

4-H Youth Development Volunteer Selection Process

Overview

The purposes of the WVU Extension Service 4-H Youth Development Program's volunteer selection process are:

- to provide a safe atmosphere for youths involved in Extension activities, and
- to select and place qualified volunteers for 4-H youth activities.

This volunteer selection process was developed and implemented for the following reasons:

1. The WVU Extension Service should provide a safe environment for 4-H youths participating in its programs.
2. Recruitment, retention, and motivation of skilled volunteers often depend on the careful match of a volunteer to an appropriate educational role.
3. Adults who are building resumes for work or recognition need evidence that they were selected as a person appropriate to work directly with youths.
4. Courts are finding employers liable for negligent hiring of employees and volunteers.
5. Extensive media coverage has enhanced society's awareness of child abuse. Because of the concerns surrounding this issue, most major youth-serving agencies have instituted selection processes.

The WVU Extension Service 4-H Youth Development Program's process for selecting adult volunteers consists of the following:

- **an application form for 4-H youth development program volunteers**
- **reference forms (sent by mail, email or used during phone or face-to-face interviews)**
- **interview questions and report for agent or volunteer recruiter to use with volunteer applicant**
- **check of the National Sexual Predator Website**
- **Criminal Background check conducted every three years**
- **Yearly signed CODE OF CONDUCT**
- **Yearly completed Children on Campus with successful completion of the quiz and certification.**

Information gathered during the process will be kept on file in the WVU Extension county office and used to:

- establish a system of recruitment and selection of qualified volunteers for 4-H youth development programs
- match volunteers to jobs needed
- provide basic accurate information, including correct name and address, for each volunteer
- identify areas for volunteer orientation and training
- provide information that might be used to assist the volunteer; e.g., letters of reference, recommendations for awards, and recognition

Who should be screened?

Effective October 1, 2014, any new adult volunteer, 18 years or older, who will work directly with youths will be screened before being officially appointed to assist with any 4-H youth development program. Extension staff works with cooperating agencies, organizations, and schools to ensure that volunteers are appropriately screened.

- **Any volunteer who work with the following: KIDS, CASH, CARS, KEYS MUST complete the volunteer selection process.**

If WVU Extension collaborates with another group(s) or organization(s) to recruit volunteers, then WVU-ES representatives must discuss and document selection procedures with the cooperators. If WVU-ES is the leader of record for a program, then this selection process shall be used.

If a volunteer drops out of the 4-H youth development program for one year or more and then wishes to reenter as a volunteer, he or she must complete the application process.

Exempted from this policy are episodic volunteers. These are volunteers who work under the direct supervision of or in the presence of a screened volunteer or Extension employee for a brief period. Examples might include judges, workshop presenters, guest speakers, and members of such service groups as Rotary and Kiwanis.

Who should do the screening?

In each county, one person shall handle the screening of all 4-H youth development volunteers. In counties, this will be the Extension agent who has youth development responsibilities or their designee. In some counties, a program assistant, office manager/secretary or key leader may be selected to be the volunteer recruitment coordinator. The volunteer recruitment coordinator and Extension agent will receive training in the following areas:

- selection process
- orientation
- purpose of volunteer selection
- rationale for volunteer selection
- confidentiality procedures
- official record-keeping
- procedures for volunteer screening
- applicant interviewing procedures
- training documentation methods
- special-needs youths
- other areas deemed appropriate

Official records

Completed records will be maintained in a secured, individual, confidential file in the county Extension office. For each volunteer who works directly with 4-H youth development programs, the following will be on file:

- 1. Application form;**
- 2. Reference forms completed by mail, email and/or written responses to questions asked in a telephone interview; dated and signed by the agent or agent designee;**
- 3. Notes from the personal interview, if held; dated and signed by the agent; and**
- 4. Signed Code of Conduct**
- 5. Documentation of National Sexual Predator website check.**
- 6. Children on Campus certification yearly.**
- 7. Documentation of cleared background check**
- 8. Letter of appointment.**

For applicants not selected, items 1 through 3 will be on file with the letter of rejection.

