Maryland 4-H
Volunteer Needs Assessment

This report was generated from responses to the statewide Volunteer Needs Assessment distributed through 4HOnline to all Certified University of Maryland Extension (UME) 4-H Volunteers in 2019. The survey is designed to align with the *Volunteer Research and Knowledge Competency Taxonomy (2010)*. The Volunteer Research and Knowledge Competency Taxonomy (VRKC) is a research study developed to answer the research question "What skills or competencies will volunteers need in order to effectively deliver 4-H programs and projects for the public in the next decade?"

The VRKC includes the skills and knowledge that volunteers have identified they need to be competent to perform their 4-H service. These competencies are organized into six domains listed in order of importance to volunteers:

- Communications
- Organization
- 4-H Program Management
- Educational Design & Delivery
- Positive Youth Development
- Interpersonal Characteristics

The Maryland 4-H Volunteer Needs Assessment asked volunteers to identify their level of need to develop each competency associated with the six domains on a scale of no need, low need, some need and high need. The survey was sent to 1,925 volunteers through 4HOnline on July 17 and August 7, 2019. A total of 298 responses (a 15% return rate) were received representing all 23 counties and Baltimore City.

The greatest training needs identified in the assessment, those with a combined rating of 50% or more of some to high need are **highlighted** in the following results and include:

- Marketing and Public Relations (Communication Domain)
- Delegating Tasks to Parents (Organization Domain)
- Parent Recruitment and Involvement (Organization Domain)
- Marketing and Publicity (Organization Domain)

Additional training needs with a combined rating of 40% or more of some to high need are also **highlighted** in the results.

Total submissions by county/city

Allegany	8	Carroll	32	Harford	12	Somerset	2
Anne Arundel	9	Cecil	14	Howard	17	St Mary's	3
Baltimore City	1	Charles	3	Kent	6	Talbot	3
Baltimore	14	Dorchester	4	Montgomery	14	Washington	8
Calvert	5	Frederick	17	Prince George's	5	Wicomico	3
Caroline	2	Garrett	5	Queen Anne's	3	Worcester	1

All 4-H faculty members are required to project volunteer recruitment goals and volunteer development plans in their annual Individualized Extension Plan (IEP). Therefore, the results of the Maryland 4-H Volunteer Needs Assessment were shared with the intention of the data focusing volunteer development opportunities offered at the local level. Local programs with the substantial results (at least 10 or more submissions) were provided a specific report to help tailor training and education to meet the needs of volunteers by targeting competencies identified as areas of some or high need. Those localities with low submission rates were encouraged to use the statewide results to identify potential training opportunities to offer.

Results have been used by the volunteer specialist to launch two state-wide initiatives, a volunteer refresher training and a fall 2020 volunteer development day titled *Volunteers United.*

The volunteer refresher is designed for volunteers with five or more years of service and is intended to refresh their knowledge and understanding of volunteer and 4-H expectations. It addresses the following expressed needs from the assessment:

- Organization and Structure of Extension (4-H Program Management Domain)
- Liability Awareness and Reduction (4-H Program Management Domain)
- Behavior Management (4-H Program Management Domain)
- Understanding Ages and Stages of Youth Development (Positive Youth Development Domain)

Volunteers United is a collaborative effort to provide a single volunteer development day hosted by local faculty in strategic locations across the state. It is organized and presented by the volunteer specialist in partnership with the Maryland 4-H State Council and Maryland 4-H Volunteers' Association. Training topics address the following needs from the assessment:

- Parent Recruitment and Involvement (Organization Domain)
- Delegating Tasks (Organization Domain)
- Practicing Youth-Adult Partnership (Positive Youth Development Domain)
- Ability to Motivate and Encourage youth (Positive Youth Development Domain)

These sessions will also provide an opportunity to administer the VRKC Needs Assessment to gather additional data to best serve Maryland's volunteers.

