



Opportunities for 4-H Volunteers

Congratulations on accepting the role of a 4-H Volunteer! As you learn more about the 4-H Youth Development Program, you will find that volunteers are valued as important resources. The 4-H program provides many opportunities that will not only help in your role as a volunteer, but may also assist in your personal or professional life.

Following is a summary of 4-H volunteer opportunities. The 4-H Motto is meant for you as well as for 4-H members as you take advantage of these opportunities "To Make the Best Better."

County Opportunities

County 4-H Volunteer Training

Every county offers training for 4-H volunteers involved in the program. This may take the form of a county-wide volunteer leader forum, local training in small groups, or one-on-one training with a paid 4-H staff member or volunteer trainer. To take advantage of county volunteer training means meeting with other volunteers in the county and learning through informal sharing and workshops.

A variety of other county opportunities are available for 4-H volunteers. See *Selecting the 4-H Volunteer Role Right for You*.

NJ Opportunities

Leader Forums

Volunteer Leader Forums draw 4-H volunteers from throughout the state to take part in educational workshops, special activities, and sharing. The cost is minimal; scholarships are often available.

State 4-H Association

The State 4-H Association works with the NJ Department of 4-H Youth Development to provide input on the direction of the 4-H program at the state level. This group initiates and implements support as needed for state and national programs that sustain the growth and development of 4-H. This group is comprised of two volunteers from each county, four youth representatives, two collegiate 4-H representatives, and several ex-officio members.

State 4-H Project Advisory Councils

Many project areas have state advisory councils that recommend rules and policies, as well as plan, conduct and evaluate educational events. Most have designated, voting representatives from each county, but meetings are open to anyone interested in attending.

Volunteers to Assist with State and Regional Events

Volunteers are always needed for special activities, as well as ongoing programs. State 4-H activities may include: advisor to the NJ 4-H State Teen Action Council, chaperone to North and South Jersey 4-H Teen Conference, judge for State 4-H Public Presentations, assistant for state 4-H horse and other animal project events, and other educational activities.



All volunteers need to be able to communicate with children and understand the philosophy of 4-H and member recognition. Depending upon the event, volunteers may need to be skilled in the subject matter of the event. Overnight activities require volunteers to complete either the 4-H volunteer appointment process or the *New Jersey 4-H Event Release Agreement Form for Adults*.

Interstate/International Exchanges

Exchange programs are exciting opportunities for 4-H members. If your county chooses to be involved in an exchange program, volunteers are recruited to host families or individuals as well as assist in overseeing the exchange process. There may also be reciprocal opportunities to be a chaperone to that state/country in the future.

Regional Volunteer Training

Northeast Regional 4-H Volunteer Forum

The goals of this forum are to give volunteers an opportunity to develop skills that will help them in their role within 4-H. Every other year, one state in the northeast region of the United States serves as host for the forum, usually held over a weekend in September or October. Volunteers attend from all Northeast states. Partial scholarships are available at the state level; some counties also offer financial support.

Chaperoning National Trips

Although opportunities vary from year to year, chaperones are needed for all youth trips. Selection for chaperones usually requires an application and interview, as well as completion of the 4-H volunteer appointment process and the *New Jersey 4-H Event Release Agreement Form for Adults*. National 4-H trips may include: *Citizenship Washington Focus*, a week-long trip to the National 4-H Youth Conference Center to learn about government and leadership; *National 4-H Youth Conference*, a week-long trip to the National 4-H Center to work in "consulting groups" and make recommendations to federal 4-H partners; *National 4-H Congress*, a leadership and community service conference held somewhere in the US; and project related trips, such as Eastern 4-H Horse Round-up, National 4-H Dairy Conference, or National 4-H Horticulture Trip.

Summary

Be sure to read your county 4-H newsletter and check both county and state 4-H websites to learn more about these and other 4-H volunteer opportunities. Your county 4-H office can provide additional information. Take advantage of these many volunteer opportunities to expand your world of 4-H beyond your county or project.

*Revised by Macy Compton and Ginny Powell.
Written by Ginny Powell.*

References

Opportunities for New Jersey 4-H Teen Members, distributed May 10, 1988 to 4-H faculty and staff, by Rita Natale Saathoff.

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.