

Volunteer Manual 2019



WELCOME NEBRASKA MASTER NATURALISTS!

*last updated 10/2019

Here's your chance to see Nebraska's natural resources like you've never seen them before! Get up close and personal with the outdoors while Nebraska Master Naturalist takes you into the field to learn hands-on about Nebraska's natural resources.

Master Naturalists are landowners, teachers, professionals, guides, college students, parents, retirees, and role models. If you have an interest in leading education programs, conducting breeding bird surveys, mentoring hunters and anglers, volunteering in parks and zoos, teaching your family about the outdoors, or being in nature, this program is for you!

Through this program you will receive in-depth training, led by experts in their fields. **LEARN** about Nebraska's ecosystems, plants and animals, conservation biology, and so much more! **EXPLORE** Nebraska alongside scientists, faculty, and natural resource professionals. **CONTRIBUTE** your time and expertise through exciting volunteer opportunities in habitat conservation, environmental education, outdoor skills, and citizen science. Most importantly, **CONNECT** with Nebraskans who share your passion for nature.

Remember, if you ever have any questions or concerns; please do not hesitate to contact us. Welcome to the Nebraska Master Naturalist Community!

Matthew Jones

Nebraska Master Naturalist Program Coordinator

CONTACT INFORMATION

For *program technical assistance*, communications, request a Master Naturalist, or host an event or training, *certification training information* contact *Matt Jones Program Coordinator*. For *communications assistance*, and to share volunteer and training opportunities, contact *Doug Wells*

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SOCIAL NETWORKING

<https://www.nemasternaturalist.org>
Facebook <http://facebook.com/masternaturalist>
Facebook Group: [Master Naturalists in Action!](#)
Nebraska Master Naturalist [Foundation Facebook Page](#)
YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/NuNaturalist>
Instagram: [Nebraskamasternaturalist](#)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Nebraska Master Naturalist is a public and private partnership funded by the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Nebraska Environmental Trust, and Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Our program recruits, trains, manages, and provides resources for volunteers participating in interpretation and outreach, resource management, citizen science, and outdoor skills and recreation in Nebraska.

Complete Training: This training format provides the required 60 hours of classroom content and field activities that allows you to achieve **“Certified Nebraska Master Naturalist”** status after participating in the full week of training.

Content areas can include: Natural Resource Interpretation, Conservation Biology and Ecology, Outdoor Skills (Archery, Kayaking, Fishing depending on location) Resource Management, Citizen Science, Reptiles Amphibians Turtles, Mammals, Insects, Aquatic Ecosystems, Geology, Grasslands Ecology, Woodland Ecology, Human Dimensions/Naturalist Ethics.

Core 24 Training: This training format provides 24 hours of foundational classroom content and field activities that allows to achieve **“Master Naturalist In-Training”** status. Once the Core training is complete you have until January 1st of the following year to complete 36 hours of continuing Education opportunities to earn your Certified Status. Continuing Education opportunities are organized and presented by the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program, Program Partners, as well as other organizations that support our mission.

Core 24 content includes: Flora of Nebraska, Fauna of Nebraska, Natural Resource Interpretation, Naturalist History & Ethics, Conservation Biology & Ecology, and Outdoor Skills.

Once certification is complete *participants are asked to complete a minimum of 20 hours of volunteer service* annually in order to maintain and keep their certification. Certified volunteers will be able to network with other Master Naturalists, find out about new and exciting volunteer opportunities, and be rewarded for their dedication.

FUNCTIONING THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS:

A growing list of over 30 partner agencies and organizations from across the state are involved, including regional and international partnerships. Partners including the University of Nebraska, the Nebraska Environmental Trust, and the Nebraska Game and Parks Association provide funding and support towards the success of this program.

The Nebraska Master Naturalist Program is an essential source of volunteers for natural resource agencies and organizations statewide. Trained volunteers are valuable members of the natural resources community and provide thousands of dollars in salary savings. This program matches the needs of conservation agencies and organizations with the skills and availability of trained volunteers. Hours and volunteer opportunities are tracked through an extensive online database.

