



Cooperative
Extension Service

Kentucky 4-H Program Quality Guide

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This guide is a framework for the Kentucky 4-H Program administered by the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.

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Cooperative Extension Service

Agriculture and Natural Resources
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Chapter 1: Kentucky 4-H Youth Development Overview

This section focuses on the basics of 4-H and the science behind the organization.

What is 4-H?

4-H is America's largest youth development organization, empowering nearly six million young people with the skills to lead for a lifetime. Kentucky 4-H reaches on average 200,000 young people each year.

In 4-H, we believe in the power of young people. We see that every child has valuable strengths and real influence to improve the world around us.

We Believe In:

- All young people's potential,
- Developing young people who are empowered, confident, hard-working, determined, responsible, and compassionate—seeing a world beyond themselves so that they have the life-long skills to succeed in college and career,
- Ensuring access to 4-H for all,
- The power of being a part of America's leading public universities,
- The practice of positive youth development by creating positive learning experiences,
- Caring and trusted adult mentors who cultivate positive relationships with youth,
- Creating safe environments, and
- Meeting young people wherever they are.

Mission and Vision of Kentucky 4-H

Mission:

Kentucky 4-H provides education and life skill development opportunities for youth to grow into confident, capable, and contributing members of their communities.

Vision:

4-H is a community of young people across Kentucky who are learning communication, civic engagement, and leadership skills.

The 4-H Pledge

I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to great loyalty, my hands to larger service, and my health to better living, for my club, my community, my country, and my world.





Foundations of Positive Youth Development

What is Positive Youth Development?

Positive youth development is an intentional, prosocial approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances young people's strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths.

Positive youth development. (n.d.). Youth.gov. Retrieved April 1, 2023
from <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/positive-youth-development>

Science of Learning and Development:

The Science of Learning and Development (SoLD) is the body of scientific evidence that supports how 4-H youth programs work their magic in the lives of youth. Recognizing that positive development happens because of the interaction of a young person and their environment, SoLD researchers turned to multi-disciplinary strands of research to identify important characteristics of youth development. Drawing from developmental and brain science, as well as research in psychology, adversity, and resilience, SoLD researchers identified how a child develops from a more holistic perspective—arguing that it is neither nature nor nurture that determines development, but rather both. The interaction of our genes and our environment drives youth development.

The SoLD research resulted in eight key findings that inform our approach to youth development. These findings are important to consider when working with young people in 4-H: potential, malleability, individuality, context, relationships, integration, continuum, and meaning making.

Science of learning and development: Eight key findings. (2023). Helping youth thrive. Retrieved April 1, 2023, from <https://helping-youth-thrive.extension.org/>

History of Kentucky 4-H

Kentucky 4-H is one of the mission areas of the University of Kentucky Land Grant System administered through the Cooperative Extension Service. Kentucky 4-H originated in 1909 with the first 4-H Corn Club in Fayette County, Kentucky. Since then, the Kentucky 4-H Program has expanded to have a presence in all 120 counties. Today, Kentucky 4-H reaches an average of 200,000 youth ages 5-18 through the seven core program areas. Along with the presence of 4-H in every county Cooperative Extension office, the University of Kentucky 4-H Program operates four residential camping facilities. Through high-quality positive youth development programming Kentucky 4-H hopes to continue to expand current educational offerings to ensure all youth have the opportunity to thrive.





4-H Thriving Model

The 4-H Thriving Model is the theory of change for positive youth development in 4-H. The model illustrates the process of positive youth development in 4-H programs by connecting high-quality program settings to the promotion of youth thriving.

High-quality 4-H program settings provide youth a place to belong, matter, and explore their personal spark. High-quality settings foster developmental relationships with youth, relationships that express care, challenge growth, and share power. These components help ensure that 4-H programs provide a nourishing developmental context, a place where youth can belong and grow.

High-quality 4-H programs contribute to positive youth development through the intentional promotion of social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral habits of mind. In the 4-H Thriving Model, this process of positive youth development is described by seven indicators of thriving: openness to challenge and discover, growth mindset, hopeful purpose, pro-social orientation, transcendent awareness, positive emotionality, and self-regulation through goal setting and management.

Youth who experience high-quality developmental settings in 4-H with an emphasis on these key social-emotional skills achieve key positive youth development outcomes, including academic motivation and success, social competence, high personal standards, connection with others, personal responsibility, and contribution to others through leadership and civic engagement.

Youth who achieve positive developmental outcomes are more likely to also achieve long-term outcomes marked by vocational or academic success, civic engagement, employability, economic stability, happiness, and well-being.

About the 4-H thriving model. (2023). Helping youth thrive. Retrieved April 1, 2023, from <https://helping-youth-thrive.extension.org/>

High-Quality Program Principles

Dedicated volunteers and staff spend many hours working directly with youth in 4-H programs. From exploring topics in a Cloverbud program to learning science skills by building a robot, to attending National 4-H Congress, 4-H provides many different types of programs to meet the needs of youth as they grow and develop. What happens in 4-H programs and how they are planned and led, makes a huge difference in the impact of the program on youth! To have the biggest impact, programs need to adhere to eight critical principles of program quality: physical and psychological safety, appropriate structure, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, positive social norms, support for efficacy and mattering, opportunities for skill building, and integration of family, school, and community.