- ❖ **Access to the files should be limited to trained Extension staff.**
- ❖ **The Freedom of Information Act allows the individual to see his or her file within 24 hours, after you receive a written request. Please note, however, that by signing the application form, the applicant waives any right to review reference materials. Therefore, you may wish to keep reference letters and comments in a separate envelope marked “For agent’s eyes only.”**
- ❖ **Files on active volunteers will be kept indefinitely.**
- ❖ **For inactive volunteers—with less than three years of service—files will be kept for three years.**
- ❖ **For inactive volunteers—with more than three years of service—files will be kept for five years.**
- ❖ **For volunteer applicants not selected for service—files will be kept for five years.**

Volunteer service descriptions will assist WVU-ES staff in matching the volunteers to particular jobs. The descriptions will also be a useful addition to the volunteer's file.

Volunteer service descriptions: Volunteers require a clear and current description of the duties and responsibilities that they are expected to perform for the WVU Extension Service. Volunteer descriptions are used as a guide in determining whether a position is needed and whether the volunteer requires additional screening and training. The volunteer duties are representative of typical roles and jobs done in similar capacities across the state.

Volunteer Screening Procedures

The selection process includes using the volunteer application form, receiving two personal references, and conducting a personal interview when necessary, a signed code of conduct and a check of the WV State Police Sexual Predator Website. A completed application, signed code of conduct, check of the WV State Police Sexual Predator Website and the two reference checks regarding ability and suitability to work with youths are mandatory. An interview will be held at the discretion of the Extension agent or volunteer recruitment coordinator.

1. Prospective volunteers will be given an application to complete and return to the WVU Extension office. Applications are available on the Web (www.wvu.edu/~exten/infores/pubs/fyres/volunteer_application.pdf), at the Extension office, or from the volunteer recruitment coordinator in each county.
2. No one will be excluded from applying for volunteer positions. The screening process will help match volunteers to particular jobs. Some people might not be selected.
3. The volunteer recruiter needs to be sensitive to all types of people who may have skills the WVU Extension Service can use. The recruiter may need to establish different ways of gaining the needed information.
Example: If a prospective volunteer has low literacy skills, the volunteer recruiter may need to become familiar with the application questions so that during an interview with the potential volunteer, the recruiter can complete the application form on his or her behalf.
4. Applications are returned to the Extension office.
5. The 4-H youth development volunteer recruiter will contact—by mail, email or phone—the people named as references. (See reference section for copies of forms.)
6. The 4-H youth development agent should conduct an interview with the applicant. (See section for copy of form.)
7. If the application information, reference checks, check of the National Sexual Predator Website, criminal background check and interview are all acceptable, and there is a place for the volunteer in the organization, the youth development agent sends a letter of appointment to the applicant with a job description outlining their role as a volunteer.
8. If any part of the screening procedure produces something that may be questionable or unacceptable, additional information will need to be solicited.
 - a. If more information is required the WVU Volunteer Leadership Development and Management Specialist can contact the court system providing the information.
 - b. The agent may discuss a questionable volunteer with the WVU-ES Volunteer Leadership Development and Management Specialist, as well as the 4-H Youth Development Director.
 - c. If an agent chooses to accept a volunteer for whom there is a negative reference or other questionable matter, that decision will be noted in the volunteer's file outlining why the decision was made.
9. If an applicant is not to be appointed, a concise (not detailed) explanation must be on file. A letter must be sent to the individual explaining why he or she was not selected to be a 4-H youth development program volunteer. The letter must contain a concise explanation why the individual was not selected.

10. Keep the volunteer's file up-to-date with the application form, reference letters, interview schedule (if one), yearly signed code of conduct, check of National Sexual Predator Website, criminal background check (every three years), Children on Campus certification (yearly), and copies of letters and notes. Place job descriptions and other information in the file, as applicable.

Guidelines for determining whether to interview applicants:

- a. The volunteer will serve or work with vulnerable clientele without direct supervision (youths under 18), frail older persons, or persons with mental or physical disability.
- b. The volunteer will have access to confidential materials.
- c. The volunteer will handle funds.
- d. The volunteer is completely unknown to faculty.
- e. The volunteer is completely unknown to other volunteers.

Due Process: It is the right of participants to know in advance any rules, expectations, and standards to be followed in 4-H programs, events, and camps. They will be informed in advance of possible consequences if they fail to follow such rules, expectations, and standards. A plan or outline must be made before each event and communicated in writing.