The ultimate culmination of this program is in the success of our participants. The training is just the first step. The Nebraska Master Naturalist Program has created a support network to connect participants with other volunteers and volunteer opportunities. The program hosts an online community to link participants with volunteers and natural resource professionals, and engage them in their experience. Most importantly, the program will acknowledge and reward its members for their participation in the program through award recognitions at annual gatherings, and conferences. Master Naturalists will be promoted, supported, and recognized by their community for their efforts, serving as an inspiration to us all.

PROGRAM PURPOSE

Mission

The Nebraska Master Naturalist Program educates a volunteer network dedicated to promoting the conservation of Nebraska's natural resources.

Vision

The Nebraska Master Naturalist Program will serve as the leader providing science-based education to empower a network of volunteers to engage citizens to conserve natural resources.

Funding and Support Provided By

Nebraska Environmental Trust
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Nebraska Master Naturalist Foundation
University of Nebraska—Lincoln Extension
School of Natural Resources
University of Nebraska Kearney
Alliance of Natural Resource Outreach and
Service Programs
Audubon Nebraska
Calamus Outfitters
Chadron State College
Crane Trust Nature & Visitor Center
Fontenelle Forest
National Association for Interpretation
National Park Service
Nebraska Alliance for Conservation and
Environment Education
Nebraska Department of Economic
Development
Nebraska Forest Service

Nebraska Invasive Species Project
Nebraska Outdoor U!
Nebraska Wildlife Federation
Nebraska Wildlife Rehabilitation, Inc.
Papio-Missouri River NRD
Pioneers Park Nature Center
Prairie Loft Agricultural Education Center
Riverside Discovery Center
Bird Conservancy of the Rockies
The Nature Conservancy
Spring Creek Audubon Center
Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary
Bader Memorial Park
Hitchcock Nature Center
Glacier Creek Prairie Preserve
Hastings Museum
Heron Haven

ANNUAL RE-CERTIFICATION

Each January we will notify all trained individuals of their current status of their certification. The certification calendar runs from January-December. Example: You participated in the April 2017 Core training, you have until December 31st of 2018 to complete your certification. Once certified, you must meet the volunteer requirement by December 31st 2021.

NEBRASKA MASTER NATURALIST REWARDS

Certification - Upon completion of the training, our volunteers receive a certificate, an embroidered polo 'uniform' shirt and a metal nametag which they use when providing volunteer service to our partners and our program.



Milestone - Upon completion of the volunteer's first year of service and associated service requirements, volunteers receive a Logo Pin or a Themed Pin. The Pin will be an annual incentive, but will include milestones within the timeline based on a 1 year (Owl), 2nd year (Badger), 3rd year (tree frog), 4th Year (Dragonfly), 5th year (Pronghorn). These will be mailed out with annual recertification packets or at an annual gathering with an awards ceremony.

MASTER NATURALIST CURRICULUM & RESOURCES SITE

You can access contact information, curriculum materials, Executive Board resources, promotional materials, manuals, Bylaws, plans and policies, and other Master Naturalist Resources on our Master Naturalist Resources Curriculum site. Your programmatic resources are housed online for quick and easy access. We will provide you with printouts when available at the training sessions. These materials are here to supplement the curriculum. The site is housed within Google Drive. The link is public and can be found on our [website](#) or by clicking [Master Naturalist Curriculum Resources Site](#) link.

MASTER NATURALIST TRACKING SYSTEM

Login and Tracking Instructions

E-mail:

Password:

****After your training is complete you will be provided with the Login Details***

Go to <http://snr.unl.edu/naturalist/member/memberlogin.asp>

1. Under Account Login, enter your E-mail and Password.
2. Locate "Volunteer Opportunity Hours" and click on "Enter Hours".
3. Review the list of Volunteer Opportunity Organization names. Select the one that fits your activity. Only if the name of the parent organization is not listed, should you enter a new organization.
4. Enter the date of the Opportunity (mm/dd/yyyy). Approximate dates are acceptable.
5. Enter the name of the Volunteer Opportunity.
6. Enter the type of Volunteer Opportunity – if you click on the arrow you will see a drop-down menu. Click on the type that matches your service to select it. This will be important for tracking specializations, and can be edited if needed.
7. Enter a Description of the volunteer service you provided.
8. Enter your Travel Time in whole or decimal numbers.
9. Enter your Volunteer Time in whole or decimal numbers (*Please define these in half-hour increments, for example = .25, .50, .75*).
10. Enter the Number of People you came in contact with in whole numbers.
11. Click the "Submit" button.

