

MATERIALS

1. PowerPoint slides or posters of:
 - Reasons Why People Volunteer
 - Club Leader Role
 - Project Leader Role
 - Skills and Attitudes of Volunteers
 - Supporting and Recognizing Volunteers
 - Volunteer Recognition Ideas
2. Flip Chart pages prepared with the following headings:
 - What could volunteers be asked to do?
 - Where could you look for volunteers?
 - What do potential volunteers need to know?
 - What are some good experiences you have had as a volunteer?
 - What are some bad experiences you have had as a volunteer?
3. Different colored markers
4. Copies of Appendix, Lesson 14 handouts if participants are not receiving 4-H 101 curriculum

OBJECTIVES

1. Highlight the importance of volunteers to the 4-H Youth Development Program.
2. Discuss recruitment strategies for 4-H Volunteers.
3. Identify strategies to effectively train 4-H Volunteers.
4. Generate ideas for recognition of 4-H Volunteers.

TIME

1 hour 30 minutes

LESSON 14

Recruiting, Training and Recognizing Volunteers

4-H PRKC: Volunteerism (domain): Engagement of Volunteers; Education of Volunteers; Sustainability of Volunteers (topics)

WHAT TO DO

Introduce the importance of volunteers to the delivery of the 4-H youth development program.

WHAT TO SAY

One of the things that distinguishes 4-H from other programs and makes us strong is the role of volunteers. All 4-H clubs must have an adult leader. Historically, 4-H has relied upon volunteers to fill this role. Volunteers have been an integral part of the success of 4-H since the 1920's. A 4-H volunteer is anyone who is not paid through the Cooperative Extension system. 4-H volunteers are adults and older youth who serve as club leaders, project leaders, committee or council members, camp counselors, etc. Some volunteers work directly with youth and others serve as trainers and mentors.

If you are a youth development professional from a partnering organization, previously you may not have worked with or relied upon volunteers. It is important to recognize that skilled volunteers are essential for program expansion opportunities for youth.

If you are a 4-H youth development professional, you are probably working with a cadre of volunteers serving in various roles. You may be expanding your 4-H program by starting new 4-H clubs or groups, and to do so, you need to recruit and train volunteers to provide adult leadership.

Adult volunteers play an important role in the 4-H program. Volunteers coordinate local community clubs and help to plan and conduct local, regional, state and national 4-H events.

WHAT TO DO

Divide the participants into five groups and have them start at one of the posted questions. (You will have already written the question on each flip chart sheet.) Provide each group with a different colored marker. Instruct the groups to record their responses to the question on their flip chart paper.

Allow about five minutes for this exercise.

After five minutes, instruct the groups to rotate in a clockwise fashion to answer their new question below the answers already listed by the previous group. Tell participants not to repeat what has already been listed.

After five minutes instruct the groups to rotate in a clockwise fashion to another question. Continue in this manner until all five groups have had an opportunity to answer all five questions.

Ask a representative from each group to stand and read the answers from their paper.

WHAT TO SAY

Nationwide, over 600,000 teen and adult volunteers share their time and talents with 4-H youth. They volunteer on a continuum, from club leaders who may devote many hours per week to 4-H, to event organizers who may volunteer for one specific event per year.

Let's talk now about ways to recruit and support these volunteers.

Each group is standing in front of a question related to recruiting volunteers. I want your group to work together to record as many responses as you can to the question you have been given. Write your answers below your assigned question on the flip chart paper. You have about five minutes to complete this task.

Please rotate in a clockwise fashion to the next question. When your group is at this question, record your responses to the new question below those responses made by the previous group. Do not list the same answer multiple times. You have about five minutes to complete this task.

Please rotate in a clockwise fashion to the next question. Again, you will have about five minutes to complete this task.

Let's see what we have discovered about volunteering from this exercise. Will the group holding the question, "What could volunteers be asked to do?", stand and read your answers to us?

WHAT TO DO

If it doesn't come out in discussion, emphasize that there are many ways to volunteer.

Ask for the next group to read their responses.

If it doesn't come out in discussion, share some examples of where to look for volunteers.

Ask for the third group to read their responses.

If it doesn't come out in discussion, emphasize the importance of volunteer position descriptions.

Ask for the fourth group to read their responses.

If it doesn't come out in discussion, point out that personal experiences can be helpful in understanding what motivates a volunteer.

WHAT TO SAY

Remember that there are many levels of involvement for volunteers from addressing envelopes, to managing an event, to assuming leadership of the entire club. All volunteers should have the opportunity to assist the club in ways that their interests, abilities, and availability allow.

Will the group holding the question, "Where could you look for volunteers?", stand and read your answers to us?

Some examples of where to recruit volunteers include local school personnel such as teachers and office staff; staff from community colleges; community volunteer agencies; military organizations such as the American Legion or Auxiliary; civic organizations such as the Rotary or Business and Professional Women's Groups; Garden Clubs; interested parents; retirees; local 4-H alumni; and 4-H teen leaders.