Due Process

A volunteer may be relieved of specific duties by the WVU-ES volunteer leadership specialist or 4-H youth development director working with that volunteer when it is shown that the volunteer:

1. Does not follow WVU Extension Service program policies, guiding principles, and/or code of conduct
2. Emotionally or physically harms a young person or adult;
3. Fails to meet the volunteer service description; or
4. Is convicted of a crime.

**West Virginia University Extension Service
4-H Youth Development Volunteer Application**

Posted at Web Site

<http://extension.wvu.edu/youth-family/4h/volunteer/volunteer-overview>

4-H Volunteer Club Leader (Sample) Position Description and Agreement

Position Title: 4-H Organizational Club Leader

Term of Responsibility: 1 year minimum, but leaders are encouraged to serve for several consecutive years.

Time Commitment: Average of one hour of planning time for every one hour of club activity. Two hours each month to attend Leaders' meetings or additional training. Additional time may be committed at the discretion of the individual.

Purpose: Provides overall 4-H club leadership. Also coordinates members, parents and involves other leaders. The 4-H club organizational leader communicates with other volunteers, county 4-H faculty or staff member, club members and 4-H'ers' parents and families to maintain smooth operation of the club. Support youth, volunteers and county 4-H faculty and staff members in conducting meaningful, educational experiences to help youth grow and reach their fullest potential.

Responsibilities:

- **Commit to young people and their growth in all areas. Be dedicated to youth and be sensitive to their abilities and needs.**
 - Help members gain life skills such as decision making, problem solving, self-responsibility, accountability, communication, goal setting, citizenship, caring relationships, leadership, healthy lifestyle choices and career exploration skills in project work.
 - Encourage youth leadership through committees, demonstrations, junior leadership and individual guidance.
 - Encourage youth to learn and experiment with new ideas, techniques and skills.
 - Provide feedback to members, letting them know when they are doing a good job and advising them when they need to improve. Praise youth for the progress they make.
 - Inform and encourage members, parents and other volunteers to actively participate in 4-H opportunities.
- **Provide a safe environment for all youth.**
 - Follow all guidelines and policies of West Virginia University Extension, the West Virginia 4-H program and the county 4-H program.
- **Coordinate project activities (meetings, work sessions, demonstrations, and educational tours).**
 - Attend club meetings and activities. If unable to attend, make arrangements for another trained 4-H volunteer to oversee activities.
 - Recruit new members, including underserved youth. Seek assistance from the county 4-H faculty or staff member in designing and distributing fliers, writing news releases, etc.
 - Recruit assistant leaders, as well as project and activity leaders when needed.
 - Guide the club in setting goals, planning and carrying out activities.
 - Assist the club in evaluating activities and implementing changes when needed. Read 4-H newsletters and information from Extension and share with members, parents and other volunteers.
 - Inform members and parents of project requirements and deadlines.
 - Welcome parent's ideas, activity and project assistance, cooperation, support and attendance at 4-H activities.

- **Work closely with the County Extension Faculty and staff regarding learning activities and materials and problems encountered in your club.**
 - Encourage and ensure club members participation in county, area, state and national events.
 - Attend monthly leaders meetings and other program planning session. If you cannot attend, make arrangements to send another adult leader, a 4-H teen leader, member or parent to represent your club.
- **Collect enrollment and other information needed by Extension and adhere to deadlines.**
 - Keep county 4-H faculty member in charge of the 4-H program informed of club activities.
 - Receive permission from county faculty member in charge of overseeing the 4-H program of fundraising plans before implementation.
 - Participate in one or more volunteer development opportunities each year.
 - Work with 4-H youth and other volunteers to maintain accurate and up to date club records (minutes, treasurer's report, etc.).
 - Submit year-end financial and other reports to Extension by the deadline.