Tracking System Guidelines

1. Enter the information to the best of your ability. It is OKAY not to know the exact details.
2. When you enter your hours, it is OKAY to estimate to half hour increments.
3. If you have several dates to enter in order to get caught up, you may enter them as a summary entry, and note it in the description.
4. When entering number values into the system, please use only whole numbers or decimals (for example 2 or 2.5). Do not include text in these fields.
5. Be sure to report all of your volunteer service, including research time, clerical time, construction time, travel time, and any unpaid time spent towards natural resource conservation.
6. Please ask questions and let us know your feedback. We will continue to update the System.

IMPORTANCE OF TRACKING

Your activities help us identify the contribution which you make toward natural resource conservation efforts around the state. It also helps us recognize your many achievements and milestones.

Our grant funding stems from the Nebraska Environmental Trust. Matching financial and administrative support comes from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the University of Nebraska, to share program costs. Each quarter, we report your volunteer contributions to our funding partners. Please track any and all of your time spent contributing to the conservation of the natural resources (or with administrative support) and your continuing education in the natural resources. If you are uncertain whether the hours will count please ask us, staff is here to answer any questions you may have.

ELIGIBLE TYPES OF VOLUNTEER WORK

Volunteer service which contributes to natural resource conservation with sponsors, partners, or agencies which further the Master Naturalist mission is reportable toward your certification requirements. Generally, volunteering occurs in local or regional natural areas, but need not be limited to those. (Please notify the Program Coordinator if you will be volunteering out of state.) Projects may well involve natural resource stewardship at parks, preserves or natural areas; environmental education and outreach; administrative service supporting the Master Naturalist Program; or serving as a Mentor to other Nebraska Master Naturalist members.

Mission: The Nebraska Master Naturalist Program educates a volunteer network dedicated to promoting the conservation of Nebraska's natural resources.

Examples of what IS NOT considered volunteer service?

- Mowing your lawn.
- Getting paid for any task or project, like leading a kayaking trip.
- Helping your neighbor plant a personal garden.

Examples of what IS considered volunteer service?

- Volunteering which contributes to natural resource conservation and education.
- Volunteering with programs affiliated with the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program as a partner or sponsor.
- Volunteering with natural resource groups that are NOT YET affiliated with Master Naturalist, but which contribute to the conservation of natural resources.
- Volunteering inside or outside of Nebraska, with natural resource conservation groups.
- Researching a volunteer led nature hike.
- Developing a brochure or interpretive materials for a conservation organization.
- Assisting a conservation organization (including the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program) with administrative support.
- Assisting with Master Naturalist training sessions.
- Serving as a Mentor for other Master Naturalists, in helping them transition from training or workshops into volunteering with a program partner, or to develop skills, abilities and expertise as a conservation volunteer.

HELPFUL HINTS:

- It is most important to regularly record and submit your volunteering and training time, toward renewing your certification and supporting the program.
- Enter the information to the best of your ability. It is OKAY not to know the exact details.
- When you enter your hours, it is BEST to estimate in 15 minute increments (.25, .50, .75)
- If you have several dates to enter in order to get caught up, you may enter them as a summary entry, and note it in the description.
- When entering number values into the system, please use only whole numbers or one-half decimals (for example 2 or 2.5). Do not include text in these fields.
- Be sure to report all of your volunteer service, including research time, preparation time, construction time, clean-up time, travel time, and any unpaid time spent towards natural resource conservation. Please track any and all of your time spent conserving natural resources and your continuing education in natural resources. If you are uncertain whether the hours will count towards your Master Naturalist Certification requirement, please ask us prior to completing the activity.
- Please be aware that volunteering activities which directly overlap with your scheduled employment may not qualify for volunteer hours. Contact a program representative for more information.
- Travel Time –Please also track your time spent traveling to and from your various training locations.