Youth program quality principles. (2023). Helping youth thrive. Retrieved April 1, 2023, from <https://helping-youth-thrive.extension.org/>





Alignment of Commonly Used Frameworks to the 4-H Thriving Model

4-H Thriving Model (Arnold, 2018) – A predictive model of positive youth development.	Frameworks – <i>The structure of program development.</i>
Developmental Context This element of the model refers to 4-H program settings and what educators need to focus on to ensure that 4-H programs are high-quality and situated in positive youth development theory. This is the setting or environment of positive youth development programming.	The Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development (Kress, 2005)
Thriving Indicators This element of the model refers to the intentional building of the social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral skills that promote thriving and that illustrate the process of youth development. This is the process or action of positive youth development.	Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning: Social, Emotional, Learning Framework (2020) Targeting Life Skills Model (Hendricks, 1998)
Developmental Outcomes This element of the model refers to the positive youth development outcomes of 4-H participation. These are the “outcomes” of positive youth development.	The 5 C’s Model of Positive Youth Development (Lerner, et. al., 2005)

Noble, R., Hall, K., Hensley, S., & Arnold, M.E. (2021). *Aligning 4-H youth development frameworks with the 4-H Thriving Model*. Retrieved from <https://helping-youth-thrive.extension.org/>





Chapter 2: 4-H Organizational Systems and Structure

This section includes the programmatic structure for Kentucky 4-H area groupings, the organizational structure for the state 4-H office, and the responsibilities of the various roles within Kentucky 4-H.

Kentucky 4-H Programming Structure

Counties are categorized into regions: west, central, east, and then further divided into areas. Two areas are paired and called area groupings for conducting 4-H Programming. To support state level initiatives agents are asked to serve in a variety of standing (required) and supporting (optional) assignments. The cycle of these assignments is for the length of the program planning process, most operating on the 4-H year. Agents are encouraged to rotate through standing assignments to promote sustainability of the program through building knowledge of operations. Agents are also encouraged to manage workload levels to prevent burnout and encourage sharing responsibilities. Resources are available through the Kentucky 4-H State Office.

Kentucky 4-H State Office

The mission of the Kentucky 4-H State Office is to advance the field of positive youth development. The staff aims to produce high-quality resources for use on all levels, organizing and implementing state-level initiatives, initiating partnerships, and advocating for youth, volunteer, agent, and county level staff needs. A detailed organizational chart can be obtained through the Kentucky 4-H State Office.

Kentucky 4-H Program Roles and Responsibilities

It takes various professionals, volunteers, and stakeholder groups to operate the Kentucky 4-H Program. Roles and responsibilities of these various positions are detailed through job descriptions and program expectations laid out by the University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment Cooperative Extension Service. A detailed chart can be obtained through the Kentucky 4-H State Office.

Philosophy of Partnerships and Collaborations

Partnerships and collaborations are critical to the success of programs at every level of Kentucky 4-H. It is important to be good stewards of these relationships to ensure we continue to expand and develop our reach within the state. When developing and maintaining these partnerships remember our role should be focused on positive youth development.

Policies and Regulations

Definition of a 4-H Member:

“A 4-H member is a youth who participates in any educational program or activity delivered by Cooperative Extension and/or receives Cooperative Extension-based curriculum. A 4-H member includes a youth who is ‘individually enrolled’ or ‘group enrolled,’ regardless of the type of 4-H engagement/delivery method in which they are participating” (NIFA, 2022).





Membership Policy:

Any young person ages 9 through 18 may be involved in Kentucky 4-H in the county in which they live or go to school. Some counties offer Cloverbud activities for youth ages 5-8 based on the need of the county.

4-H Age:

The age of a young person participating in 4-H is the age they are on January 1 of the current program year.

Categories:

5-8 years old: Cloverbud

9-13 years old: Junior

14-18 years old: Senior

Program Year:

The 4-H Program Year in Kentucky is September 1 through August 31. The 4-H program year may include a few culminating events that occur after September 1.

Grade:

Participation in some educational events is based on grade rather than (or along with) age. Follow the specific requirements of the event or opportunity in those cases.

Exceptional Student Category:

Youth classified as an exceptional student and thus determined eligible for a special program by the Kentucky Department of Education shall be eligible to participate in 4-H until the age of 21 years old or completion of high school, whichever comes first. The definition of an exceptional student can be found within KRS 157.200.

4-H Camp Age Policy:

4-H Summer Camp has a different age policy. The camping age is determined by the first day of camp. Camper participants must be at least nine years old and no older than 14 on the first day of camp. Camper participants at age eight may attend if they are going into the 4th grade in the next school year. A 15-year-old can attend summer camp to assist teen and adult leaders with the camping program: at no time may a 15-year-old be responsible for supervision of campers. A Teen Leader is a youth 16 or 17 years of age. Participants aged 18 or older will be recognized as adult leaders.

