



Department of 4-H Youth Development
**New Jersey Policy and Procedures for Membership in a
4-H Seeing Eye Puppy Club**

Background Information

The 4-H Youth Development Department has a unique relationship with The Seeing Eye of Morristown. The goal of the Seeing Eye is to find loving, caring homes to raise Seeing Eye puppies until they return to the Seeing Eye for training (usually at 14-16 months). The Seeing Eye program is expanding, utilizing 4-H youth and adults to raise puppies. Adults provide a socialization experience for their puppies through membership and participation in 4-H clubs. Seeing Eye families in 4-H clubs find emotional support and various socialization opportunities for the puppies. While “adult members” of 4-H clubs have regular contact with youth club members they are not considered chaperones, and are never left alone with 4-H youth.

Working together with Seeing Eye, we have established guidelines for all counties to follow.

General Policy

Any adult, 18 years of age or older, who is not a registered 4-H member, but is working directly with youth or in the same setting with youth on a regular basis without the presence of paid 4-H staff must be screened prior to official enrollment as an adult member of a 4-H Seeing Eye Puppy club.

Enrolling an Adult Member of a Seeing Eye Puppy Club

Responsibilities of 4-H staff:

The county 4-H agent/program associate (referred to as county 4-H staff) will be responsible for implementing the enrollment process in a timely manner. All of the steps of the following process must be completed before official enrollment is made:

- Step 1: Each county that has a Seeing Eye 4-H dog club must have a registered volunteer leader running that club. County 4-H staff should be in regular contact with this leader.
- Step 2: Each county has a Seeing Eye Puppy Placement Area Coordinator assigned to them from Seeing Eye, Inc. County 4-H staff should be in contact with their Seeing Eye Puppy Placement area coordinator on a regular basis.
- Step 3: Potential Seeing Eye Puppy raiser is identified through self-referral, referred through club, or referred by The Seeing Eye, Inc. Two contacts must be made with this individual/family:

The Seeing Eye, Inc - Personnel of The Seeing Eye, Inc will interview potential puppy raiser who will conduct phone interviews and give the 4-H club leader information and recommend they attend Seeing Eye 4-H club meetings.

Seeing Eye 4-H Club - The 4-H club leader should contact the potential puppy raiser and discuss the club and puppy raiser responsibilities, and invite the potential puppy raiser to attend as many 4-H club meetings as possible prior to receiving a puppy. The 4-H club leader will provide the potential puppy raiser with a “Welcome Packet”.

Welcome Packet - The Welcome Packet shall consist of:

- *The Seeing Eye Application for Raising a Puppy for the Seeing Eye, Inc. (from SE)*
- *A copy of the Puppy Promise to review (from SE)*
- *4-H Membership application (from 4-H)*
 - If this is a family project and the parent is the identified puppy raiser, the parent should fill out the ***4-H Seeing Eye Puppy Club Adult Member Application.***
 - **If any of the children in the family are interested in participating in 4-H events, and they are in 1st grade and older, they should fill out the *New Member Registration Form for 4-H.*** This should be done even if they do not yet have a puppy.
 - If the adult puppy raiser is an adult without children, they are to fill out a *4-H Seeing Eye Puppy Club Adult Member Application.*

NOTE... According to Seeing Eye rules, no child under the age of 9 can be assigned as the puppy raiser. However, this project requires full family involvement and every 4-H age child in the family is encouraged to become a 4-H member so they, too can have the 4-H experience.

County 4-H Office -

Step 4: Adult members need to have 3 references. County 4-H staff checks references via phone call and verbal script, or letter and mail questionnaire. (File of references is kept confidential.). Potential puppy raisers do not need to fill out New Leader Application or attend a new leader orientation. They are not leaders and not to be trained as such. They are adult members of the 4-H club and will NOT be alone with the members at any time. They may end up receiving a puppy before the references are complete. If there are any “red flags” from the references, county 4-H staff must alert the Seeing Eye coordinator. This may include issues related to housing a puppy.

Once all paperwork and references are completed, County 4-H staff places new adult member on mailing list, and sends letter of welcome/notification to the new Seeing Eye Adult Member with a copy to The Puppy Placement Area Coordinator and 4-H club leader that the enrollment process has been completed.

Step 5: County 4-H staff will work with the 4-H Seeing Eye Puppy club leader to make sure all club members (youth and adults) are registered 4-H members. Review the updated puppy raiser list sent to the county 4-H office by Seeing Eye each fall.

Responsibilities of Seeing Eye, Inc

In addition to above, the Seeing Eye Inc. will work with the 4-H club leaders and families to complete the Seeing Eye reports for the puppies. Parts of these reports will be included in the 4-H Seeing Eye Record Book.

General information

Presentations

Seeing Eye puppy raisers are often asked to give presentations to various community groups. To participate in a State Show, all 4-H members must give a club, county, state, or national presentation. Community presentations in which the 4-H member is truly giving a demonstration or talk (as opposed to answering a few questions as people walk by a display) should be counted as a presentation that can be used to participate in the State Show.

County Fairs

The Seeing Eye Puppy Project is a 4-H project just like any other. The youth are project members and should be afforded the same member benefits as 4-H members in other clubs. This means that the 4-H Seeing Eye Clubs should be designing, and staffing exhibits at their county fairs. The youth should be given the opportunity to exhibit or show their projects at the fair.

State 4-H Shows

As with all state 4-H shows, Seeing Eye Puppy 4-H Members must be registered 4-H members by January 1 to compete in the state show. If a family receives a puppy after January 1, but the children joined 4-H prior to January 1, they will be eligible to show. If the puppy is eligible to show, but the member is not a registered 4-H member, then another registered member may show the puppy.

4-H Seeing Eye Record Book

Members must complete the 4-H Seeing Eye Record Book. This book combines information from the required Seeing Eye reports that are filled out by raisers at the 6 months and 12 months periods for the puppy, along with general 4-H record book information. Many of the forms and questions the puppy raiser needs to fill out for Seeing Eye, Inc. are on the Seeing Eye Website and must be completed by the puppy raiser and submitted electronically directly to Seeing Eye, Inc. Seeing Eye does not distribute hard copies to all the puppy raisers. Since this information is not available to the general public, Seeing Eye will provide each county 4-H office a blank copy of all the information that Seeing Eye is expecting from the puppy raisers. This information (which will also be in the 4-H Seeing Eye Record Book) is to be kept on permanent file at the county 4-H office.