Will the group holding the question, "What do potential volunteers need to know?", stand and read your answers to us?

Remember that people want to know what they are agreeing to before they volunteer. If they have a written position description, then they know exactly what is expected from them.

Will the group holding the question, "What are some good experiences you have had as a volunteer?", stand and read your answers to us?

One of the best ways to know what interests your volunteers and how to support them is to remember what your own experiences with

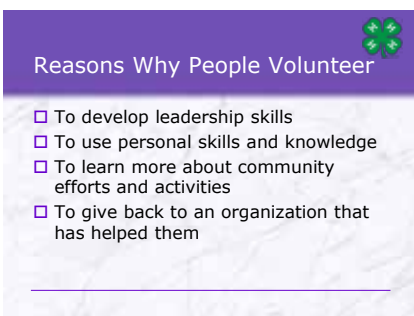
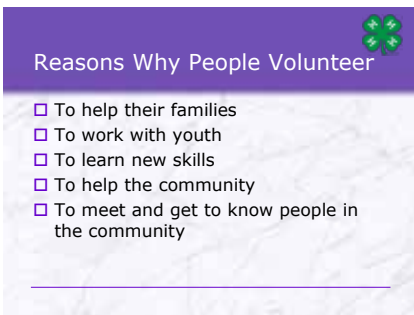
WHAT TO DO

Ask for the last group to read their responses.

Again, if it doesn't come out in discussion, remind participants that their own experiences as a volunteer are helpful.

Allow 3-5 minutes for discussion, if necessary.

Show PowerPoint slides or poster of Reasons Why People Volunteer.



WHAT TO SAY

volunteering have taught you.

Will the group holding the question, "What are some bad experiences you have had as a volunteer?", stand and read your answers to us?

If you have had a negative volunteer experience, you can use what you have learned to develop a checklist of actions to avoid with volunteers.

Are there questions about anything we have discussed?

Now, let's examine some of the reasons why people volunteer.

Research shows that volunteers want to feel that their service is helping the community. Different people are motivated by different things, but most volunteers become involved because they want:

- to help their families;
- to work with youth;
- to learn new skills;
- to help the community;
- to meet and get to know people in the community;
- to develop leadership skills;
- to use personal skills and knowledge;
- to learn more about community efforts and activities;
- to give back to an organization that has helped them.

This list should help you provide potential volunteers with the benefits they might expect from their volunteer roles.

Recruitment will also be easier if you have identified the responsibilities associated with volunteer roles. There are many types of 4-H volunteers, but for our purposes today, we are going to discuss two primary roles of volunteers—the club and project

WHAT TO DO

Show PowerPoint slides or poster of Club Leader Role.

Club Leader Role



- Supports youth by providing encouragement, ideas and learning opportunities
- Recruits other volunteers and parents to assist with project and club activities

Club Leader Role



- Links the club to the county 4-H program by keeping communication open between the club and local 4-H Extension professional
- Makes sure that 4-H clubs contribute to and make use of community resources

Show PowerPoint slide or poster of Project Leader Role.

Project Leader Role



- Creates positive learning environment where needs of all youth are met
- Provides experiences that teach the subject matter using experiential learning methods
- Provides opportunities to develop life skills
- Helps youth set realistic goals for projects and helps them reach those goals

WHAT TO SAY

leaders.

The club leader's responsibilities are fairly standard across states. The club leader is the organizational leader of the group and works with members and their parents to provide experiences that will support youth in their positive growth and development. The club leader's main responsibilities are:

- 1) supporting youth by providing encouragement, ideas and learning opportunities;
- 2) recruiting other volunteers and parents to assist with project and club activities as needed;
- 3) linking the club to the county 4-H office and program by maintaining contact and keeping communication open between the club and the local 4-H Extension professional;
- 4) making sure that their 4-H club contributes to and makes use of community resources.

Communities are proud to support 4-H when the activities and goals of the program contribute to the positive growth of their youth and support community goals.

Project leaders take on the role of teachers. They focus their efforts on teaching life skills through the 4-H project materials. The project leader is responsible for:

- 1) creating a positive learning environment where the needs of all youth are met;
- 2) providing experiences that teach the project subject matter using experiential learning methods;
- 3) providing opportunities to develop life skills;
- 4) helping youth set realistic goals for their projects and then helping

WHAT TO DO

WHAT TO SAY

them reach those goals.

Clubs may also have volunteers who work as mentors for club officers or who help to coordinate specific club events. It is important to survey the interests, talents and skills of parents and other potential volunteers to match people to appropriate volunteer positions.

If you are a 4-H youth development professional, it is essential that you know and understand the policies in your state regarding screening, registration and training requirements for volunteers. Each state has its own requirements that need to be shared with partnering organizations. If you are a youth development professional in a partnering organization, ask your 4-H Extension professional about your state's screening, training and appointment policies. You and any of your staff/volunteers are eligible to participate in any county, district or state 4-H volunteer trainings.