Use of 4-H Online:

4-H Online is the data management system that the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service utilizes to track the enrollment of youth, families, and volunteers. All youth participating in Extension programming, as well as all Extension volunteers, are expected to be registered through 4-H Online in the county in which they (or their dependents) live, work, or attend school. Extension Agents in all program areas are expected to accurately maintain enrollment in 4-H Online for their county. The 4-H Online system is intended to be





utilized as a tracking system for the total reach of youth programming through Extension, not as a measure of impact. Other methods of evaluation will be utilized to measure impact data.

Additionally, the 4-H Online data management system will be used to track all Extension volunteers and ensure that their background check status is up to date. Background checks must be updated at least every four years. The Volunteerism Specialist will notify agents and Area Extension Directors in January each year, which volunteers in each county need an updated background check.

Cross County Lines:

A young person may enroll in 4-H within the county where they are a resident or attend school. Exceptions to this policy are made through the request of the member and their parent/guardian on a yearly basis through the 4-H agents and the local County 4-H Councils. The purpose of crossing county lines should be to increase the educational opportunities and experiences of young people, not for competitive or financial gain, or perception/status of a program.

If a young person pursues crossing county lines, *Form A: Request for 4-H Participation Across County Lines* should be completed. The deadlines for requests are set by the local 4-H agent and local County 4-H Council. 4-H agents retain a copy of the request form with the decision, along with returning it to the young person's parents/guardians. The decision remains on the local level. If a question of eligibility is brought to our attention the state 4-H office will work with the local 4-H agent(s) to get the documentation needed.

Charters:

A 4-H Charter is an agreement between the club, 4-H National Headquarters at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. Receiving a 4-H Charter means the group agrees to follow and abide by local and state 4-H policies, procedures, and other requirements. A 4-H Charter provided by the USDA and signed by the Secretary of Agriculture's designated representative is the only document that officially recognizes a 4-H club/group. All 4-H entities are expected to operate within the framework of the 4-H program by following 4-H and Extension policies and procedures. Included is the expectation that entities will show progress toward a diverse membership.

Once chartered, the charter generally remains in effect for the duration of the club's existence. However, if a 4-H entity does not operate within 4-H and Extension guidelines, then the charter can be revoked. Revocation of the charter generally involves Extension administrators, comes after significant controversy, and is an action taken as a last resort. A charter should be revoked in writing so that the group is officially notified that they are no longer associated with 4-H and no longer permitted to use the 4-H name and emblem.

School enrichment groups, short-term groups, and camps/day camps generally are not chartered. An individual family cannot be considered a club and is therefore not chartered.





To issue a charter to a 4-H club/group:

1. The 4-H agent should prepare a charter using the official USDA charter template.
2. Add club information to the fillable template. Print the charter certificate and give or mail a copy to the primary leader of the club/group. This can be done as a ceremony, explaining to members the significance of the charter and the importance of following 4-H rules.
3. Inform the club/group's volunteers and members of their responsibility to use the 4-H name and emblem according to the federal guidelines and to follow the policies and rules of 4-H and the Cooperative Extension Service.
4. County 4-H Agents are responsible for keeping a continuous list of all chartered clubs/groups in your county. 4-H Online is the appropriate place to document this.
5. Federal guidelines require the State 4-H Department to maintain a list of chartered clubs. All counties have the charter feature in 4-H Online.

If a chartered entity no longer exists:

Go to 4-H Online and follow the appropriate procedure to indicate that a club no longer exists.

To revoke a charter:

If an entity does not operate within the guidelines of 4-H, then the charter should be revoked. Revocation of the charter generally comes after significant controversy and action is taken as a last resort. The best method of revoking a charter is to do so in writing so that the group is officially notified that they are no longer associated with 4-H and no longer permitted to use the 4-H name/emblem. Keep notes of action and a copy of the letter revoking the charter in a file in the Extension office to serve as documentation of this action.

Marketing and Branding:

Kentucky 4-H should strive to increase awareness and promote a positive brand perception of its programs. This should be through consistent and proper use of the University of Kentucky and 4-H branding, visual and ADA guidelines. Sharing successes or marketing products should be done thoughtfully through social media and print media to ensure all stakeholders are included in the information dissemination.

Risk Management:

The following information is from the County Extension Office Manual - County Office Procedures- Risk Management website where complete directions are found.

It is the responsibility of all Cooperative Extension Service employees to be aware of factors in program implementation, event planning, volunteer management, facility ownership, and other situations that could cause injury to participants and spectators and damage to the organization, the reputation of Extension and its Cooperative Extension Service volunteer organizations. When planning an event or activity, take time to consider the potential risks, utilize best practices for risk management, and develop a risk management plan. Be sure to follow the established guidelines identified in this





document. If you have additional questions, contact either your Area Director (for county events) or the state specialist coordinating the event (for state events).

