, volunteers will submit a secure online form to initiate a background check. Payment of \$9.95 submitted online at the time of submission. Not required for Energy Masters High School Student Volunteers.

** All are welcome and encouraged to participate in this program, regardless of financial means. If the registration fee is a barrier to your participation, please contact us at energy@ecoactionarlington.org. Fee not required for Energy Masters Student Volunteers.

1. Train

Training sessions are traditionally held at Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford Street, Arlington, with the exception of one session which is held on location at an affordable housing community in either Arlington or Alexandria. *However, depending on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic this fall, some or all sessions may be held virtually via Zoom.* After consulting with local and state recommendations, a determination will be made in September as to which training sessions will be held virtually, and which, if any, are able to be held in person, maintaining social distancing guidelines.

Regardless of whether training sessions are held in person or online, each session will include recommended and required readings and activities, which should take no more than one hour each week. Volunteers are also required to successfully complete an open-book, take home exam, which will be available on November 12 and must be submitted by November

19.

Prior to the start of the training, volunteers are asked to choose a subject-matter team, including Tenant Education, Community Engagement, Continuing Education, and Data Collection and Analysis to join for the duration of the program and will provide assistance and feedback in these areas.

Training Schedule

Thursday, October 8, 2020 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.	Session 1: Introduction and Overview
Thursday, October 15, 2020 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.	Session 2: Building Science
Thursday, October 22, 2020 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.	Session 3: Typical Workday
Thursday, October 29, 2020 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.	Session 4: Tenant Education
Saturday, November 7 2020 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Session 5: Hands-on Training
Thursday, November 12, 2020 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.	Session 6: Community Education and Partnerships/Training Debrief
Thursday, November 19, 2020 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.	Celebration and Recognition Ceremony

2. Serve

In past years, Energy Masters volunteers work in the homes of affordable housing residents providing energy and water efficiency upgrades. Depending on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic, this may not be possible to do this fall. We are currently exploring other opportunities to provide similar energy/water efficiency upgrades to other facilities, including schools, group homes, churches or small businesses, where social distancing while volunteering will be possible.

In order to achieve our mandate of assisting low-income communities in Arlington and Alexandria, we may provide on-site distribution of energy efficiency products, such as light bulbs, and educational information to affordable housing communities. Other possibilities include providing educational materials and activities through on-site after-school clubs or through resident services.

There may also be opportunities to expand our on-line programming by developing virtual learning content. This could be shared via posted videos or live webinars to the general public.

Prior to training, volunteers will select a first and second choice of committee to join for the duration of the program. Volunteers will work in these committees to provide assistance and program support in the following areas. The committees include the following:

1) Continuing Education - This group plans occasional educational opportunities during the year that further fellow volunteers knowledge of energy or conservation issues. Examples include a guest speaker at a happy hour, eco-house tour, hands on learning opportunity or a virtual learning opportunity.

2) Tenant Education - This group develops tenant education materials or demonstration tools for tabling events and helps plan and conduct on-site activities such as energy bingo events and developing other tenant education activities. This group may be tasked with developing energy and water efficiency educational materials that could be translated into different languages and distributed to low income families.

3) Data Collection and Analysis - This group helps the management team in our ongoing efforts to collect and analyze energy usage data from completed apartment units to support our funder's reporting requirements.

4) Community Engagement - This group organizes and helps conduct some of Energy Masters community events, including, EM presence at festivals, fairs, libraries, local home shows and science nights at area schools. As many of these events may be virtual in the coming year or more, this group may develop and enhance our online presence and increase our virtual educational content options.

Following the completion of the training, volunteers are typically expected to contribute a minimum of 25 community service hours, although due to restrictions on our activities, this requirement is flexible. Given the opportunities to complete energy/water upgrades at alternate locations, we have set the following *tentative* work days. During work days, volunteers would work in teams to provide energy and water upgrades at facilities in Arlington and Alexandria. A typical work day is 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. Depending on the status of COVID-19 in the spring of 2021, there is a possibility that we could return to providing upgrades to homes in affordable housing communities, but a determination would be made at a later date. Any volunteer who would be uncomfortable or unable to provide in-person assistance would not be required to participate.

Work days for the 2020-2021 volunteer year are tentatively set for the first Saturday of each month (with the exception of January) on the following dates. Locations are TBD.

- **Saturday, December 5, 2020**
- **Saturday, January 9, 2021**
- **Saturday, February 6, 2021**
- **Saturday March 6, 2021**
- **Saturday, April 3, 2021**

3. Report

Upon completing your service hours, report them through our online reporting Volunteer Management System (VMS). This information is critical in measuring the impact of our work, and in completing reports for our funders. It is also how we track progress towards your total volunteer requirement and your achievement of certified status. Student volunteers can become certified Energy Master Volunteers after completing 20 volunteer hours, although this requirement will be contingent on the opportunities we are able to offer this year.

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