



4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT EDUCATORS & COUNTY 4-H LEADER ORGANIZATIONS

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The Link between Cooperative Extension, UW-Extension and 4-H Leader Organizations

4-H is the youth development program of the United States Department of Agriculture and the Cooperative Extension System of the nation's land-grant universities. 4-H Youth Development programming in Wisconsin has a dual focus - providing educational programs for youth, and youth development leadership for communities. 4-H groups are created solely to extend and support Cooperative Extension's youth educational programs, and are considered a formal component of Cooperative Extension's educational efforts. 4-H groups and organizations are accountable to Cooperative Extension for their activities and finances. Their continuing existence is dependent upon Cooperative Extension's authorization and oversight. This oversight is provided at the local level by the 4-H Youth Development Educator.

The 4-H Youth Development Educator Role

The 4-H Youth Development Educator is charged with overall leadership and oversight for all 4-H Youth Development programs and groups in the county. This includes guidance and support for the 4-H community club program, 4-H outreach programs, and serving as a community leader in youth development. The 4-H Youth Development Educator works with the county 4-H Leader Organization and Board of Directors as:

Educator

- Provides leadership and support for the county 4-H Youth Development program
- Serves as the link to the larger 4-H Youth Development and UW-Extension system
 - Provides knowledge of state and national resources, new programs, policies and sources of training
 - Brings state and national materials, educational opportunities, policies and advice to the county
- Provides resources and information for 4-H groups in organizational decision making
- Teaches content in youth development, organization building, and volunteer development through informal conversations, phone calls, newsletters, group presentations, participation in meetings and development of educational materials

Educational Administrator

- Responsible for assuring that all programs bearing the 4-H name and emblem are consistent with the mission and goals of Cooperative Extension's 4-H program
- Ensures compliance with state and national 4-H policies, procedures and expectations
- Ensures that local 4-H program decisions comply with federal and state nondiscrimination laws and policies
- Provides education and management for financial accountability for county 4-H clubs and groups so they meet federal and state tax requirements and receive ongoing approval of tax-exempt status

4-H Volunteer Manager

- Implements the Wisconsin 4-H Youth Protection Program
- Establishes and maintains a comprehensive 4-H volunteer development and management system that includes selection, orientation and training, utilization, recognition, and evaluation of volunteers
- Provides educational leadership and support to volunteers in delivery of the 4-H community club program

Youth Development Leadership

- Provides the academic preparation, skills and resources for a comprehensive youth development program in the county
- Facilitates the positive development of young people through 4-H clubs and activities
- Supports youth engagement in 4-H-sponsored opportunities
- Provides opportunities through the 4-H community club program for older youth to assume leadership roles and responsibilities

4-H Leader Organizations

Organized at the county level, the 4-H Leader Organization works closely with the 4-H Youth Development Educator. The organization brings together volunteers to serve as a venue for volunteer leader training and an organizing mechanism in providing volunteer and financial support for county level educational opportunities for 4-H members and 4-H volunteers. The organization consists of 4-H volunteer leaders and may include 4-H members, who are the voting members. Meeting frequency varies from monthly to annually. This countywide organization exists in many, but not all counties. 4-H Leader Organizations are not responsible for the hiring and supervision of 4-H Youth Development staff or the selection and supervision of volunteers. 4-H Leader Organizations:

Conduct Supplemental County Level Programs for Youth

- Establish educational opportunities for youth beyond the club level, such as camp, member exchanges, county fair, or project activities
- Support volunteer development and education through training, financial support and promotion of opportunities
- Seeks advice from the 4-H Youth Development Educator

Raise Funds and Manage a Budget to Support 4-H Youth Development Work

- Develop and manage a budget that supports 4-H Youth Development work
- Fundraise to support these budgets

Coordinate County Level Recognition

- Develop meaningful recognition for young people and volunteers

Represent 4-H Youth Development to the Community

- Establish and support a promotion committee or Ambassador program

Advocate for 4-H Youth Development

- Maintain personal contact with stakeholders including elected officials for understanding of the benefits of 4-H
- Advocate the value of 4-H Youth Development Programs in the County
- Market and promote 4-H programs

Provide input on new 4-H Youth Development opportunities and youth and volunteer needs

- Explore new 4-H youth development opportunities and challenges
- Provide advice on youth and volunteer needs and issues
- Work to ensure that all youth participating in Extension youth groups have equal access to 4-H Youth Development programs including 4-H community clubs, after-school groups and others

Executive Board or Board of Directors

This elected body works closely with the county 4-H Youth Development Educator in providing leadership for the activities of the 4-H Leader Organization. This includes compliance with state and federal policies and laws. The Board often makes recommendations on issues for discussion and action by the organization's membership, and is accountable to the membership of organization. Youth leaders and adult volunteer leaders are eligible to serve on 4-H Boards. Organizational by-laws outline election processes and length of terms. Leadership roles that the Board provides include:

Organizational Planning

- Ensures understanding of the purpose of the 4-H Leader Organization has a vision of how their organization should operate and establishes steps to make these visions happen.
- Provides leadership for the organization

Policymaking that Relates to the 4-H Leader Organization

- Establishes by-laws that give direction to how the local 4-H Leader Organization policies are developed and communicated.
- Makes recommendations on policy issues for discussion and action by the organization's membership.

Enforcement of Policies

- Ensures 4-H Leader Organization compliance with state and national 4-H policies, procedures and expectations and that decisions comply with federal and state nondiscrimination laws and policies
- Oversees any issues related to 4-H Leader Organization policies and implements a fair and equitable procedure for addressing those concerns

Legal Responsibilities

- Provides leadership for completion and submission of the 4-H Charter Renewal documents
- Provides leadership that makes sure the business of the organization is accurately recorded and reported to the membership. Board members should avoid conflict of interest questions by abstaining on votes in which they might personally gain.

Financial Responsibilities

- Provides leadership for budget development and oversight
- Establishes and implements legal and accountable banking and check writing policies for the 4-H Leader Organization, including completion of an annual audit
- Involves the 4-H Leader Organization membership in budget adoption, fund raising commitments, and annual audits
- Provides leadership and assurance for compliance with federal and state tax reporting requirements.
- Seeks advice from the 4-H Youth Development Educator

Committees

4-H committees bring youth and adult volunteer leaders together to focus on a specific purpose, event, activity or project. 4-H committees can be formed through the 4-H club, county 4-H program, or through a 4-H leader organization. The work of 4-H committees is important for 4-H clubs and the 4-H county program for joint decision making, planning and carrying out 4-H experiences. They provide opportunities for developing leadership, citizenship, teamwork, decision-making, planning, organizational and evaluation skills.

- All committees are ultimately accountable to the 4-H Youth Development Educator.
- Chartered committees who handle their own finances are required to complete a charter renewal packet each year which is due to the 4-H Youth Development Educator by Dec. 1
- There are variations among counties in organizational and committee structures, but communication between committees, county organizations, members, and the 4-H Youth Development Educator is necessary and should be clearly defined.
- Committees need to have by-laws or operating guidelines in place. Guidelines are to be distributed to each member of the group or committee and reviewed annually with the group.
- Voting members on committees are 4-H volunteer leaders and youth members/leaders. Committee meeting minutes are to be accessible to all committee members including the 4-H Youth Development Educator.
- Seeks advice from the 4-H Youth Development Educator



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