VOLUNTEERING CATEGORIES:

Resource Management involves hands-on management. Examples include planting, prescribed burning, trail work, activities supporting the management of natural resources. It is not limited to these particular activities, but serves overall to restore habitats for native plant or animal species which are adapted to depend on them.

Citizen Science is where the Master Naturalist collects data or monitors wildlife and/or vegetation under the supervision or guidance of a resource management professional or academic researcher. It is the functional empowering of citizen volunteers to so partner with research scientists to thus help answer real-world questions through a systematic approach. Such efforts can contribute to our natural resource knowledge base, toward more effective natural resource management.

Education, Interpretation and Outreach- These are activities or programs where the Master Naturalist provides information or environmental education to the public or interprets natural resources or processes for them. Each of these activities has different aims, but working together in a continuum of service may help to invite the audience toward greater awareness, understanding, and appreciation for our natural and historic heritage, as they discover meaning and relevance for themselves.

Examples include developing and presenting natural history or outdoor skills programs or demonstrations, or leading in-person, guided, nature-discovery hikes into the field, or answering questions at a station or booth promoting natural resource stewardship to audiences on-site; along with providing natural resource training to the public or other volunteers; as well as developing environmental interpretive materials, programs, and signage, interpretive scripts, captions or handouts. In addition, any outreach activities which contribute to the goals and mission of the Master Naturalist Program are also considered appropriate to record as volunteer hours.

Outdoor Skills- Recreational activities like archery, kayaking, fishing, camping, backpacking, outdoor cooking, target-shooting, skiing, orienteering, or geocaching promote physical and mental well-being among the community, along with the development of skills in the outdoors. They can contribute greatly to the shared enjoyment of our state's natural resources, while experiencing individual challenge and accomplishment. Volunteering to help others gain confidence with such pursuits is a valuable investment in the future of outdoor recreation and, of course, reportable toward your certification requirement.

Administrative Efforts - Administrative volunteering which counts toward certification requirements includes working on a Master Naturalist newsletter, serving as a Mentor to newly trained naturalists, providing content for Master Naturalist publications and web media, helping to plan conferences or workshops, and any other activities which help maintain and sustain the Master Naturalist Program.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Our Program Partners continually offer new and exciting training opportunities to help you expand your horizons. Program Partners welcome Certified Master Naturalist volunteers to support their

organization. If you know of an organization which could benefit from volunteer Master Naturalists, please let us know and help us build a strong Nature Network in Nebraska!

Items that are considered eligible for continuing education:

- Master Naturalist organized trainings
- partner sponsored workshops and trainings
- Online webinars
- Attending a lecture or speaker/presenter
- Conferences. (e.g. Nebraska Natural Legacy Conference)
- Attending a training/workshop organized by a natural resource group that is NOT YET affiliated with Master Naturalist, but contributes to the conservation of natural resources.
- Local Master Naturalist groups may plan periodic informational meetings with educational updates for active Master Naturalists.
- Those registered as participants in trainings or workshops time should, of course, count their time as Continuing Education, not as Volunteer service time. Only if the Master Naturalist is the *presenter* of information would their time count as Volunteer time.

E-MAIL LISTS

Online and e-mail communications are our primary means of communicating with our Master Naturalist Community. Direct communications with all Master Naturalists Members is currently made through the MasterNaturalist@listserv.unl.edu listserv e-mail address. These go through an approval process before delivery. To reach the Program Members contact NMNpartners@listserv.unl.edu To reach the Executive Board Members contact NMNexec@listserv.unl.edu. Omaha Chapter of Master Naturalists is known as the River City Chapter, if you wish to join their email list it is omahamasternaturalist@googlegroups.com the Lincoln area chapter is known as the Salt Valley Chapter and you can subscribe to that list saltvalleynmn@listserv.unl.edu

As part of the Master Naturalist community, your e-mail address will be added to our Master Naturalist e-mail and mailing lists. Access to the e-mail lists requires approval, to ensure only relevant communications are distributed.

