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4-H & YOU



4-H 

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

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4-H AND YOU: VOLUNTEERS AND EXTENSION

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 4-H Youth Development program. As a 4-H volunteer, you represent Washington State University and have many of the same rights and responsibilities as salaried staff. This publication summarizes information that will help you become an effective 4-H volunteer. The Washington 4-H Youth Development program encourages the teamwork of salaried faculty and staff and volunteers so we can offer youths and adults quality personal growth opportunities.

4-H PROGRAM BACKGROUND

THE 4-H MISSION

4-H Youth Development education creates supportive environments for culturally diverse youths and adults so they may reach their fullest potential. In support of this mission, we:

- Provide formal and non-formal community-focused learning experiences.
- Develop skills that benefit youths throughout their lives.
- Foster leadership and volunteerism in youths and adults.
- Build internal and external partnerships for programming and funding.
- Strengthen families and communities.
- Use research-based knowledge and the land-grant university system.

Achievement of this mission will result in capable, competent, caring citizens.

These goals are expressed through the **4-H Emblem**, the **4-H Pledge**, and the **4-H Motto**. The 4-H Emblem is the four-leaf clover and represents head, heart, hands, and health. The 4-H Pledge elaborates the meaning of each of the four “H”s found in the fourleaf clover. The pledge is recited at 4-H meetings and events.

I pledge:



The 4-H Slogan, “**Learn by Doing,**” and the 4-H Motto, “**To Make the Best Better,**” emphasize the goal of 4-H members to improve themselves, their work, and their communities. Federal law prohibits the use of the 4-H name and the official 4-H emblem if the use will exploit the 4-H program, its volunteers, or members. To use the 4-H name or emblem, prior approval must be obtained from the county 4-H office.

HISTORY OF THE 4-H PROGRAM

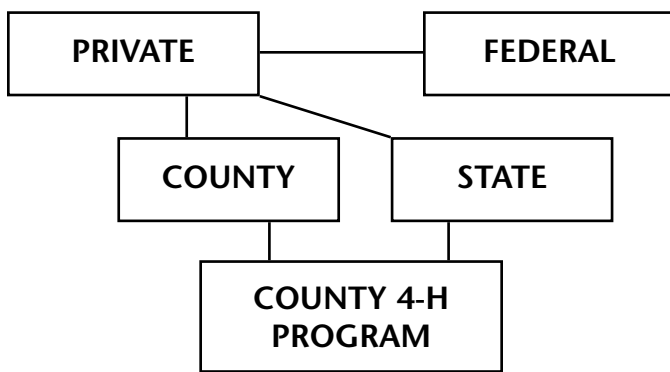
Nationally, 4-H is a unique educational program because it is a three-way partnership between the federal government, state land-grant universities, and county government. This partnership and cooperation has created a model that nations around the world have tried to duplicate.

A review of 4-H and Cooperative Extension history helps us to understand this unique partnership.

- 1862** The Morrill Land-Grant College Act was passed by the federal government to grant land to states to establish teaching institutions that help farmers increase agricultural productivity.
- 1889** Washington State University, a land-grant university, was founded as a result of the Morrill Act.
- 1900–1910** Throughout the United States, the first Boys and Girls Clubs were formed to teach boys and girls skills in farming, canning, and gardening. These clubs were the direct predecessors of today's 4-H Youth Development program and one of the building blocks in the formation of Cooperative Extension.
- 1911** The four-leaf clover, symbolizing "Head, Heart, Hands, and Health," was created.
- 1914** The Smith-Lever Act was passed by the federal government to form Cooperative Extension at the federal and state levels. Cooperative Extension became established as part of the land-grant university system with the philosophy of helping people help themselves by taking the university to the people. This basic philosophy is still true today.
- 1912–1914** Yakima County and Wahkiakum County organized the first 4-H clubs in Washington.
- 1922** The first State 4-H Club Week was held in Pullman.

Most states have Cooperative Extension administrative centers at their land-grant universities, such as Washington State University, and also county Extension offices. In Washington there is an Extension office in each of the 39 counties. Extension has many staff members and volunteers working together across the United States to share information from land-grant universities with the general public.

Funding and Support



The level of support for Extension and 4-H starts at the county level which includes county government, county extension faculty (agents), program assistants, secretaries, and volunteers. They provide educational resources and programs for people in their communities. In addition to the 4-H Youth Development program, volunteer opportunities are available in other areas of extension.

At the state level, WSU faculty provide specific knowledge and expertise. 4-H and Extension is administered at the federal level through the United States Department of Agriculture. Additional support is provided from the private sector.