Qualifications:

- Sincere interest in working with youth and adults in the community
- Ability to communicate with youth and adults
- Ability to resolve conflict positively and constructively
- Ability to organize, plan, delegate responsibility and carry out assignments
- Time to carry out the club leader role
- Willingness to seek out resources and information
- Positive role model for youth
- Motivate and foster positive self-esteem, decision making, problem solving, responsibility, leadership, career exploration and other life skills in youth

Resources Available:

- Extension provides leader training and offers subject matter training. 4-H manuals, pamphlets, audio-visual aids, newsletters, and other resource materials are available on request. Local, regional, State and National opportunities are also available.
- Resource volunteer leaders are available to offer subject matter assistance and share past experiences as a 4-H leader.

Requirements: Volunteers must meet the following requirements before participating as a 4-H club leader.

1. Complete and return the volunteer application, Code of Conduct, 4-H Leader Job Description and Agreement.
 - Two references will be checked. (The Extension office will either contact the references by phone or will mail out forms in self-addressed, stamped envelopes to the references listed on the volunteer application.)
 - A check of the West Virginia State Police Sex Offender Website will be Conducted
2. Complete Essential Elements of Positive Youth Development Training.
3. Review West Virginia University Extension and West Virginia 4-H program policies.

Agreement:

I have read the above job description and agree to carry out the responsibilities described therein.

Signed _____ Date _____

I have discussed the volunteer responsibilities and staff support with the above signed volunteer. The Extension office and 4-H faculty and staff will provide assistance as indicated.

Signed _____ Date _____

This form should be returned to the Faculty Member/Agent or staff member in charge of 4-H in your county Extension office.

Youth Protection Policy and Guidelines

West Virginia University Extension

Screening and Training of Extension Personnel and Volunteers

1. Volunteers (age 18 and over) working directly with youth and having two or more contacts per year with youth will acknowledge by signing the WVU Extension Service 4-H Code of Conduct that they read, understand and agree to abide.
2. To be just, fair, open, and caring in relationship with others. To be non-abusive physically and verbally to 4-H/youths, volunteers, staff, and faculty of WVU-ES. To follow the rules, by not taking advantage of others. To treat others the way they want to be treated. To be a contributing and law-abiding citizen
3. To be worthy of trust, honor, and confidence, and to be a positive role model of integrity by doing the right thing even when the cost is high. WVU-ES programs do not permit dishonesty by lying, cheating, deception, or omission.

Relationship with Youth

4. Volunteers will endeavor to provide safe and healthy programs for youth. In cases of illness or injury, youth will be treated on site by an appropriate health care provider or taken to an appropriate health care provider if necessary, when a parent or guardian is not available for consultation.
5. Volunteers will not intentionally or purposefully place themselves in a position alone with a member of a vulnerable population, in a one-on-one situation, including, but not limited to sharing sleeping quarters with non-related members and/or participants.
6. Volunteer, will not, under any circumstances, physically, verbally, or emotionally abuse, or fail to provide the basic necessities of care, such as food, or shelter to members or participants
7. Volunteers will follow all guidelines as outlined in WVU Policy 49, Children on Campus. <http://employmentservices.hr.wvu.edu/r/download/191248>.

Reporting Procedures

8. According the West Virginia Code, anyone may report child abuse or neglect to the Child Protective Services, DHHR. In addition this imposes upon the persons the following legal reporting obligation: “when acting in their official or professional capacity are required to report knowledge or suspicion that a child under eighteen years of age or a physically or mentally handicapped child under age twenty-one years of age has suffered or faces a threat of suffering any physical or natural wound, injury, disability, or condition of a nature that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect of the child...”
9. Any one reporting suspected child abuse or participating in a judicial proceeding resulting from such report is immune from any civil or criminal liability they otherwise might be imposed as a result of such actions when taken in good faith.
10. A person who knowingly makes or causes another person to make a false report that alleges that any person has committed an act or omission that results in a child being an abused or a neglected child is guilty of a misdemeanor in the first degree.

11. Volunteers, Extension personnel and staff will handle suspected child abuse information in a confidential manner. Involved Extension personnel, staff and volunteers will discuss matters pertaining to suspected abuse with only the immediate supervisor and the Child Protective Service representative, or DHHR or the appropriate city or county law enforcement officer.

4-H Youth Development Reference Form

(For reference by mail or email for potential 4-H Youth Development Program volunteer)

_____ is applying to work with 4-H youths as a volunteer for the West Virginia University Extension Service and has given your name as a reference.

