

# EXTENSION SNAPSHOT

Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit

March 2025



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

## Digital Navigator provided professional development for Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists

Video conferencing may have seen a burst of use during recent years, but its popularity hasn't waned much. Today, educational, social, and professional opportunities frequently rely on video conferencing software like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meets. Local University of Illinois Extension volunteers received professional development training to develop their skills and confidence using these online tools.

This online landscape often comes with unspoken etiquette expectations, and increased nuances around things like screen sharing, image use, and information citations.

"It's important to orient people to the space. Just like you would if you were hosting a dinner party," Abi Amstutz-Spencer, ACC AmeriCorps member and new Digital Navigator fellow with Illinois Extension explained. "When someone walks in the door you might offer to take their coat, or point out which hall door is the bathroom. We can do something similar in online spaces. For example, setting the tone for how you want people to use the chat features or asking people to mute or unmute themselves."

In an online class, "Zoom Etiquette", Abi guided Extension Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists through possible interactions during an online video conferencing event, including how to present informational presentations as the hosts of their own online event.

The class included how to find copyright free digital images to use, how to properly cite an embedded video, and how to play the role of a host even though the gathering space is virtual.

"Technology changes rapidly, and this class only scratched the surface of topics we could have included," Abi noted.

This Zoom class was a pilot for online learning opportunities for Extension volunteers and staff.

Abi is a Peoria native, who is primarily working towards digital equity through digital literacy training, tech assistance, and resourcing for affordable internet access. In her role as an AmeriCorps Digital Navigator, she works with Illinois Broadband Lab and Extension's community and economic development educator Richard Proffer. Her program territory includes Fulton, Mason, Peoria, Tazewell, Woodford, Marshall, Livingston, McLean, and De Witt counties.



*Abi Amstutz-Spencer, ACC AmeriCorps member and new Digital Navigator fellow with Illinois Extension, led a Zoom Etiquette training for local volunteers.*

### Abi Amstutz-Spencer

AmeriCorps Digital Navigator  
Fellow with Illinois Extension  
uie-eh-peoria@illinois.edu