You may remove your e-mail address from these lists at any time. Please be aware that if you do unsubscribe from the e-mail list, you will no longer receive relevant information regarding training and volunteer opportunities, an essential component of your certification.

MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Every month we send out an e-mail about upcoming opportunities. As we identify programs with volunteer needs, we will continue to add to that list. Program Members have a great need for Master Naturalist volunteers and we encourage you to make contact with them on your own, regarding their volunteer needs. You are NOT limited to just the events that we share. If there is an event you would like to participate in, we encourage you to do so. Our partners and friends send us requests, but we are open to any qualifying source in need of a volunteer. The most important thing is the conservation of

natural resources in Nebraska. You can research a project online, deliver a program, or lead a conservation effort. Even if it is out of state, please let us know. If you find a representative in need of volunteers for a conservation project that we have not yet listed, share with us so that we can add them to our network. We look forward to growing into these new opportunities together!

WEBSITE

Found at <https://www.nemasternaturalist.org> The website features Events Calendar, Master Naturalist Tracking System, Applications, Contact Information, Master Naturalist Store, Donations, Photos, Master Naturalist Resources Site, Links to Partners, and much more! We recommend 'liking' Master Naturalist on Facebook to gain additional opportunities provided through our many friends. See upcoming workshops and trainings by clicking on "Events" to access the Online Master Naturalist Calendar on the website Members or Program Partners Pages.

ABSENCES, BACKGROUND CHECKS, AND MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

All Certified Nebraska Master Naturalists are expected to attend every session of their training. In the event that you are unable to make a training session, please notify the Program coordinator as soon as possible. Missed sessions are required to be made up within one year of completing the core training. If you are unable to make a Certified Master Naturalist training session within that year period, *make-up opportunities can be discussed on a case by case basis*. Please be aware that missing more than two sessions during a training period may suspend your Master Naturalist Certification and you will be placed in inactive member status until you can complete the training again.

NEBRASKA MASTER NATURALIST FOUNDATION

Mission: The Nebraska Master Naturalist Foundation supports the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program, which trains volunteers across the state to work in habitat and wildlife conservation, environmental education and citizen science. The Nebraska Master Naturalist Foundation (NMNF) is a Nebraska non-profit corporation, recognized as tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code. The NMNF was incorporated in April 2015, and the purpose of the corporation is to support and enhance the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program.

NEBRASKA MASTER NATURALIST EXECUTIVE BOARD

Program Supervisor: Dennis Ferraro, Univ. of
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Past Chair: Mike Schrad, Certified Master
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Chair: Andrea Faas, Pioneers Park Nature
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General Naturalist Member:
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First Name	Last Name	Organization	City	E-mail	Phone
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CODE OF ETHICS

Each member, in striving to meet the mission, goals and objectives of the Master Naturalist program, pledges to:

1. Subscribe to the highest standards of integrity and conduct.
2. Promote and support the statewide and local Master Naturalist program.
3. Respect the state sponsors of the University of Nebraska, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and the Nebraska Environmental Trust, and their roles and expectations.
4. Disseminate information to promote understanding of, and appreciation for, the values of our natural resources.
5. Strive to increase knowledge and skills to advance as a Master Naturalist volunteer.
6. Promote competence as a Master Naturalist volunteer by supporting high standards of education, service and performance.
7. Encourage the use of sound biological information in education and outreach and in management decisions.
8. Support fair and uniform standards of service and treatment of those engaged in the Master Naturalist program.
9. Know and follow established program guidelines and policies.
10. Avoid use of the Master Naturalist title, logos and trademarks for personal endeavors and/or profit.
11. Act as trustworthy and ethical stewards of the environment.
12. Never inappropriately disturb or harass wildlife, never inappropriately remove anything from its natural state or area.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Master Naturalist program volunteers shall at all times:

