



Florida Project Learning Tree Facilitator Roles & Requirements

INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT LEARNING TREE (PLT)

Project Learning Tree® (PLT®) uses trees and forests as windows on the world to increase students' understanding of the environment and actions they can take to conserve it. Since 1976, PLT has reached 138 million students and trained 765,000 educators to help students learn how to think, not what to think, about complex environmental issues.

PLT helps develop students' awareness, knowledge, and appreciation of the environment; builds their skills and ability to make informed decisions; and encourages them to take personal responsibility for sustaining the environment and our quality of life that depends on it.

[Project Learning Tree \(PLT\)](#) is an initiative of the [Sustainable Forestry Initiative](#) and is sponsored in Florida by the [University of Florida/IFAS School of Forest, Fisheries, & Geomatics Sciences](#).

The PLT program is characterized by three equally important components:

- high-quality instructional materials for grades PreK-12,
- carefully designed professional development, and
- an extensive distribution and support network.

PLT's instructional materials for early childhood through grade 12 can be used with students in formal school settings and with youth in nonformal settings. Our hands-on activities make teaching and learning fun. They connect children to nature, engage students in learning, improve student achievement, and grow 21st century skills — including the ability to think critically and solve problems.

The materials are distributed along with professional development (PD) through in-person workshops or online courses.

FACILITATOR ROLES & REQUIREMENTS

Roles

National PLT and State PLT programs depend on facilitators to deliver programming that reflects the organization's commitment to and standards for high-quality environmental education.

Florida PLT facilitators design and deliver high-quality PD training experiences for formal educators (early childhood through grade 12 classroom teachers) and non-formal educators (4-H, Scouts, nature center/zoo staff, after school programming, etc.), as well as natural resource and forestry professionals.

As a representative of the PLT program, facilitators are expected to provide equitable opportunities for all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, income, gender, sexual orientation, national status, ability, or any other characteristic that may cause individuals to feel excluded, marginalized, or disenfranchised. At PLT, all of us have a responsibility to maintain the integrity of the program. Supporting materials for keeping PLT's approach to education consistent, PLT's conceptual framework, professional development (PD), and guides and resources can be found on the [PLT website](#).

As a facilitator, your role is to guide and assist participants in constructing their own learning. You will guide the group to make observations, create interpretations, and draw conclusions, as well as assisting them in raising their level of interaction, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities. You will, in essence, model the PLT mission of engaging students in “how to think; not what to think.”

To achieve this, you will need to determine the most appropriate type of PD to meet the needs of your audience, the specific content of the PD, and the location. PD refers to different types of learning experiences that focus on improving people’s professional competence, content knowledge, and skills on a specialized topic.

Requirements

To be certified as a PLT facilitator in Florida, you must first attend a PLT educator training and then attend and participate in a facilitator training. The facilitator training ensures that PLT facilitators provide consistent professional development that reflects professionalism, presents current and relevant content, models best practices in instruction, and provides a high-quality educational experience for all participants.

In addition, Florida PLT has general, annual, and curriculum facilitator requirements. Refer to the [Florida PLT Facilitator Requirements Checklist](#) for more information and to keep track of your requirements.

National PLT Guidelines

Inclusivity. PLT is committed to providing professional development that is inclusive of all. We strive to be a learner-centered program that values the perspectives and contributions of all people.

Political Agendas and Viewpoints. PLT should never be used to promote political agendas. This does not mean that facilitators and PD event participants cannot have their own political views. In fact, PLT promotes tolerance for diverse viewpoints. PLT’s activities encourage the type of lively debate about controversial issues that promotes understanding. However, when a facilitator leads a PD event, and ideally when PLT-trained educators use PLT’s materials, their job is to promote PLT’s philosophy of “how to think; not what to think” rather than sharing their own views, no matter how well-founded these views might be. The bottom line is that PLT PD trainings should not be used as a political platform; to do so adversely affects PLT’s standing and possibly the professional reputation of the facilitator.

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FACILITATOR STATUS

If, after the completion of the calendar year, a facilitator has been unable to attend or complete a PLT facilitator continuing education experience, design or assist with and implement at least one PLT professional development training, or present PLT at a conference, the FL PLT Coordinator will assess the readiness of a facilitator to continue to conduct PLT educator trainings.

A facilitator is a representative of National PLT and Florida PLT. If the Florida PLT Coordinator does not feel that a facilitator is carrying out their responsibilities and/or is not acting as an appropriate representative, the facilitator may be dismissed. Florida PLT reserves the right to revoke an individuals’ facilitator certification at any time, for reasons including but not limited to unprofessionalism, not upholding National PLT guidelines and Florida PLT facilitator requirements, and/or consistent

unsatisfactory participant evaluations. A facilitator will be notified in writing of their dismissal. Facilitators may appeal the decision in writing to the Florida PLT Steering Committee.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the roles and responsibilities of a PLT facilitator, as well as tools, tips, and resources, check out the [PLT Next Generation Facilitator Handbook](#).