Volunteer Eligibility:

Individuals are eligible to apply to become an accepted volunteer with Kentucky 4-H in the county in which they live, work, or their dependents live or attend school. Individuals who are accepted volunteers and wish to volunteer outside of the county in which they are accepted must receive approval from the County 4-H Councils and Extension Agents with 4-H responsibilities in both counties. Exceptions to this policy should be submitted to both County 4-H Councils and Extension Agents with 4-H responsibilities. Volunteers that have been dismissed or are not in good standing in a county will generally be ineligible to volunteer in another county. Exceptions may be requested through the Extension Agent with 4-H responsibilities by contacting the Area Extension Director and the state Volunteer Specialist.

Eligibility to Volunteer for Kentucky 4-H Program (state level):

All individuals (both youth and adults) serving in volunteer roles on the state level for any 4-H programs, projects, events, or activities, must have completed the entire screening process and been accepted as a volunteer in their county, must have an active volunteer file, be in good standing, and must not have been released as a volunteer.





Chapter 3: 4-H Program Design and Delivery

This section provides an overview of the design and delivery of 4-H programs.

Core Program Areas

All Kentucky 4-H opportunities are categorized into seven core program areas with supporting research-based resources available to advance opportunities for youth.

- Agriculture
- Communication and Expressive Arts
- Family and Consumer Sciences
- Health and Well-being
- Leadership
- Natural Resources
- Science, Engineering and Technology

Core Program Areas Action Plans

Each core program area will have an action plan that will address the critical issues, situation, public value, long-term, intermediate, and immediate outcomes, and deliverables. Additionally, the action plans will include ways to incorporate essential skill development.

4-H Essential Skills

Kentucky 4-H provides education and development opportunities for youth to grow in the following essential skill sets that contribute to the growth of 21st Century Skills:

- Communication
- Leadership
- Civic Engagement

Regardless of the core program area these essential skills should be integrated into all learning opportunities and experiences.

University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service Priority Areas

Through a statewide assessment initiated in the fall of 2018, the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service strove to gain a better understanding of the needs and priorities facing communities in Kentucky. Utilizing the results, the University of Kentucky and Cooperative Extension Service will align resources to improve services and partnerships in response to the priority needs of each county. Kentucky 4-H will highlight programs to address priority areas.

Approved 4-H Curriculum

Kentucky 4-H has designated curriculum for each of the core program areas to utilize in programming. The designated curriculum has been vetted by 4-H professionals and approved for use. Curriculum is research-based, produced by the land-grant system or a reliable source.





Commitment to Professional Development

The state 4-H office will work to provide a broad portfolio of professional development opportunities throughout the year for 4-H professionals and stakeholders. Professional development opportunities will meet the standards of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service Program and Staff Development and the positive youth development field of work. Minimum attendance, location, requirements for attendance, and system needs will be evaluated independently for each opportunity.

The 4-H PRKC (Professional, Research, Knowledge, Competency) is organized around six domains and related competencies: youth development; youth program development; volunteerism; access, and opportunity; partnerships; and organizational systems. Competencies are described as proficiencies or specific skills and behaviors that are necessary for being an effective youth development professional. Each competency is defined in terms of how it reflects your understanding and proficiency. These domains create a framework for professional competencies vital to the success of the 4-H professional.

Growing together: 4-H Professional, Research, Knowledge and Competencies 2017. (2017).
<https://www.nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resources/4-H%20PRKC%202017%20Guide.pdf>

Planning for professional development using 4-H PRKC self-assessment. (n.d.).
<https://www.nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resources/4-H%20PRKC%202017%20Self-Assessment.pdf>

Guidance for Expansion and Review of 4-H Programming

Each county is required to have a 4-H Expansion and Review Committee. The function of this committee is to identify opportunities to make 4-H involvement more accessible to all youth. The committee should recognize and recommend ways to minimize barriers for all. The committee should have a link with the overall 4-H Council and County Extension Council.

Membership of Committee:

- The total membership of the committee will vary based on county needs, at least five individuals from different families.
- Must be geographically representative from throughout the county.
- Must include 1/3 young people (recommended 4-H age: 14-18 years old).

Functions of Committee:

- Must have a separate meeting time and listing, recommended annually.
- Minutes must reflect:
 - close examination of 4-H participation
 - review of map of membership/involvement analyzing access gaps of 4-H enrollment based on geography, transportation, and cost.





- The minutes of the committee will be kept on file in the county office.
- The membership list will be maintained in the minutes of the annual meeting of the committee which will be kept in the county.
- The Expansion and Review Committee will provide the Extension Agent responsible for 4-H programs recommendations to adjust operations to increase access to 4-H for all.
- The Extension Agent responsible for 4-H programming will document programmatic efforts on work from recommendations of the committee in the county.
- Area Extension Directors and the State 4-H Office should be utilized for questions and as resources regarding this process.

Delivery Modes

- **Club:**
An organized group of youth who meet throughout the year and elect officers. To be considered an organized club there must be at least five members from different families and three elected officers (President, Vice President, Secretary). Each program year the club should have a minimum of six hours of educational instruction in at least five meetings with the officers presiding. There are three types of 4-H clubs: a) community clubs which meet at times when youth are not in school; b) in-school clubs which meet during school hours; c) project clubs which focus on a specific area of interest.
- **Special Interest/Short-Term Programs:**
A group of youth who participate in a series of learning experiences on a topic of special interest. The group may meet several times but perhaps not throughout the year.
- **Camp:**
A group of youth who participate in overnight or day camp.
- **School Enrichment:**
Classrooms of youth who participate in 4-H as part of the school curriculum.
- **Individual Study:**
Individual youth who participate in 4-H, but do not affiliate with a 4-H club/group.
- **After-School:**
The direct and indirect support of educational programming available to children and youth in grades K – 12 that takes place outside the regular school day whether in a structured childcare facility or another setting (i.e. school campus, church, community center, etc.), specifically during the hours directly following the school day.

