



Becoming Involved in 4-H Volunteer Groups

There are many opportunities for 4-H volunteers to increase their involvement in the 4-H program. Becoming involved with a 4-H volunteer group can give you the chance to share your unique skills and talents beyond your club. In addition, these groups can help to support you in your role as club leader through training sessions, discussion, and involvement in county-wide events and activities. All 4-H affiliated groups must be officially chartered and also have an EIN in order to accept donations or conduct fundraising.

4-H Leaders' Association

The county 4-H leaders' association is a recognized organization of adult volunteers working together to develop and provide leadership for the 4-H program and its members. Your county's leaders' organization may have a different name, but the goals probably include most of the following:

- Identify the needs of adult volunteers.
- Share ideas and experiences.
- Plan and conduct county-wide programs and activities.
- Promote 4-H programs.
- Cooperate with other 4-H and non-4-H youth-related organizations.
- Raise funds to support the 4-H program.
- Advise the county 4-H staff on program policies and implementation.

In general, all 4-H volunteers are invited to participate in regularly scheduled leaders' association meetings and committee meetings. Membership in the association in some counties also includes parents and others interested in 4-H and youth development. Each county 4-H leaders' association operates with a set of by-laws, which includes specific information on the organization's goals, membership, policies and committee structure. A copy of the by-laws can be obtained from the county 4-H office.

Expansion and Review Committee

The county 4-H Expansion and Review Committee (ERC) is an organized group of adult and teen volunteers whose primary purpose and mission is 4-H program development. Their task is to assess the needs, concerns and interests of youth in the county; set realistic goals; and suggest ways in which 4-H can respond. This group is composed of 4-H volunteers and teens, as well as others from the community.

County Project Advisory Councils

Many counties have project advisory councils to work with certain project areas. These councils bring together adult volunteers and youth representatives from different clubs in the same project area. Their role may be to help plan and implement county-



wide events in the project area, raise funds to support the project, promote the project, and provide advice to the 4-H staff on implementing the project. Project advisory councils found in many counties include horse, livestock, and small animal.

Fair Planning Groups

There are many opportunities to become involved in the 4-H fair. Most counties have a fair association or a fair committee of the leaders' association which is responsible for planning and managing the county 4-H fair or 4-H participation in a county fair. Involvement might include fair planning, setting up and taking down, chairing committees, staffing booths, etc.

Teen Council

Most counties have a teen council for teen leaders. While names and membership requirements differ by county, the goal of most of these groups is to enable teens to come together to develop and practice leadership skills. The members often help conduct county-wide events and activities, serve in a variety of leadership roles and serve as role models to younger youth. Some counties also have a "junior council" for pre-teens interested in expanding their skills. Adult volunteers are needed to serve as leaders or advisors for these groups.

Statewide Advisory Groups

There are several statewide advisory groups which meet in support of the 4-H program. These include:

- New Jersey State 4-H Association, which meets three times a year to serve in an advisory capacity to the 4-H department, as well as to conduct some statewide programs.
- Project advisory groups, which support statewide program efforts in specific project areas, such as horse, livestock, etc.

Share Your Skills

The 4-H Program depends on volunteer participation to provide as many quality activities to 4-H'ers as possible. Think about sharing your time and talents through one or more of these organizations. To find out how you can contribute to one of these organizations, contact your county 4-H staff for more information.

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References

4-H Advisory Groups: The Basics Fact Sheet. <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=4H254>

Engaging Youth in 4-H Advisory Groups Fact Sheet. <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=4H256>

4-H Advisory Group Position Descriptions Fact Sheet. <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=4H255>

Effective 4-H Advisory Groups...A Checklist for Success Fact Sheet. <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=4H257>

For more information on New Jersey 4-H, please visit www.nj4h.rutgers.edu.

Cooperating Agencies: Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and County Boards of Chosen Freeholders. Rutgers Cooperative Extension, a unit of the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.