Q#1 - According to the VRKC Taxonomy, volunteers should demonstrate the ability to create, deliver and interpret information effectively through formal and non-formal means. Identify your need to develop (learn/practice) each specific skill for the **Communication** category of the VRKC.
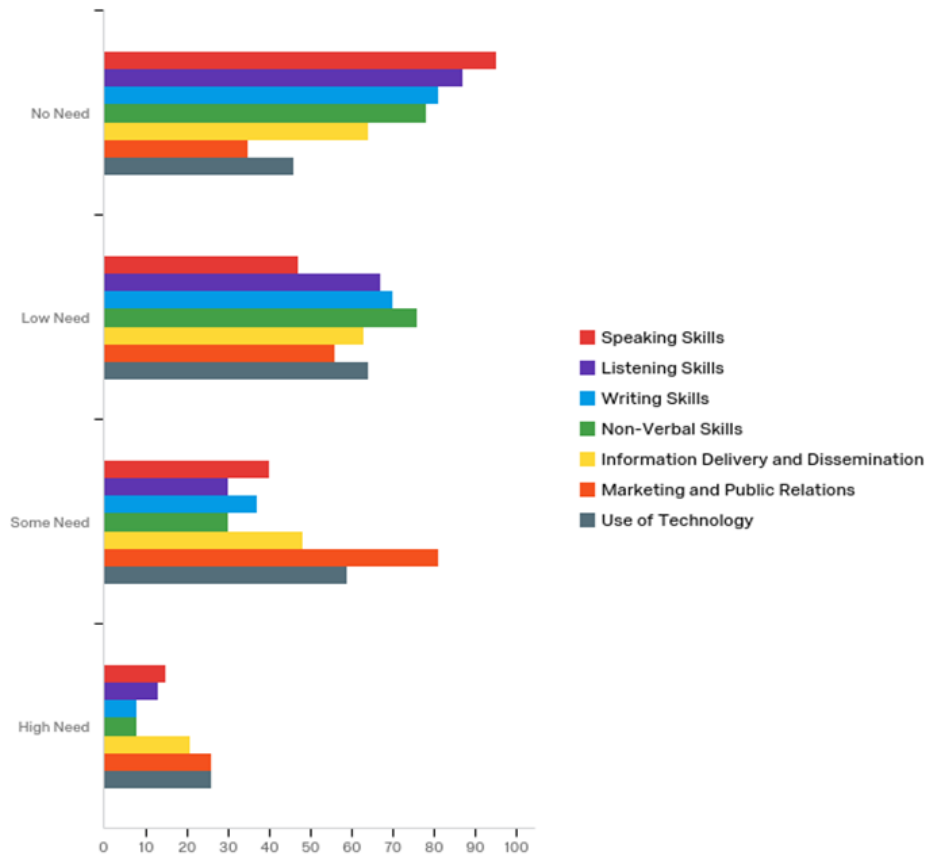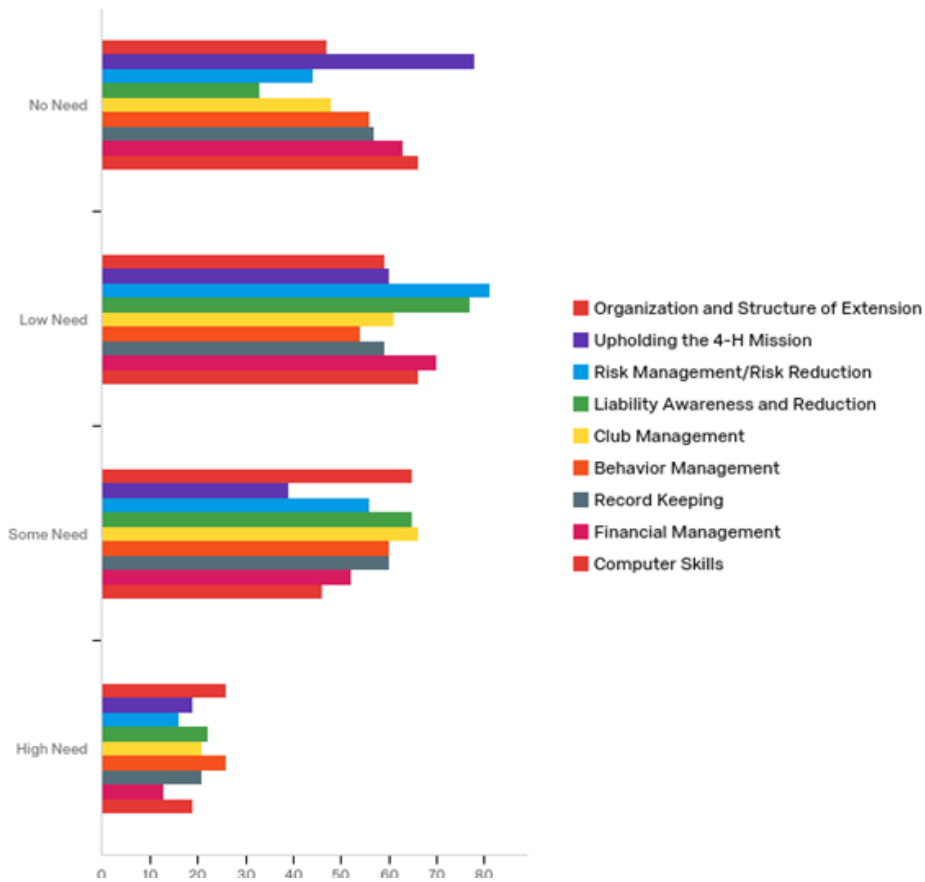