Evaluation and Sharing Impact

Evaluation using National 4-H Common Measures and other statewide standardized indicators, focusing on educational outcomes and impacts, will be conducted by the 4-H system. 4-H will evaluate the depth and breadth of program impact through these evaluation practices, implementing the six-hour minimum standard of engagement.





Evaluation will be shared as appropriate to contribute to the creation of success stories, priority indicators, grant reports, or other reports as needed.

The state 4-H program will produce an annual report each year to share the impact of the overall program.

County Programming Expectations

Every county is required to incorporate the following to ensure a quality program. 4-H programs will be driven by local needs. 4-H agents will use the following expectations in developing high-quality local programming. The State 4-H Office will provide resources and opportunities for these expectations to be met. These will be evaluated yearly through the Performance Appraisal Process (Major Job Responsibility: Programming) utilizing data from 4-H Online and the Kentucky Extension Reporting System.

- **Progressive Experiences:**
4-H opportunities should be designed to promote long-term involvement in 4-H, encouraging participation by a pathway through the advancement of skills (beginner, intermediate, advanced) and levels of experience (county, area, region, state, national, and international).
- **4-H Camp:**
All counties are required to attend 4-H Camp and meet their minimum camp attendance requirement. Agents are encouraged to utilize the camp program as a recruitment and marketing tool throughout the year to generate involvement in all aspects of programming, creating a cohesive pathway for involvement through the various delivery methods.
- **Volunteer Engagement:**
Volunteers support the advancement of 4-H and the access to opportunities for young people. 4-H programs should include volunteers in a variety of roles to expand the reach of 4-H. Each county is asked to report volunteer involvement through Priority Indicators as well as 4-H Online.
- **Integrated Programming:**
4-H programming should be integrative, working across the core program areas to deepen learning outcomes. Opportunities should be intentionally designed to develop content knowledge and incorporate the essential 4-H skills of communication, civic engagement, and leadership.
- **Access to 4-H:**
Based on the county's needs and the continued evaluation of programming 4-H professionals should work to minimize barriers for participation. A variety of programming offered through various delivery modes and core program areas should be offered based on the county's needs. The more delivery modes and core program areas used, the more access to 4-H participation you create.





Chapter 4: Volunteer Administration

The GEMS Model of Volunteer Administration (Culp, Deppe, Castillo, & Wells, 1998) provides the research base and framework for 4-H youth development. GEMS is an acronym of the four categories of volunteer administration: *generating*, *educating*, *mobilizing*, and *sustaining*.

Generating

Generating 4-H members, volunteers, and leaders is an important component of 4-H Youth Development. The first step in generating is to conduct a community *needs assessment*. The information gathered in the needs assessment is used to *develop positions*. Position descriptions articulate the general purpose of the role and the specific responsibilities of the position. *Identifying* and following a *recruitment* plan for both 4-H members and volunteers ensures that your 4-H program, its members, and volunteers remain strong, viable, healthy, and active. After potential volunteers have been identified and recruited, they must be *screened* using Extension's Client Protection Process. After screening, the most qualified applicants are *selected* for volunteer service to the 4-H program.

Educating

Educating members, volunteers, and leaders is an important component of 4-H youth development. Once an organization has generated new members, volunteers, and leaders, it is essential to begin the process of educating them. Educating includes developing personal leadership skills and providing information about the specific role, duties, and responsibilities that they have accepted.

The four components involved in educating members, volunteers, and leaders include *orienting*, *protecting*, *resourcing*, and *teaching*. *Orienting* provides an overview of the organization, its programs, and policies. In *protecting*, volunteers learn about risk management, resolving conflicts, and managing behavior. *Resourcing* provides human, educational, financial, and technological resources. *Teaching* develops specific skills and knowledge to assist volunteers in carrying out their responsibilities.

Educating adds stability to Extension and 4-H, empowers volunteers to represent, serve, and lead, improves retention, and extends the outreach of Extension and 4-H to audiences who would otherwise be unserved.

Mobilizing

To effectively serve 4-H and communities, 4-H volunteers, leaders, and members must be mobilized to action. Mobilizing is the key component of a volunteer program and is the step in which service, leadership, and action all begin. Mobilizing consists of three steps including *engaging*, *motivating*, and *supervising*.





Engaging involves calling volunteers to action by appealing to individual interests and the needs of the organization and its programs. *Motivating* involves identifying and tapping personal interests, needs, and stimuli. *Supervising* provides guidance from the 4-H Agent or master volunteers to ensure positive results, effective volunteer involvement, and achieving the responsibilities of the volunteer role.

