

4-H Volunteer Leaders' Series

The 4-H Club Leadership Team

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Welcome to the Arkansas 4-H Program. As a 4-H volunteer leader, you join thousands of others who work to develop 4-H club programs in local neighborhoods and communities across our state. This guide will acquaint you with the "4-H Club Leadership Team" idea. It will help you and your fellow volunteers become an effective leadership team.

Team Objective

Your leadership team's main objective will be to establish, support and maintain a 4-H club. You will learn to use your club's program for the positive development of its members.

Team Goals

You should adopt the following team goals:

1. To help your 4-H'ers learn subject matter content and skills related to their interests.
2. To help your 4-H'ers develop positive self-concepts and positive social skills.

Achieving These Goals

"Learning by Doing" is a key idea in 4-H. Your leadership team must design and carry out a club program with the help of your members. Your 4-H'ers should play an active part in planning, doing and reviewing the club's meetings and activities.

Your team must create and guide this program development process. Your team goals will be achieved if the process is successful.

Team Approach Assumptions

The "4-H Club Leadership Team" approach was designed after making the following assumptions:

1. Parents of 4-H'ers are willing to invest time and energy in a program stressing positive youth development.
2. Other adults are also willing to invest time and energy in such a program.
3. Parents and other adults want to be actively involved in the development of youth.
4. Parents and other adults are willing to work together as a team to create a 4-H club program.
5. The knowledge and skills available through 4-H are best taught in a group setting in which youngsters can:
 - a. Identify their individual learning interests and help plan and carry out activities related to those interests.
 - b. Become active group members and develop positive self-concepts and social skills through this group membership.



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Designing the Team

The leadership team idea was designed in response to the following needs:

1. To involve parents with their children and their neighbors' children in a positive educational and social environment.
2. To develop human support for a program offering a variety of educational and social activities.
3. To involve several adults in "sharing the lead" of a youth program as complex as an active 4-H club.

Each position on the leadership team responds to a specific set of 4-H club program needs. These needs are linked to the youth development goals of the team. They are:

1. Advising club officers who plan and manage the club's calendar of meetings and activities.
2. Generating subject matter-based educational experiences for 4-H'ers in response to their learning interests and utilizing the "Learning by Doing" philosophy.
3. Making the educational and social aspects of the club fun for both the members and leadership team.
4. Training 4-H members, parents and project leaders in proper 4-H project record keeping procedures.
5. Expanding the leadership team by placing older 4-H members in leadership positions.
6. Making the entire community a potential human resource by involving people as resource/support volunteers for your club program.

Leadership Team Recruitment

The 4-H club leadership team is secured by the 4-H club advisory committee. This committee is composed of people from the area where the club is to be organized.

They are responsible for the following:

1. Planning and conducting a 4-H informational meeting in their area to determine interest in organizing a 4-H club or 4-H clubs.

2. Securing people to fill the 4-H club leadership team positions and recruiting the youth membership.
3. Working in conjunction with the 4-H club leadership team in planning and conducting the 4-H club organizational meeting.
4. Serving as an advisory group to the club. They are the link between the community and the club. They provide assistance and deal with problems or needs that arise within the club.

Leadership Team Positions

The "4-H Club Leadership Team" contains six positions. These positions correspond to the six 4-H club program needs listed previously. At least one person performs the tasks contained in each position. This does not mean that your team will have only six members. Nor does it mean that there will be more than six members. It means that each task listed below must be performed by someone if the leadership team and the 4-H members are to benefit fully from the 4-H program.

The positions on the leadership team and their respective tasks are:

1. The Organizational Leader

- a. Generates and coordinates the club's officers and their planning process. This allows for the democratic, peer-based environment which is important to social skills development.
- b. Generates and maintains the calendar of meetings and activities for the planned program.
- c. Coordinates the volunteers – project leaders, activity leaders, records leaders, teen leaders and resource/support volunteers – with the club program plan.
- d. Maintains channels of communication with the county Extension faculty and/or 4-H club organizational coordinator.

2. The Project Leader

- a. Establishes a rapport with 4-H'ers in individual and group settings and helps them identify their learning interests.

