



Master Food Preserver A WSU Extension Volunteer Program of WSU Benton-Franklin County Extension

What is the Master Food Preserver program?

The WSU Master Food Preserver (MFP) program is a volunteer outreach program designed to bring research-based education to the public. The program began in Washington State in 1976, as a pilot project in King and Yakima counties. For the first time ever, a group of volunteers was trained to assist the county Extension faculty in providing up-to-date food preservation and safety information to the general public. At the end of the first year, the program was deemed a success and is still in operation today.

What do MFP's do?

At WSU the Master volunteer programs are an important part of the delivery structure of WSU Extension outreach and education. Volunteers serve in partnership with the local community, functioning as an unpaid employee of Washington State University.

Specifically, the Master Food Preserver volunteers:

Assist county and state Extension faculty by answering food safety/preservation inquiries. There has been an increased interest in food safety/preservation in the past few years, and the extra help is critical to our success.

Staff information booths and present demonstrations at the local Farmer's Markets, Benton-Franklin County Fair, CSA's, local festivals and/or produce stands.

Assist the county office staff with distribution of food safety/preservation materials.

Who can be a MFP Volunteer?

Any Benton or Franklin county resident, eighteen years of age or older, interested in food safety/preservation that is able to commit to a 30+ hour training program and volunteer at least 50 hours of time conducting outreach education.

How do you become a MFP Volunteer?

Complete the enclosed registration form. After orientation, applicants pay the class fee and complete the training program. Upon completion of the course, an open-book certification exam is given and those passing are recognized as MFP volunteers for the coming program year.

What benefits do MFPs receive from the program?

MFP volunteers are provided training, plus a packet of resource materials. Class instruction is appropriate for people with differing educational backgrounds and food preservation experience. After training, volunteers continue to receive update information on the latest research in the area

of food safety/preservation. Through their experiences, volunteers develop skills in working with people, public speaking, and building self-confidence in addition to increasing their expertise in food safety/preservation.

How long am I committed to the program?

Although only 50 hours are required as payback during one year, it is hoped that MFP volunteers commit for more than one season. We have several volunteers who have been with the program three to five years. Each year additional training is provided and continual update information is given to volunteers. Volunteers are required to re-certify each year.

What are the dates for the training program?

Training sessions are held April through June. New volunteers **must** attend all of the training and laboratory sessions to qualify for the program. Excessive tardies count as absences. A training schedule is available each year that includes the training class dates, topics and lab dates and topics.

How do I register? Applications are available at the WSU Benton County Extension office, 5600-E West Canal Drive, Kennewick, WA 99336. For more information call Lizann Powers-Hammond, Extension Faculty at (509) 735-3551 or by email at: powers@wsu.edu