Sustaining

Sustaining volunteers adds stability, credibility, and continuity to 4-H by building the learning experiences which will be celebrated and define the culture of the organization. Sustaining volunteers benefits 4-H members by strengthening and extending the relationship that they have developed with the organization, its programs, and Extension staff. Sustaining volunteers also amplifies the learning outcomes of youth through high-quality programming.

Sustaining consists of five steps including *evaluating*, *recognizing*, *retaining*, *redirecting*, and *disengaging*. *Evaluating* is necessary to determine if organizational, programmatic, and volunteer goals are being met. *Recognizing* acknowledges the accomplishments and contributions the volunteers made to the 4-H program and its members. After *recognizing*, volunteers have three options; *retained* to continue service to 4-H in the same volunteer role for another year, *redirected* to a different 4-H volunteer role, or *disengaged* from 4-H volunteer service. However, the 4-H agent's role is essential in determining the most appropriate option. An agent should never assume that the volunteer will be retained in the role; the volunteer should be recognized for his or her contribution and service, and then asked to continue serving for another year (if the agent wants the volunteer to continue serving).

Disengagement is a natural component of all relationships. Agents should make this phase as positive and smooth as possible. Agents should plan for 4-H membership turnover, volunteer disengagement, and leadership succession.

Volunteer Resource, Knowledge, and Competency (VRKC) Taxonomy

The VRKC taxonomy (Culp, McKee, & Nestor, 2006) identifies competencies that volunteers need to deliver 4-H programs and activities. VRKC provides 4-H professionals with direction related to the levels of competency and the needs of 4-H volunteers.

VRKC is expressed in six domains: *Communications*, *Organization*, *4-H Program Management*, *Educational Design & Delivery*, *Positive Youth Development*, and *Interpersonal Skills*. VRKC provides agents with a volunteer administration framework. Agents may focus on one domain annually or may assess volunteer needs and tailor a specific volunteer development plan, based upon VRKC. Opportunities to support volunteer development will be provided through the year.





Volunteer Certification

Some volunteer roles have additional requirements based on the level of risk and the educational needs of their project areas. Volunteer roles requiring certification include shooting sports (all disciplines) and animal sciences [livestock (beef, sheep, swine, goat, meats, and country ham), dairy, horse, poultry, rabbit, and dog]. Certification is required for all volunteers working in these project areas. Certified volunteers receive enough curriculum to lead their clubs and provide enough educational content for several years. To attend volunteer certification, individuals must have completed the volunteer screening protocol, volunteer orientation, and been accepted as volunteers in their county.

Volunteer Accreditation

Volunteer Accreditation is offered in each of Kentucky's seven core program areas, plus camp and Cloverbuds. Accreditation provides additional education and development opportunities for those individuals that want a more in-depth understanding and background of their core program area. Accredited volunteers receive sufficient program planning materials and curriculum to lead their project clubs for two program years. Accreditation is currently offered during the even-numbered years at the Kentucky Volunteer Forum.

Management of Certified and Accredited Volunteers

The database of certified and accredited 4-H volunteers will be managed through 4-H Online by the county. The state 4-H department will generate enrollment lists of certified and accredited volunteers by county twice throughout the year (October 1 and February 28) to maintain accuracy, communicate upcoming educational opportunities, changes to core program areas, and provide the yearly programmatic update generated by the state 4-H department for all leaders.

Yearly 4-H Programmatic Update for All Volunteers

Each program year the state 4-H department will produce a yearly update for all volunteers which will include general information that can be utilized by volunteers implementing programming. This update will include trends in positive youth development, major changes within the program, updates to processes, promotion of opportunities, etc. This will be produced and available for dissemination in a variety of mediums, the county 4-H program will be able to utilize this resource as they maintain education of their volunteer base.





Chapter 5: 4-H Progressive Experiences

This section focuses on the progressive experiences of a 4-H member. The depth and breadth of 4-H involvement led to youth thriving.

Focus on Progressive Experiences

Kentucky 4-H Youth Development teaches invaluable life skills and focuses on progressive experiences. The “learn by doing” approach utilizes project work experiences that build upon one another over time (National 4-H Learning Work Group, 2016).

4-H learning experiences are connected in active, progressive learning pathways. Experiences are designed with the end in mind, so that each experience builds on the last. Learning experiences are designed for frequency and duration that build learning over time. Learning pathways spark youth interest, deepen their learning, and sustain their growth. 4-H learning pathways provide hands-on, real-world learning that takes place in community and provides young people opportunities to develop relationships, skills, and leadership. They focus on contribution - young people learn by doing for themselves and for others. Pathways may be different for each young person. The learning purpose, goals, and outcomes of these pathways are determined in partnership by everyone involved (National 4-H Learning Work Group, 2016).

Kentucky 4-H progressive experiences start at the beginner level and transition to the intermediate level and then advanced level.

Depth and Breadth of Involvement

The intensity, duration, and breadth of youth involvement provide a more meaningful way to assess youth engagement in a program (Arnold, 2018). The longer a youth member is involved in a program or activity at a deeper level, the greater the developmental outcomes. In Kentucky 4-H, we interpret this as at least six hours of educational instruction through the high-quality program design of positive youth development programs. Youth showcasing their work through a cumulative experience in 4-H will be engaged in at least six hours of educational instruction in the core program area in which they are demonstrating their work.