Mission Statement and Slogan

The mission of WSU Extension is to help people develop leadership skills and use research-based knowledge to improve their economic status and quality of life. The

slogan is: **“Helping You Put Knowledge To Work.”**

Shared Ownership in 4-H Youth Development Program

The 4-H program is based on a philosophy of shared ownership. Its basis is the belief that extension faculty, staff, and volunteers (adults and youths) share vision, ideas, and responsibilities for the program. They also share leadership roles and decision making. Shared ownership is a dynamic partnership that requires extension staff and volunteers to share in planning and implementing programs. Tasks are divided according to individual talents and interests, rather than by title or role expectations. Finally, each partner should feel the program will be strengthened with the cooperation and support of the other partner. For the shared ownership partnership to work, there must be a balance of trust, credibility, truth, and accountability between extension staff and volunteers. However, the ultimate responsibility for the 4-H program remains with the extension staff. They are held legally accountable for the operation of the 4-H youth development program.

4-H VOLUNTEER PHILOSOPHY

4-H volunteers are valued by WSU Extension and the 4-H Youth Development program. Volunteers are defined as members of the staff who give time and expertise without receiving or expecting monetary pay. They support the mission of 4-H Youth Development and WSU Extension to help or teach others and to reach personal goals. The time, talents, and experiences that 4-H volunteers contribute strengthen 4-H and other extension programs. 4-H volunteers and extension staff work together as a team. This helps make better use of limited resources and reaches more youths and adults.

The many ways volunteers can be involved in the 4-H youth development program may include working with a 4-H club, managing county or state 4-H events and activities, working with youth in school or child care programs, or special interest activities (i.e., day camps, short-term projects, 4-H Challenge, etc.) There are many benefits to being a 4-H volunteer along with rights and responsibilities.

Benefits of a WSU Extension/4-H Volunteer Partnership

4-H Volunteers:

1. Reach personal goals.
2. Increase leadership ability organizational, decision-making and problem solving skills.
3. Have training and learning opportunities.
4. Gain satisfaction in helping others.
5. Receive encouragement and recognition.
6. Develop and increase self-confidence.
7. Develop lasting friendships.
8. Acquire information and skills usable in various situations.
9. Share interests with others.
10. Increase public relations skills.
11. Make useful contacts through networking.
12. Prepare for new employment or volunteer opportunities.

WSU Extension faculty and staff:

1. Acquire fresh ideas through collaboration.
2. Gain satisfaction from reaching more people through volunteer efforts.
3. Increase understanding of community and clientele.
4. Access more community resources.
5. Develop lasting friendships.
6. Provide stronger, more effective programs.
7. Expand the number of programs offered.
8. Increase clientele confidence in programs.

Rights and Responsibilities of 4-H Volunteers

The right to:

1. Be treated as a co-worker and be valued as a person capable of unique contributions.
2. Have a suitable and worthwhile role in the program.
3. Know as much as possible about the organization (policy, people, and programs) and be kept informed.
4. Participate in activities and have a variety of experiences.
5. Receive quality orientation and training.
6. Receive guidance, support, and direction.
7. Be heard and have a part in planning.
8. Be recognized and receive expressions of appreciation.

The responsibility to:

1. Accept realistic assignments suited to personal interests, talents, and limitations.
2. Follow expected code of conduct.
3. Participate in appropriate orientation, training, and evaluation sessions.
4. Respect confidences.
5. Follow through and complete accepted tasks.
6. Work as a team member with extension faculty and other extension volunteers.
7. Inform extension of progress and problems.

Rights and Responsibilities of the WSU Extension Faculty and Staff

The right to:

1. Expect quality performance.
2. Expect that the volunteer will complete assignments accepted.
3. Expect the volunteer to communicate his/her expectations and limitations.
4. Be kept informed by volunteers.
5. Receive volunteer management and leadership education.
6. Expect volunteers to participate in 4-H leader education.

The responsibility to:

1. Explain and maintain set standards, provide support, and give continuity to the program.
2. Support and direct volunteers by providing accurate job descriptions

that clearly define expectations and responsibilities.

3. Provide constructive feedback including recognition and rewards.
4. Offer a well-planned program of orientation, leader education, supervision, and evaluation.
5. Treat volunteers as co-workers with acceptance, trust, and respect.
6. Provide information and keep volunteers up-to-date.
7. Evaluate the program and job performance with volunteers.
8. Provide opportunities for volunteers' personal growth.

4-H VOLUNTEERS

Types of Volunteer Leaders

The success of the 4-H Youth Development program depends on the time and efforts of the 4-H volunteers. Within the 4-H program there are a variety of volunteer roles available to adults and youths.

4-H Club Leader

- Responsible for operating the 4-H club in accordance with county and state policies.
- Works with officers to guide the club's general meetings.
- Recruits and enrolls members.
- Recruits and enrolls project and activity leaders.
- Helps plan club programs; helps coordinate project meetings, activities, and events.

- Insures that club officers receive guidance and leadership.
- Provides leadership for project and activity leaders.
- Keeps parents informed.