Individuals in volunteer positions help young people have fun while learning new skills, increasing their abilities to work together, managing their own activities, and developing into productive adults.

The 4-H Youth Development Program seeks your assistance in selecting the most qualified people to serve in volunteer roles and will appreciate your prompt completion of this reference form. All comments will be treated in a confidential manner.

How long and in what capacity or position have you known the applicant? _____

Please circle how you would evaluate the applicant's qualities, using this scale:

	E – Excellent	G – Good	F – Fair	NK – Not Known
Understanding of children	E	G	F	NK
Communication skills	E	G	F	NK
Ability to organize	E	G	F	NK
Respect for others	E	G	F	NK
Dependability	E	G	F	NK
Sense of humor	E	G	F	NK
Sense of fairness	E	G	F	NK
Enthusiasm	E	G	F	NK
Flexibility	E	G	F	NK
Patience	E	G	F	NK
Initiative	E	G	F	NK
Resourcefulness	E	G	F	NK

Please share your impression and knowledge of the applicant's qualifications for the position by using specific examples where possible. (Circle your opinion.)

1. How would you rate the applicant's general ability to work in a volunteer role with youths?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Good
 - c. Fair
 - d. Poor

Comments: _____

2. What additional skills, abilities, and attributes does the applicant have that will be helpful in this role?

3. How much experience does the applicant have in working with people who are developmentally disabled, are from different cultural backgrounds, or are from different socioeconomic backgrounds?
- a. Much experience
 - b. Some experience
 - c. Little or no experience

Comments: _____

4. How would you describe the applicant's ability to handle records and money?
- a. Very good. I would trust this person with my organization's records and money.
 - b. Fair. The person will do OK, but will need some help handling records and money.
 - c. Poor. Handling records and money is not a strong attribute of this applicant.

Comments: _____

5. How would you describe the applicant's general outlook and stability?
- a. Consistently positive and reasonable.
 - b. Usually positive, but has occasional bad moods.
 - c. Moody and hard to predict.
 - d. Consistently negative, grumpy, and unreasonable.

Comments: _____

6. Would you be willing to place your son or daughter or any other child for whom you are responsible under his or her leadership?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

Comments: _____

7. Do you know any reason why this person should NOT be considered for this volunteer position?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

If yes, please explain: _____

Signature

Date

Thank you. I appreciate your assistance in helping the West Virginia University Extension Service and the West Virginia 4-H Youth Development Program select the best-qualified people to serve in volunteer roles.

Return to: _____

Date Received: _____



4-H Youth Development Reference Form

(For telephone or face-to-face interview of potential 4-H Youth Development Program volunteer)

Reference name _____

Potential 4-H Youth Development Program Volunteer _____

Address _____ Position

Interviewed by _____ Phone _____

Date _____

_____ is applying to work with 4-H youths in the WVU Extension Service 4-H Youth Development program and has given your name as a reference. I would like to ask you some questions.

Do you have a few minutes?

Your comments will be treated in a confidential manner and will not be shared with the applicant.

1. How long have you known the applicant? _____
2. What is your relationship with the applicant? _____
3. Have you ever worked with the applicant in a (or another) volunteer capacity?

If yes, please describe.

Explain the position the volunteer will be assuming, such as club leader, activity leader, committee member, etc.

4. What strengths and weaknesses would the applicant bring to this position?

5. Please describe situations in which you have observed the applicant interacting with children.

6. Please describe experiences the applicant may have had in working with culturally diverse audiences.

7. Would you be willing to place a child for whom you are responsible under his or her leadership?

8. Do you know of any reason why this person shall not be considered for this position?

Signature of Interviewer: _____

Date: _____

Thank you! I appreciate your assistance in helping the WVU Extension Service and the WVU 4-H Youth Development Program select the best-qualified people to serve in volunteer roles.

4-H Youth Development Volunteer Interview
(For 4-H Youth Development Extension Personnel use only)

Volunteer's name _____ Position interviewed for _____

Date _____ Location _____

Name of interviewer _____ Title _____

Throughout the interview, consider how well the volunteer and the position complement each other. Consider how the volunteer listens and responds to the questions. Choose one or more appropriate questions from the following areas, as applicable.