- b. Translates the expressed interests of members into subject matter information and designs learning experiences.
- c. Willingly:
 - (1) Applies personal subject matter knowledge to the project leader role.
 - (2) Acquires the subject matter knowledge necessary to fulfill the project leader role.
- d. Becomes knowledgeable about the basic “Learn by Doing” methods used in 4-H, such as 4-H projects and demonstrations.
- e. Develops the skills necessary to plan, execute and review a sequence of educational experiences for individual 4-H’ers or groups related to their interests.
- f. Sequences educational activities on a calendar.
- g. Identifies, recruits and utilizes resource persons in the delivery of subject matter programming.
- h. Serves as an active leadership team member and as a link between the club program and appropriate county subject matter agents and/or project coordinator.

3. **The Activity Leader**

- a. Plans, executes and evaluates club-level activities through the use of peer leadership.
- b. Establishes a working relationship with organizational and project leaders in planning, doing and reviewing the club’s social, educational, community service and fund-raising activities.
- c. Identifies, recruits and utilizes resource persons from the community to assist in the execution of club activities.
- d. Links the leadership team and the 4-H’ers in the social and educational atmosphere of the club.
- e. Serves as an active leadership team member and as a link between the club and appropriate county Extension agent and/or activity coordinator.

4. **The Records Leader**

- a. Knows the 4-H project record keeping process.
- b. Trains 4-H members, parents and project leaders in proper record keeping procedures.
- c. Cooperates with other team members to establish record keeping as a part of the 4-H club program.
- d. Serves as an active leadership team member and as a link between the club and the county Extension faculty member responsible for 4-H records and/or the records coordinator.

5. **The Teen Leader**

- a. Knows the club program planning process and assists 4-H’ers in planning the club’s program.
- b. Assists in the generation of the club’s calendar.
- c. Knows the educational methods, including projects, demonstrations and other general methods, used in instruction and assumes a coaching role to younger 4-H members.
- d. Knows the 4-H club structure and assists the club’s officers and committees.
- e. Knows the “Learning by Doing” philosophy and develops social and educational activities that are directly tied to the club program.

6. **The Resource/Support Volunteer**

- a. The job to be done will have been defined by other members of the team prior to the recruitment of the resource/support volunteer.
- b. Involvement is generally short term and tied to a specific program need. The resource person’s involvement may be on a semi-annual or annual basis.
- c. Resource people are identified, recruited, oriented and utilized because they have a specific skill or can provide a specific service needed by the club.

Teamwork Is Key

As is true with any group, teamwork is the key to success. The success of your leadership team depends on how well each volunteer performs his/her task while working with other team members toward the overall team objective.

Team Size

The size of your “4-H Club Leadership Team” will vary according to several characteristics:

1. The number of youngsters involved in the club.
2. The scope of subject matter interests expressed by the youngsters in the club at any one point in time.
3. The scope and number of activities planned by a club.

The size of your leadership team will vary depending on the program your club is planning and the resulting need for guidance to accomplish that program.

How to Start

The educational philosophy of 4-H is based on the idea of “Learning by Doing.” That approach is the best way to get your leadership team started toward a successful 4-H club program. Learn by doing together. You will be involved in orientation sessions so that you can get to know your own job as well as those of your teammates before you meet with the youth.

You will be supported in the following ways prior to your first club meeting:

1. The 4-H club advisory committee will work with you to plan and conduct the 4-H club organizational meeting.

2. You can attend club meetings of existing 4-H clubs in your county and visit with experienced 4-H volunteers.
3. Your ultimate team objective is to independently plan, carry out and review programs and secure resources in response to the interests of your youngsters. However, your team will be given an extensive orientation to the 4-H program prior to and during your first meetings.
4. Following that orientation, you will be offered in-service training related to your particular position on the leadership team. You will receive more in-depth information on your particular job and resources available to you.
5. You will realize that your best resources are other 4-H volunteers. Throughout your career as a 4-H volunteer, you will be able to join several groups and associations. You can meet and talk with other 4-H volunteer leaders who are serving in the same leadership position.

Early Goals and Early Successes

Much of your orientation training will be aimed at understanding how your position on the leadership team relates to those of your teammates. Your team can expect a period of adjustment before becoming familiar with leadership team relationships. Although communication will always be very important on the team, it is particularly important during the early months of your team’s existence.

Communication and Cooperation

4-H is designed to develop interpersonal communication skills in youngsters and make them contributing group members. Your team can demonstrate these important personal and social skills through communication, cooperation and teamwork. Your team can become an excellent model for your 4-H’ers to copy.

Adapted for use in Arkansas from materials developed by Dr. Thearon McKinney, Extension 4-H Specialist, North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service.

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