4-H Project Leader

- Organizes, plans, and conducts 4-H project meetings and club activities.
- Helps members and parents choose projects, plan project activities, and carry them out.
- Provides opportunities for members to learn and practice project skills.
- Encourages member participation in 4-H county project activities and events.

4-H Activity Leader

- Responsible for organizing and implementing specific 4-H activity or activities in the 4-H club.
- Involves members, leaders, and parents in the activity.
- Coordinates activity with club program.

4-H County Program Leader

- Works with other 4-H leaders and community volunteers in an area or county to help with a specific project or activity.
- Liaison with county extension office.

4-H Service Leader

- Works with other 4-H leaders and others in an area or county (beyond club level) to support 4-H.

Special Interest Volunteer

- Provides leadership in a special interest or short-term group.

- Volunteers for a specific job (e.g., Challenge leaders, day camps, etc.).

School Enrichment Volunteer

- Teaches or assists with the use of 4-H curriculum in the classroom during school hours.

School Age Child Care Provider/Volunteer

- Uses 4-H curriculum in a day care or after school setting.

BECOMING A 4-H VOLUNTEER

Application and Screening Process

WSU Extension requires an application and screening process for all new 4-H volunteers who desire to work with young people. The purposes of screening are to:

- Provide a safe environment for 4-H youths.
- Help insure the selection and placement of qualified volunteers for 4-H youth activities.

The rationale for the screening process is:

- WSU Extension should provide a safe environment for youths participating in all extension programs.
- Washington State passed legislation in 1987 that enables nonprofit organizations to obtain information on child or adult abuse convictions of applicants.
- Courts are finding employers liable for negligent employee hiring.
- Media coverage has enhanced our society's awareness of child abuse and sexual abuse. Because of these concerns, most youth-serving agencies now have a screening process.

Any adult who would have regularly scheduled, unsupervised contact with youths

4-H VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

(kindergarten through 19 years old) and developmentally disabled persons of any age, must be screened.

The application and screening process includes the following steps. These must be completed before a new volunteer can enroll in the 4-H program.

1. Extension will give the application form (CO938) to interested volunteers.
2. Prospective 4-H volunteers will complete the entire application form and return it to the county extension office.
3. Extension will complete the Washington State Patrol form (Form C) that requests criminal history information.
4. Extension will send a letter to the 4-H volunteer within ten days of receiving information from the Washington State Patrol. The purpose of the letter is to inform the prospective 4-H volunteer about the results from the Washington State Patrol and the next steps in the screening process.
5. If there is no history of criminal convictions then the individual may be considered for enrollment as a 4-H volunteer.

4-H volunteers may have their references checked either by mail or by phone, before or after the Washington State Patrol check. In addition, all main club leaders will be interviewed and must complete leader education.

Some counties may require that all new 4-H volunteers be interviewed. Additional application and screening procedures (depending on the county) may include:

- Discussing job descriptions.
- Discussing and agreeing to expectations of volunteers and WSU Extension.

Volunteer leadership is vital to 4-H. The following policies must be maintained for 4-H programs to be successful.

Expected Conduct of 4-H Volunteers

The WSU Extension 4-H program prides itself on providing hands-on education and opportunities for youths. The major purposes of these conduct standards are to ensure the safety and well-being of youths in the 4-H program and to provide a positive learning environment.

4-H volunteers will:

- Represent WSU Extension 4-H Youth Development with dignity and pride.
- Respect members, parents, other volunteers, extension faculty, and others. Refrain from physical or verbal abuse.
- Work in a cooperative manner.
- Conduct oneself in a courteous, respectful manner, exhibit good sporting conduct, and provide positive role models.
- Respect and follow the Washington 4-H policies, along with specific county policies and project expectations.
- Comply with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws.
- Not consume alcohol or drugs at 4-H events where under-age youths are present.
- Not use illegal drugs.
- Accept the responsibility to promote and support 4-H in order to develop an effective county, state, and national program. All 4-H volunteers must adhere to these standards.

Failure to do so may lead to possible action by Washington 4-H which may include dismissal from the program.

Affirmative Action

Equal opportunity procedures shall be used in the recruitment, selection, education, placement, retention, and recognition of volunteers regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, or gender preference.

Enrollment

Any youth who is at least five years old and in kindergarten by January 1 of the current 4-H year, may become a 4-H member, regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, or disability. 4-H membership is open to youths, grades K-12, or those who have not reached their nineteenth birthday before January 1 of the current 4-H year.

Members must be in the 3rd grade and have reached their 8th birthday before January 1 of the current 4-H year to be eligible for:

- Competitive situations.
- Enrollment in large animal projects including beef, dairy, dairy goat, horse, sheep, and swine.
- Enrollment in projects involving firearms or motorized vehicles.