Advancement of Skills

A hallmark of 4-H is the focus on developmentally appropriate opportunities for young people to engage in hands-on experiences. Although 4-H will provide opportunities at the beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels it is imperative to take into consideration the various needs of a young person.

- **Beginner-level:**
4-H experiences should prepare a young person with the skills needed to advance within their interest area, building a solid foundation for progressive work in 4-H.





- Intermediate-level:
4-H experiences should build upon beginner-level knowledge, advancing a young person's skills within their interest area along with contributing to progressive work.
- Advanced-level:
4-H experiences should allow young people the opportunity to practice skills they have developed through their 4-H work, mastering concepts at a deeper level and contributing as leaders in their area of interest.

Certain characteristics are common to children at each age level. Although children differ in the rate at which they develop, the order of the stages does not vary. While it is extremely important to remember that every child is unique and special in his or her own right, some needs and interests are universal to all children to ensure successful development (Iowa State University, 2006).

There are exceptions to those opportunities. For example, some projects are written for specific ages. Additionally, consider the following when guiding a 4-H member in selecting a project: (a) interests, needs, and capabilities of the young person, (b) opportunity for sufficient challenge and growth, (c) family situation, (d) availability of adequate financing, (e) availability of equipment and space, and (f) availability of leadership for the project (Oklahoma 4-H Volunteer Development Series, 2020).

Defining Levels of Experience

All experiences planned by Kentucky 4-H must follow client protection protocol and risk management guidelines - refer to County Extension Manual. Experiences are implemented at the discretion of county needs, employee capacity, and available resources. The following are best practices.

- County:
Experiences that should be representative of the county's needs. All county level experiences are planned and implemented by county personnel/volunteers. Participants should be members and/or volunteers from the county.
- Multi-county:
Experiences that typically have at least two counties participating. Counties do not have to be in the same area or region.
- Area grouping:
Experiences that typically have at least two counties participating. Counties are in the same area grouping.
- Regional:
Experiences that take place within one region and are representative of the region's needs.
- Multi-regional:
Experiences that typically have representation from more than one region, but not the entire state.





- State:
Experiences that typically include participation from all regions across the state.
- National:
Experiences that should be approved by the Assistant Extension Director for 4-H Youth Development, Area Extension Director, and Regional Extension Director. Youth participating in national experiences must be active members in the county they live in or go to school in. Volunteers participating in national experiences on behalf of Kentucky 4-H must be an approved volunteer in good standing.
- International:
Experiences that must be approved by the Assistant Extension Director for 4-H Youth Development, Area Extension Director, and Regional Extension Director. Youth participating in international experiences must be active members in the county they live in or go to school in. Volunteers participating in international experiences on behalf of Kentucky 4-H must be an approved volunteer in good standing.

Evaluation of State Level 4-H Programming

The State 4-H Department will utilize these recommended guidelines when evaluating state level programming and projects: (1) ten percent of counties in Kentucky participating statewide (i.e., at least twelve counties must be represented at program/event), (2) representation from each of the three Extension regions (west, central, and east), and (3) overall financial implications of the program/event, and The guidelines will be evaluated based on the 3-year average paying close attention to trend of decline or growth. The goal is to intentionally produce high-quality positive youth development programs that meet the needs and trends of the state. Final decisions approved by the Assistant Extension Director for 4-H Youth Development.

When adding programming the State 4-H Department will determine the capacity of implementation and need across the state through work with 4-H agents, volunteers, and youth. The guidelines within the *Kentucky 4-H Program Quality Guide* will be utilized to design and deliver programming intentionally and of high-quality. Final decision approved by the Assistant Extension Director for 4-H Youth Development.





Chapter 6: 4-H Camp

The Kentucky 4-H Camping Program is one of the hallmark experiences provided through 4-H. This section describes the structure and expectations of 4-H Camp participation for local 4-H programs. Kentucky 4-H Camps are American Camping Association Accredited and follow all guidelines and policies of ACA, the University of Kentucky, federal and state laws.

Planning

- **Camp Scheduling:**
Camp dates are determined by the county Agents responsible for 4-H Camp. The order in which counties choose their camp dates is determined by each camping group's 3-year bed count. The camping groups with the highest 3-year bed count choose their dates first.
- **Camping Groups:**
Camping groups are made up of multiple counties who attend 4-H Camp on the same dates. The maximum number of counties that can attend together is 6.
- **Camp Fees & Scholarships:**
Camp Fees are determined by a Camp Advisory Committee that includes Agents representing all 24 program areas, with input by the Camp Financial Oversight Committee which includes Extension Specialists, Agents, 4-H Foundation Employees, and Volunteers. Scholarship funds are overseen by individual county extension offices and help supplement the fees for their camp participants.