- Leadership Skills
- ▶ What experiences have you had in working with adults and children?
 - ▶ What skills and qualifications do you have?
 - ▶ Describe how children or others would view you as a role model?
 - ▶ How do you promote teamwork?
 - ▶ How will you involve parents or other volunteers in your program?
 - ▶ What previous leadership roles have you had in other organizations?
 - ▶ What kind of rewards do you desire to stay motivated?

Comments

- Human Relations Skills
- ▶ What kind of people do you find easy to work with?
 - ▶ How do you handle conflict?
 - ▶ How would you work with an upset parent or volunteer?
 - ▶ How do you handle criticism?
 - ▶ What kind of people do you find hard to work with and how do you handle them?
 - ▶ What kind of discipline would you use with disruptive or irresponsible children, a child who deliberately defies your request for cooperation, or a child who consistently misses meetings without explanations?
 - ▶ What is your view on competition?
 - ▶ How important is winning to you?

Comments

- Affirmative Action
- ▶ What experiences have you had working with people of different backgrounds?
 - ▶ How do you feel about working with people different from yourself? For example, different racial and ethnic backgrounds, developmentally disabled, and different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Comments

- Organizational Skills
- ▶ How do you manage your time?
 - ▶ What record-keeping experience have you had?
 - ▶ What experiences have you had organizing a group of youths or adults?
 - ▶ Describe how you would help a group of youths reach a decision.

- ▶ Describe instances when you have planned or conducted meetings.
- ▶ Describe an ideal meeting.
- ▶ Are you willing to attend orientation and training sessions to assist you in your volunteer role?

Comments

- Adaptability
- ▶ How do you deal with situations that don't go as you planned?
 - ▶ What situations cause you stress and how do you deal with them?

Comments

- Dependability
- ▶ Describe one project or activity for which you had total responsibility.
 - ▶ What do you do when you are unable to complete a commitment?
 - ▶ Is there any reason that you would not be able to attend meetings/activities regularly?

Comments

- Communication Skills
- ▶ What public speaking or writing experience do you have?
 - ▶ How comfortable do you feel speaking in front of a group?
 - ▶ What makes a good listener?
 - ▶ What methods could you use to communicate with all the families in your club or project?

Comments

- Understanding 4-H
- ▶ What experiences should 4-H offer to youths?
 - ▶ What does 4-H mean to you?
 - ▶ What do you want to accomplish in 4-H?
 - ▶ Why do you want to be a 4-H volunteer?

Comments

Based on the interview, do you recommend the volunteer for this position?

- Yes No Uncertain

If no or uncertain, explain

Another position? (Specify)

- Yes No Uncertain

Action or follow-up needed

Date received

Signature of interviewer

Questions One Must Not Ask a Potential Volunteer

Anything that relates to age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, political beliefs, and marital or family status.

For example, do **not** ask:

- Are you eligible for senior citizen's benefits? When did you graduate from high school?
- I notice that you limp. Do you need special facilities such as handicapped parking? Will you be able to keep up with active children?
- Does your blond hair mean that your ancestors came from Scandinavia?
- Are you Chinese or Japanese?
- Will your religious practices prevent you from volunteering on Saturday or Sunday?
- Did you serve in Vietnam? Were you honorably discharged?
- What are your views on homosexuality?

Sample Acceptance Letter

Date:
Name:
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear,

Congratulation, I am pleased to inform you that you have been accepted as a volunteer with the WVU Extension _____ program in _____ County. We are extremely pleased you will be joining the organization as a volunteer and look forward to working with you as you share your talents with individuals, groups or organizations.

Please know that _____ County requires all new volunteers participant in a volunteer training and orientation program. Please contact the Extension office at (000-0000) to register for one of the following training/ orientation programs:

(Insert dated, times. Locations here)

Again, welcome to WVU Extension, County. I look forward to working with you as we seek to provide positive, educational programs for individuals, families, groups, and communities in _____ County.

Sincerely

Extension Agent

Sample Non- Acceptance Letter

Date:

Name:

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear,

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer with West Virginia University Extension Program in _____ County. After reviewing all information received throughout the selection process, we are unable to accept you as a volunteer with the WVU Extension _____ county program at this time.

