



## VOLUNTEER TRAINING MODULES

### WAYS TO PARTICIPATE IN 4-H

#### 4-H Delivery Modes

It is often said, "It is easier to build a child than to mend an adult." With this in mind, the focus of 4-H is to develop in youth and adults the life skills necessary to be contributing members of society. In 4-H, volunteer leaders encourage youth to gain knowledge and learn together as a team. 4-H members learn decision-making skills and develop within themselves a sense of self-responsibility through project work, community service, and participation in an assortment of club, county, state and national activities and events. The 4-H volunteer is the backbone of this youth development program.

Membership in 4-H is open to ALL youth in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, or those who have not reached their 19th birthday before January 1 of the current 4-H year. Special Education youths older than nineteen may enroll in 4-H with the approval of the County Extension Office. 4-H strives to foster in each member and leader an appreciation of the uniqueness and self-worth of each individual.

#### 4-H Delivery Modes

The 4-H Youth Development Program is delivered to youth in Washington State by the following methods:

#### 4-H CLUBS- WHERE TO BEGIN AND HOW TO MANAGE?

A 4-H club is an organized group, led by one or more adult volunteers, with a planned program of activities that is carried on throughout all or most of the year. 4-H Clubs may meet in any location and typically have elected officers and a set of rules approved by the membership to help govern the club.

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### **There are many factors involved in the success of a 4-H Club:**

- Recruiting 4-H members and additional adult leaders: The size of a 4-H club is determined by both the project focus of the members, and the expertise and ratio of leaders to youth. Limit your first group to a number that you and your co-leaders feel comfortable with. Recruiting members is seldom hard to do. Your local County Extension Office can assist you, as they will often keep a list of youth wanting to join a club in your area. When recruiting new members and leaders, we must be certain that programs are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, marital status, disability, and disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status.
- Volunteer Application: Those adults who wish to work with youth in the 4-H program must fill out a WSU Cooperative Extension volunteer application (also known as a 4-H Leader enrollment form) and the Washington State Patrol criminal background check permission form. They must also sign a volunteer behavior and expectations agreement and meet with a member of the county CE staff. Participation as a Cooperative Extension/4-H volunteer is contingent upon successful completion and staff review of all four of the above components.
- How to Enroll 4-H Members: Your local county Extension Office has the necessary enrollment forms for you to complete and submit to their office. Each county has a due date for enrollments.
- 4-H Fees and Leader Liability Coverage: Washington State 4-H members currently do not have to pay dues. However, counties and individual clubs may charge fees for insurance (\$1 per member, \$2 for horse club members) and for costs associated with conducting the 4-H program. Enrolled 4-H leaders have limited liability coverage through Washington State University when leading a 4-H group or activity.

- Projects: “Hands-on” (or experiential) projects and activities are the strength of the 4-H Youth Development Program. 4-H leaders must always remember that the “youth comes first” and that the skills and self-confidence developed through a successful project are always more important than the actual project. As a result of successfully completing a project, the youth should have developed a feeling of capability and self-worth, as well as meaningful relationships with adults and other youth. Each WSU Cooperative Extension Office has copies of EM2778, “4-H Projects and Publications”, which lists the publications and curriculum materials for the eight project areas: animal science, environmental stewardship, expressive arts, family living, interdisciplinary, mechanical science, plant science, and social science. Additional information on 4-H projects is available on-line at [http://4h.wsu.edu/projects/project\\_list.htm](http://4h.wsu.edu/projects/project_list.htm).

#### **4-H SPECIAL INTEREST PROGRAMS AND DAY CAMPS**

During short-term special interest programs and day camps, youth learn about a specific subject for a designated period of time. The learning activities are taught by Extension staff or trained volunteers. Special interest activities and day camps are not part of the school curriculum and are not restricted to members of 4-H clubs. Examples of 4-H Special Interest programs and Day Camps include:

- 4-H Challenge activities.
- 4-H programs presented to other youth groups such as Scouts and Campfire.
- Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Programs (EFNEP) for youth.
- Horseback riding programs for disabled riders.
- Natural Resource and Sewing Day Camps.

#### **4-H OVERNIGHT OR RESIDENT CAMPING PROGRAMS**

Many counties or regions conduct resident camps where youth learn such important life skills as problem solving, decision-making, communications, and cooperation while experiencing a variety of

activities. These experiences involve being away from home at least one night in a camp-like environment and are not restricted to members of organized 4-H clubs. Additional information regarding 4-H overnight camping programs in your area is available from your local Extension Office and from the Washington State 4-H website.

#### **4-H SCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS**

These innovative educational programs utilize Extension trained volunteers (Master Gardeners, 4-H Leaders, etc.), educators and teachers to share their personal interest and knowledge with children in a formal classroom setting. School enrichment programs are short-term and often use 4-H materials to enhance and supplement existing school curriculum. Examples of 4-H Enrichment Programs include:

- Talking with TJ.
- Urban Gardening.
- Ag in the Classroom.
- Vermiculture/Worm composting.
- Science Experience and Resources for Informal Education Settings (SERIES) activities.

#### **4-H SCHOOL-AGED CARE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

Many County Extension Offices have partnered with local school districts to offer youth development activities on a regularly scheduled basis after school. After school programming is a commitment beyond short-term special interest and school enrichment activities and involves a formal partnership between a local school district and Extension. A combination of fees, local funding and grant money is often used to help defray the cost of the after school programming. A primary purpose is to provide childcare for youth while parents are working or unavailable. Your local Extension Office can give you information on after school programming in your area. Additional information is available on-line at [www.4hafterschool.org](http://www.4hafterschool.org).

### **OTHER 4-H DELIVERY MODES**

In Washington State, 4-H is also delivered to youth by the following methods:

- 4-H Individual and Family Learning Programs, where self-directed learning occurs with limited adult involvement except for parents (or mentors).
- 4-H Instructional TV and Video Programs, where youth learn through Extension via television or satellite broadcasts.

4-H is flexible and designed to meet the needs of each individual youth. Your county may be offering 4-H in additional creative ways where you live.

Check out the Washington State 4-H website at <http://4h.wsu.edu/staffdir/index.html> for additional information on 4-H in your county.

*Some information in this module was adapted from the New Jersey 4-H Leaders Series, <http://nj4h.rutgers.edu/volunteering/e148.html>.*

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