If you are using paid staff in lieu of volunteers, you need to contact your 4-H Extension professional about your state's specific volunteer training requirements. Oftentimes, a partnering youth development organization, such as the military, assumes the liability for their staff in the role as volunteer leader for the 4-H club.

4-H has a wealth of material to assist 4-H Extension professionals in recruiting, training and supporting volunteers. Training opportunities should focus on skills and attitudes of effective leaders and on developing life skills through project work.

WHAT TO DO

Show the PowerPoint slides or poster of Skills and Attitudes of Volunteers.

Skills and Attitudes of Volunteers



- Understanding youth development principles
- Share age-appropriate responsibilities with youth
- Have high expectations and hold youth accountable
- Recognize the accomplishments of youth

Skills and Attitudes of Volunteers



- Fair, objective, honest and sincere
- Facilitate teamwork
- Develop leadership skills of youth

Show the PowerPoint slide or poster of Supporting and Recognizing Volunteers.

Supporting and Recognizing Volunteers



- Maintain contact with volunteers (internet, personal contact, phone)
- Develop clearly focused agendas for volunteer meetings
- Handle conflicts immediately
- Encouragement and recognition are essential

WHAT TO SAY

Through training, volunteers should receive a basic grounding in some general skills and attitudes that characterize effective volunteer leaders. Some of this training might cover topics such as:

- understanding youth development principles;
- sharing certain age-appropriate responsibilities with youth;
- having high expectations and holding youth accountable;
- recognizing the accomplishments of youth;
- the importance of being fair, objective, honest and sincere;
- facilitating teamwork;
- developing leadership skills of youth.

Volunteers should also receive training on specific project materials. 4-H project curricula include leaders' guides that review the use of hands-on teaching experiences for youth in specific subject matter and directions for facilitating and processing those experiences to develop specific life skills.

As a 4-H youth development professional, you need to develop an on-going support program for your volunteers. There are many ways to achieve this. Some examples include:

- maintaining contact with your volunteers through the internet, personal contact, mail, e-mail, and phone. People are motivated when they feel their efforts are respected and help is available. Make sure that your communication skills demonstrate that you value your volunteers. Online communities are another way for volunteers to stay

WHAT TO DO

Show PowerPoint slides or poster of Volunteer Recognition Ideas.

Volunteer Recognition Ideas

1. Publicly thank volunteers. Write a news release for local paper highlighting their contributions.
2. Ask for volunteers' input into programs, events, workshops.
3. Invite volunteers to participate in staff meetings and conferences.

Volunteer Recognition Ideas

4. Ask a volunteer to speak on behalf of the 4-H program to an outside agency or to a donor.
5. Promote a volunteer to a higher level of responsibilities.
6. Write a letter of reference.
7. Nominate volunteers for community, state or national awards.

Volunteer Recognition Ideas

8. Encourage youth to send thank-you notes.
9. Feature volunteers in print or media promotional publications.
10. Provide recognition tokens such as plaques, certificates, pins.

Volunteer Recognition Ideas

11. Offer perks such as free admission, parking, reserved seating, etc.
12. Have a Volunteer of the Month Award.
13. Host a banquet, luncheon, party or reception in the volunteers' honor.

WHAT TO SAY

connected.

- developing agendas for volunteer meetings that are clearly focused and relevant to the needs of the volunteers;
- handle conflicts immediately. Disagreement is to be expected and can lead to new ideas and creative ways to approach situations when dealt with openly and honestly.
- encouragement and recognition are essential. Everyone likes to be appreciated for doing a good job. Recognition activities do not need to be formal or expensive.

Here is a list of ways to recognize volunteers. As you get to know your volunteers, you will be able to identify the kinds of recognition that are most meaningful to each individual.

- Publicly thank volunteers and acknowledge their contributions. Write a news article for the local newspaper or your newsletter highlighting their contributions.
- Ask for volunteers' input into programs, workshops, etc.
- Invite volunteers to participate in staff meetings and conferences.
- Ask a volunteer to speak on behalf of the 4-H program to an outside agency or to a donor.
- Promote a volunteer to expanded or higher level responsibilities.
- Write a letter of reference.
- Nominate volunteers for community, state or national awards.

WHAT TO DO

WHAT TO SAY

- Encourage youth to send thank-you notes to volunteers who have helped them.
- Feature volunteers in print or media promotional publications.
- Provide recognition tokens such as plaques, certificates, pins, etc.
- Offer perks such as free admission, parking, reserved seating, etc.
- Have a Volunteer of the Month Award.
- Host a banquet, luncheon, party or reception in the volunteers' honor.

For additional volunteer recognition ideas, refer to the “131 Ways to Recognize 4-H Volunteers” handout (see Appendix).

The goal of the 4-H youth development professional is to help volunteers grow within the organization through training, providing recognition for their work, and offering on-going support of the volunteer role.

REFERENCES

131 Ways to Recognize 4-H Volunteers. 2002. Ohio 4-H Volunteer Fact Sheet #40, Ohio State University Extension.