It is our intent, throughout the selection process, to select the individuals who possess the abilities and desire to: (1) assist other in developing skills, knowledge and abilities; (2) build positive relationships with youth members or service recipients and /or adults who work with WVU Extension programs; (3) promote teamwork with other individuals, groups, organizations and the community; and (4). serve as a positive representative of WVU Extension programs.

Sincerely

Extension Agent

Cc: File,

Supervisor,

Unit leader, etc

West Virginia 4-H Volunteer Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct is a contractual agreement accepted by volunteers who commit to the 4-H program. The Code of Conduct shall guide their behavior during their involvement in West Virginia 4-H. Just as it is a privilege for the West Virginia University Extension Service to work with individuals who volunteer their time and energies to West Virginia 4-H, a volunteer's involvement in West Virginia 4-H is a privilege and a responsibility, not a right.

The West Virginia 4-H program provides quality, educational programs accessible to all West Virginia youths. The primary purpose of this Code of Conduct is to ensure the safety and well-being of all 4-H participants (members, their parents and families, professionals, and volunteers).

West Virginia 4-H volunteers are expected to function within the guidelines of the West Virginia Extension Service and the West Virginia 4-H program. West Virginia 4-H volunteers shall be individuals of personal integrity.

West Virginia 4-H volunteers will:

- Uphold volunteerism as an effective way to meet the needs of youths and adults.
- Uphold an individual's right to dignity, self-development, and self-direction.
- Accept supervision and support from professional Extension staff while involved in the program.
- Accept the responsibility to represent their individual county 4-H program and the West Virginia 4-H program with dignity and pride by being positive mentors for the youths with whom they work.
- Conduct themselves in a courteous and respectful manner, exhibit good sportsmanship and provide positive role models for all youths.
- Respect, adhere to, and enforce the rules, policies, and guidelines established by their individual county 4-H program, the West Virginia 4-H program, and the West Virginia University Extension Service.
- Not abuse any 4-H participant by physical or verbal means and will report such abuse, if observed, as outlined in the West Virginia University Extension Service Youth Protection Policy.
- Not commit a felonious criminal act.
- Comply with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws.
- Discharge duties in a responsible and timely manner.
- Promote a welcoming environment by fostering a climate based on social justice.
- Report immediately any threats to the volunteer's emotional or physical well-being to the county 4-H professional.
- Accept the responsibility to promote and support 4-H in order to develop an effective county, state, and national program.
- Handle animals and operate machinery, vehicles, and other equipment in a responsible manner.
- Social media and cell phones will be used in an appropriate and respectful manner
- Abstain from harassment or bullying of another participant, volunteer or staff member (either in person or face to face or through social media or other communication venues).

I have read and understand the Code of Conduct outlined above. I understand and agree that any action on my part that contradicts any portion of this Code of Conduct is grounds for the suspension and/or termination of my volunteer status with the West Virginia 4-H program.

Signature of 4-H Volunteer

Date

Signature of Extension Professional

Date

Sample Dismissal Letter # 1

Date:
Name
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear:

In late November, we met with you to discuss concerns regarding your actions as a 4-H volunteer. These concerns center on behavior by you that contradicts the WVU Extension code of Conduct and Guiding Principles, by which you agreed to abide when you became a 4-H volunteer. Specifically, we discussed your continued failure to:

1. follow established policies and procedures of the county 4-H program;
2. create and maintain a positive and safe environment for youth and adult volunteer participation; and
3. accept supervision and support from professional Extension staff.

Your disregard for the Cloverbud policies is particularly troublesome. The _____ Cloverbud program established very specific guidelines to promote the positive development of young children, while trying to insure their safety. In March 20__, you attended the Cloverbud Update at which time the parameters of the program were discussed. At that meeting, volunteers were directed that Cloverbud participants are not to ride horses or to take part in competitive events. Despite clear direction from Extension professionals, you have repeatedly objected to the policy and attempted to debate established program parameter.

Notwithstanding your dissatisfaction with long-standing Extension policies, you advised Extension professionals in March 20__ that your club would not offer any Cloverbud activities. Despite this assurance, you recently admitted in a phone conversation with Extension personnel that Cloverbud members participated in all of your club activities, including competition and horse activities. Your admission is in direct conflict with your earlier representation that your club would not offer Cloverbud activities. More importantly, allowing Cloverbud members to participate in these activities is in direct conflict with parameters and policies of WVU 4-H Youth Development, of which you are aware.