Orientation and Training

- **Volunteers:**
Must undergo a thorough criminal background check and National Sex Offender screening. They must attend mandatory training prior to serving in their role at 4-H Camp which may include in-person, virtual, and hybrid sessions.
- **Extension Staff:**
Professional development opportunities are held annually for Extension Staff with 4-H Camp responsibilities. In these in-services, the Camp Agent Mentor Program team trains agents on camper recruitment, training volunteers, camp policies, procedures, paperwork, fundraising, camp planning, and more.
- **Professional Development of Camp Leadership Team (CLT):**
The Camp Leadership Team is made up of Specialists, Camp Directors, and Program Coordinators who attend various regional and national conferences annually that are hosted by the American Camp Association. At these conferences, the CLT attends workshops on topics such as camp health and safety, supervision and screening, mental health support, facility operations, foodservice, and more.





Camp Enrollment and Retention

- **Population Tiers and Minimum Attendance Requirement:**
Kentucky counties are placed into one of eight tiers based on the population of camp age youth in their county. Each tier has a minimum camp attendance requirement that Agents are responsible for meeting.
- **Tracking Retention:**
The quality and value of a camping program can be evidenced by the youth retention rate. Returning campers should out pace first-time campers. This demonstrates not only the positive experience of the camper but also the confidence parents have in the 4-H Camp program to deliver a safe, high-quality, educational, and fun experience for their youth.
- **Utilizing Camp 365:**
This is a philosophy in which we intentionally embed 4-H camp into all 4-H operations and programming, utilizing it as a benefit year-round. It is encouraged to utilize camp facilities throughout the year for programs and events such as environmental education camp, teen retreats, special events, volunteer training, and professional development in-services. Additionally, agents are encouraged to utilize the camp program as a recruitment and marketing tool throughout the year to generate involvement in all aspects of programming, creating a cohesive pathway for involvement through the various delivery methods.





Chapter 7: Kentucky 4-H Foundation, Inc.

The Kentucky 4-H Foundation, Inc. is the fundraising arm of Kentucky 4-H. This section explains the role of the Kentucky 4-H Foundation, Inc. and how their intentional focus on fundraising opportunities for Kentucky 4-Hers is imperative to providing opportunities for all through 4-H.

All information regarding the Kentucky 4-H Foundation, Inc. can be found at:

<https://kentucky4hfoundation.org/wp/>

Mission and Purpose

- **Mission Statement:**
Funding Opportunities for Kentucky's 4-H Youth
- **Purpose:**
The Kentucky 4-H Foundation is an independent 501c3 organization dedicated to the financial support of the Kentucky 4-H Youth Development Program. The Foundation is a partner of the University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment and the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, 4-H Youth Development.

Organizational Structure

- **Board of Directors:**
Comprised of membership representing the interest of the entire state; adult volunteers; youth members including the current and past 4-H State Presidents; the President of KAE4-HA; and two ex-officio voting members including the Associate Dean/Associate Director of University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, and the Assistant Director of 4-H Youth Development University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.
- **Paid Staff:**
Executive Director, Director of Advancement, Support Staff, Interns (as determined by need and vote of Board of Directors)

Funding Opportunities

- **Annual Fund:**
We utilize contributions to the Annual Fund to provide Kentucky 4-H programs, events, and special initiatives.
- **Programs:**
You can choose to give directly to any of the many Kentucky 4-H programs. Your gift will go directly to the designated program account.
- **Endowments:**
This gift will last a lifetime!





Events

- **Emerald Gala:**
The Foundation's premier fundraising and recognition event. The event showcases the outstanding accomplishments of Kentucky 4-Hers and celebrates the year's top 4-H honorees – Emerald Award Winners.
- **Alumni:**
Alumni events are hosted throughout the year to reconnect with fellow alumni and the organization.

Financial Assistance

- **Ag Mini Grants:**
For county and club level projects and activities that are agriculture related. The grants require a dollar-for-dollar cash match, in-kind match will not be accepted.
- **Ag Tag:**
Partnership program between Kentucky 4-H, FFA, and Kentucky Proud where farmers can donate \$10 when renewing their agriculture tags for their vehicles. The 4-H portion of the donation is split between the counties where the funds originated and the Kentucky 4-H Foundation; meaning 50% of all donations stay in the county to fund local programs and activities. The Foundation's share is used to support state-level programs that many 4-H members participate in.
- **4-Hers Helping 4-Hers Relief Fund:**
Fund to support 4-H members through major disasters such as a flood, tornado, loss of home due to fire, or serious illnesses. Donations made to the fund will be disbursed to meet the needs of 4-Hers and their families. Disbursement of these funds will be determined by the Kentucky 4-H Foundation along with Extension Staff.

Scholarships

- **High School:**
Twelve total high school scholarships are awarded each year. Applicant must be a high school graduate in the year applying, be a full-time Kentucky resident, an active KY 4-H member for at least two years, must attend a post-secondary academic or vocational institution in Kentucky, and be a full-time student. A completed scholarship application and all supporting materials must be e-mailed to be eligible.
- **College:**
Two college scholarships are awarded each year. Applicant must be a 4-H alumnus who has completed at least one year of college or technical school. A completed scholarship application and all supporting materials must be e-mailed to be eligible.