Contact the WSU Extension office for specific enrollment details.

Fees

No dues or fees are required for the privilege of belonging to 4-H. Money may be collected from members to cover the costs of project materials, publications, and insurance.

Insurance

Liability

Adult 4-H volunteers will be defended by Washington State University whenever an

action or proceeding for damages shall be instituted arising from their acts of omissions while performing official duties as a 4-H volunteer. 4-H members are not covered by this liability insurance. Volunteers are expected to act in good faith and without negligence. Cloverbuds (ages 5–7) may not participate in large animal projects (beef, sheep, swine, horse, dairy, and dairy goat) because leaders are not covered for liability from WSU. Contact your WSU Extension office for more details.

Industrial Insurance

Adult 4-H volunteers are covered under the Department of Labor and Industry medical aid program. The coverage assumes the volunteer is acting in good faith, performing official duties, and exercising due care and diligence. This coverage includes hospital, physician's care, prescriptions, ambulance, and other associated costs. Loss of limb, rehabilitation, or loss of income are not covered. 4-H members are not covered by this industrial insurance.

Accident Insurance

Special illness and accident coverage is available for club and group activities. This is not automatic; contact your WSU Extension office for more details.

Child Abuse Reporting

If a 4-H volunteer suspects that a 4-H member has been abused, the volunteer should report his or her suspicions to the police or local child and protection services. The 4-H volunteer making the report is immune from liability unless it can be proven that a false report was made and the volunteer knew it was false.

Use of Facilities

As a 4-H volunteer, you may not sign a lease agreement or use permit with schools or other public or private facilities if the agreement contains a “Hold Harmless” clause. If you are asked to sign a lease, contact your county 4-H office for assistance.

Conflict Resolution

Volunteers should feel free to bring problems and concerns to the attention of those with whom they work. A problem can arise when a volunteer feels unjustly treated or feels that policies or procedures as related to the job are not being properly administered. Each person has the right, the responsibility, and the opportunity to present complaints for consideration.

Publications

EM2778, “4-H Projects and Publications,” lists current 4-H publications and their prices, along with information on how to enroll in 4-H. Leaders will receive one complimentary copy of member and leader publications for the projects in which they are enrolled. Request complimentary 4-H publications through your WSU Extension office. Publications for 4-H members are purchased from the WSU Bulletins Office. Publications for low-income members are available at no cost. Details for ordering procedures are found in EM2778.

Additional publications to assist you in your 4-H leadership role can be obtained from your WSU Extension office.

4-H Policy Development

Each year many decisions that affect 4-H activities, events, and procedures are made. When developing policy consider if a decision is in the best interest of the members, ensuring them the opportunity to

develop their talents and interests. Member and leader input is important in the decision-making process because 4-H is based in communities.

County 4-H policies are determined by input from leaders, parents, teens, and extension staff through 4-H county councils. County policy may be more restrictive than state policy, but may not be less restrictive. 4-H county policy should be based on the needs of the leaders and youths in that county.

Volunteers and Extension faculty and staff have the opportunity to offer suggestions for policy and program changes for 4-H at the Washington State 4-H Council meeting that is held annually in October. Recommendations are encouraged to be discussed at county 4-H council meetings and to be submitted to the State 4-H office throughout the year. Contact your WSU Extension office for details and for the specific location each year.

ADVISORY GROUPS

State 4-H Advisory Board

The State 4-H Advisory Board has twenty members consisting of three elected representatives from each of the four districts; four representatives from nonclub programs, leaders, providers/volunteers, and four representatives from county faculty, 4-H program assistants, and youths. The responsibilities of this group may include:

- 1) working with the host district to plan and conduct the State 4-H Forum;
- 2) staffing and providing direction for the State 4-H Ambassadors;
- 3) developing leader education opportunities;
- 4) planning strategies to make the 4-H dollar go farther;
- 5) promoting and fostering the mission of the 4-H Youth Development Program; and
- 6) advising the Assistant Director for 4-H on program and policy issues.

County 4-H Council /Association

Each county usually has a 4-H advisory group that provides direction to the county 4-H program in partnership with Extension staff. Other functions may be to:

- Help provide education to volunteers.
- Recommend policy for the county 4-H program.
- Raise and manage funds to under write the planned county program.
- Evaluate the county 4-H program.
- Provide leadership in planning and conducting county 4-H events and activities.
- Recruit leaders.
- Promote and enhance 4-H Youth Development.

Membership in county 4-H councils/ associations is for 4-H volunteers and may also include youths, parents, or interested individuals from the community. For more information and details, contact your county WSU Extension office.

Thank you for your interest and commitment to youth in your community. Welcome to our 4-H team! You truly will make a difference.


Contact your County Extension Office if you have questions regarding the 4-H Youth Development Program.



4-H 

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