Your behavior and disregard for 4-H established policies is not a recent development. During your time as a 4-H volunteer, you have been involved in several inappropriate verbal altercations with other 4-H volunteers in a public forum. In an effort to resolve these incidents, Extension staff contacted you on several occasions to discuss your behavior and to reinforce with you the need for appropriate behavior from adult volunteers that fosters a positive environment for youth. Based on your most recent acts, it appears that attempts to work with you to modify your behavior have been unsuccessful.

As a result of your continuing pattern of behavior, and your flagrant disregard for Extension policies and guidelines, Extension has no choice but to terminate your status as a 4-H Youth Development volunteer with West Virginia University Extension, _____ County effective immediately. This includes, but not limited to, your participation as a 4-H volunteer/advisor in
Sample Dismissal Letter #1: page 2

the following activities: (a) 4-H club meetings; (b) county committee meetings/activities; and (c) 4-H sponsored workshop, clinics, events and activities.

If there is any additional information you would like to provide on your own behalf for our consideration, you may do so in writing within seven (7) business days after your receipt of this letter. Questions regarding this matter should be directed to _____ Extension Agent, 4-H

Sincerely

Extension Agent
4-H Youth Development

cc: File
4-H Unit Director
Volunteer Leadership & Management Specialist

**Sample
Dismissal
Letter # 2**

Date:

Name
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear:

Due to the recent findings of the _____ County Court and your guilty plea, you are dismissed as a volunteer with the _____ County 4-H program effectively immediately.

Please be advised you are not to act in the capacity as a recognized 4-H volunteer at any event in the county or state. This included, but not limited to your participation as a 4-H volunteer/advisor in the following: (a) 4-H club leaders; (b) 4-H club meetings; (c) county committee meeting/activities/projects; (d) county-wide committees; and (e) 4-H sponsored clinics, events, shows, and workshops.

Please feel free to contact our office at 000-0000 should you have questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely

Extension Agent
4-H Youth Development

cc: File
4-H Unit Director
Volunteer Leadership & Management Specialist

Sample Probation Letter

Date:

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear:

This letter is a follow-up to our meeting last fall when we discussed concerns regarding your behaviors and actions at the 20__ _____ County Junior Market Steer Show. As a result of your actions and behavior, you are being placed on probation as a 4-H volunteer, effective February 1, 2006 to February 1, 2006.

Prior to July 1, 2006 you are required to schedule a meeting with me to discuss your involvement in upcoming activities and events. Additional meetings may be scheduled at any time during the probationary period to discuss your current situation. During this probationary period, you are to:

- (1) continue to uphold the WVU 4-H Code of Conduct and Guiding Principles
- (2) support county 4-H and Junior Fair program policies, procedures, and rules;
- (3) attend at least one volunteer training opportunity offered by the county 4-H youth development program; and
- (4) attend at least one livestock quality assurance training held in _____ County prior to the 2007 County fair.

Again, thank you for meeting with us to discuss these issues. Should you have any questions about the terms outlined above, please feel free to contact our office and speak directly with me.

Sincerely

Extension Agent
4-H Youth Development

cc: File
4-H Unit Director
Volunteer Leadership & Management Specialist

Sample Suspension Letter

Date:

Name
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear:

I have received information from the _____ Police Department regarding your indictment. As a result, please be advised, that effective January 8, 20____, your status as a 4-H volunteer with the _____ County 4-H Youth Development program is being suspended. This suspension will continue to be in effect, and may be reviewed upon the outcome of the legal proceedings.

The suspension does not allow you to act in the capacity as a recognized 4-H volunteer at any event in the county or state. This includes, but not limited to your participation as 4-H volunteer/advisor in the following: (a) 4-H club meetings; (b) county leader meetings/activities; (c) 4-H sponsored events, workshops, clinics, or shows.

Please contact my office should you have any questions regarding your involvement or wish to discuss the situation.

Sincerely

Extension Agent
4-H Youth Development

cc: file
4-H Unit Program Leader
Volunteer Leadership & Management Specialist