1. Uphold the agreement made to the program and the required volunteer and continuing education hours required by the program.
2. Uphold the dignity and integrity of the Master Naturalist program. They shall endeavor to avoid even the suspicion of dishonesty, fraud, deceit, misrepresentation, or unprofessional demeanor.
3. Conduct themselves appropriately to context and setting at all times.
4. Be considerate and respect other's points of view.
5. Keep accurate records of volunteer service, training and research, and regularly notify your Program Coordinator of these records.
6. Avoid performing service when such service is judged to be contrary to the Code of Ethics or detrimental to the well-being of the program and its sponsors.
7. Provide maximum possible effort in the best interest of each client and/or volunteer project.
8. Be mindful of their responsibility to society and the program.
9. Avoid discrimination in any form, or the abuse of program authority, certification, or membership for personal benefit.
10. Cooperate fully with professionals and other Master Naturalist volunteers in the best interest of our natural resources.
11. Avoid all use of alcohol and controlled substances while on duty as a Master Naturalist volunteer. Reporting for service while under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance will result in termination from volunteer service.
12. Accept responsibility for decisions made and actions taken based on these decisions.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT/MEDIA RELEASE/CONTACT INFORMATION

I understand that I am a volunteer for the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program and will receive no financial compensation or benefits for assistance rendered in any capacity. I understand that my certification is contingent upon a successful background check. I agree to abide by all policies and procedures of the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program and its sponsoring agencies. I understand that I can cancel up until two weeks before the first day of the Nebraska Master Naturalist training and thereafter I will not be reimbursed for my registration fee unless arranged with the Program Coordinator.

I understand that after successful completion of the Nebraska Master Naturalist training, I am expected to devote a minimum of 20 hours of public service in the natural resources as identified by the volunteer standards which will be provided to me during the training, and this service is to be completed within twelve months after my graduation date. I understand that this certification is only valid for twelve months after completion of the training and if I do not complete these volunteer hours, my certification will become invalid until which time I complete the training and requirements again. I understand that to maintain certification, each year I am expected to complete a minimum of 20 hours of volunteer service and to participate in 8 hours of continuing education opportunities. I understand that I may be asked to complete a successful background check at any time during my certification.

I understand that I am expected to attend all sessions, missing no more than two sessions, as listed on the training schedule. If I am unable to attend a session I understand that I must contact the Program Coordinator, and I will have 24 months to make up that session. I understand that any information regarding the policies and procedures will be posted online when it becomes available and that I will be notified of any changes to these materials.

I understand that when I am representing the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program I agree to conduct myself according to the Nebraska Master Naturalist Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct as shown in this document. By signing this form, I verify that I have completed a successful background check and waiver form and am at least 19 years of age.

Media Release: The University of Nebraska and the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program periodically use photographs, video, audio footage, or testimonials of program participants for local, regional, or state publicity or educational purposes. By my signature on this Volunteer Information form, I acknowledge receipt of this document and give permission for University of Nebraska and the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program to use such reproductions for educational and publicity purposes.

Contact Information: Your name, email, city, and class will be made available in a member only contact list located on our secured member area of our website. The purpose of this document is to encourage communication between our Master Naturalists. By my signature on this Volunteer Information form, I acknowledge receipt of this document and give permission for the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program to share Member contact information. Such information will only be released to other members of the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program.

I have read and understand the Media Release, Master Naturalist Volunteer Manual and agree to abide by the rules of conduct laid out by these documents. I am now a valuable part of the Nebraska Master Naturalist community. I will endeavor to be an **active** participant in this community and track this commitment using the online systems made available to me.

The Nebraska Master Naturalist Program is a collaboration of the University of Nebraska, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and the Nebraska Environmental Trust, with support from our partners.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Please provide us with your emergency contact information, and return this form to the Program Coordinator.

Primary Emergency Contact:

Name _____

Relationship _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

Secondary Emergency Contact:

Name _____

Relationship _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

Are there are special needs which we should be aware of, regarding your participation in this program?