#	Competency	No Need		Low Need		Some Need		High Need		Total
1	Speaking Skills	48.22%	95	23.86%	47	20.30%	40	7.61%	15	197
2	Listening Skills	44.16%	87	34.01%	67	15.23%	30	6.60%	13	197
3	Writing Skills	41.33%	81	35.71%	70	18.88%	37	4.08%	8	196
4	Non-Verbal Skills	40.63%	78	39.58%	76	15.63%	30	4.17%	8	192
5	Information Delivery and Dissemination	32.65%	64	32.14%	63	24.49%	48	10.71%	21	196
6	Marketing and Public Relations	17.68%	35	28.28%	56	**40.91%**	81	**13.13%**	26	198
7	Use of Technology	23.59%	46	32.82%	64	**30.26%**	59	**13.33%**	26	195

Q#2 - According to the VRKC Taxonomy, volunteers should demonstrate the ability to engage others in planning, providing and delivering positive 4-H youth development programming in your community. Identify your need to develop (learn/practice) each specific skill for the **Organization** category of the VRKC.
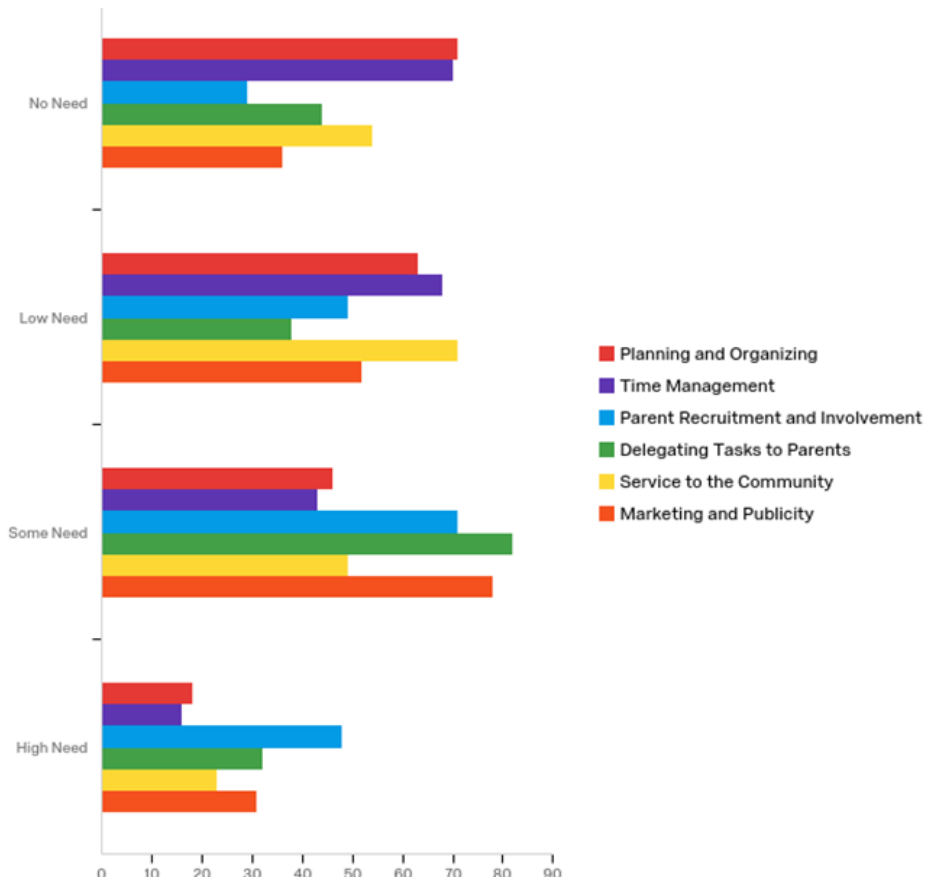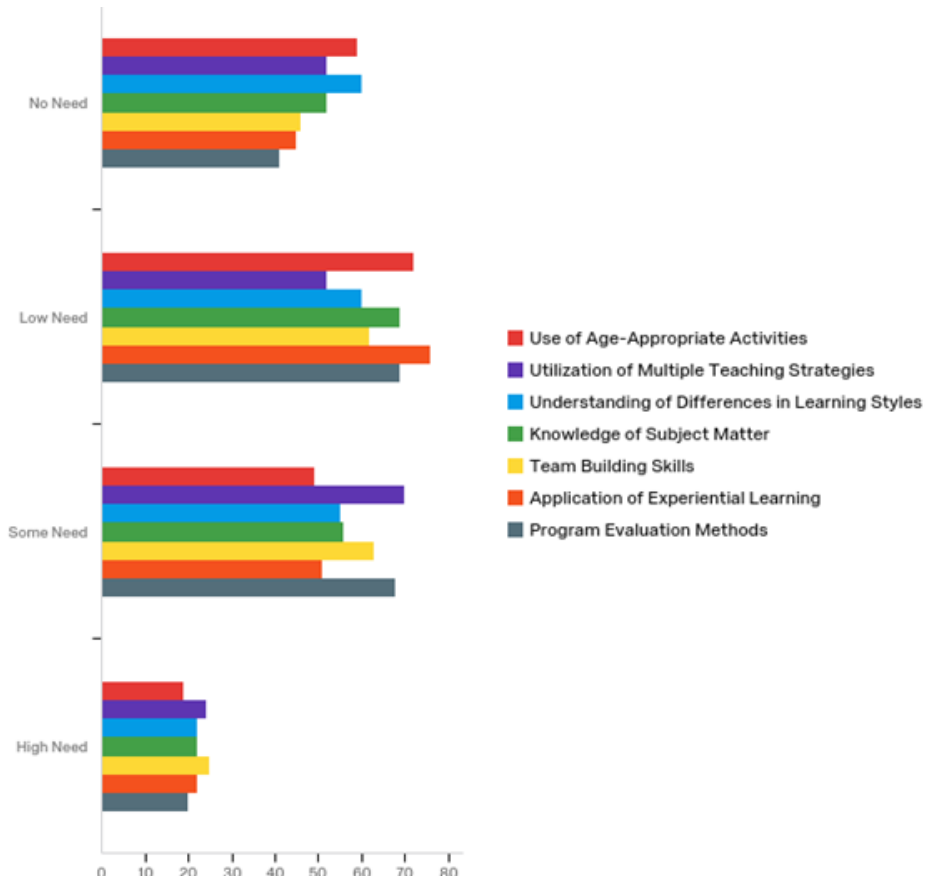

#	Competency	No Need		Low Need		Some Need		High Need		Total
1	Planning and Organizing	35.86%	71	31.82%	63	23.23%	46	9.09%	18	198
2	Time Management	35.53%	70	34.52%	68	21.83%	43	8.12%	16	197
3	Parent Recruitment and Involvement	14.72%	29	24.87%	49	**36.04%**	71	**24.37%**	48	197
4	Delegating Tasks to Parents	22.45%	44	19.39%	38	**41.84%**	82	**16.33%**	32	196
5	Service to the Community	27.41%	54	36.04%	71	24.87%	49	11.68%	23	197
6	Marketing and Publicity	18.27%	36	26.40%	52	**39.59%**	78	**15.74%**	31	197

Q#3 - According to the VRKC Taxonomy, volunteers must understand and follow appropriate policies, procedures and safety guidelines when acting on behalf of Extension. Identify your need to develop (learn/practice) each specific skill for the **4-H Program Management** category of the VRKC.
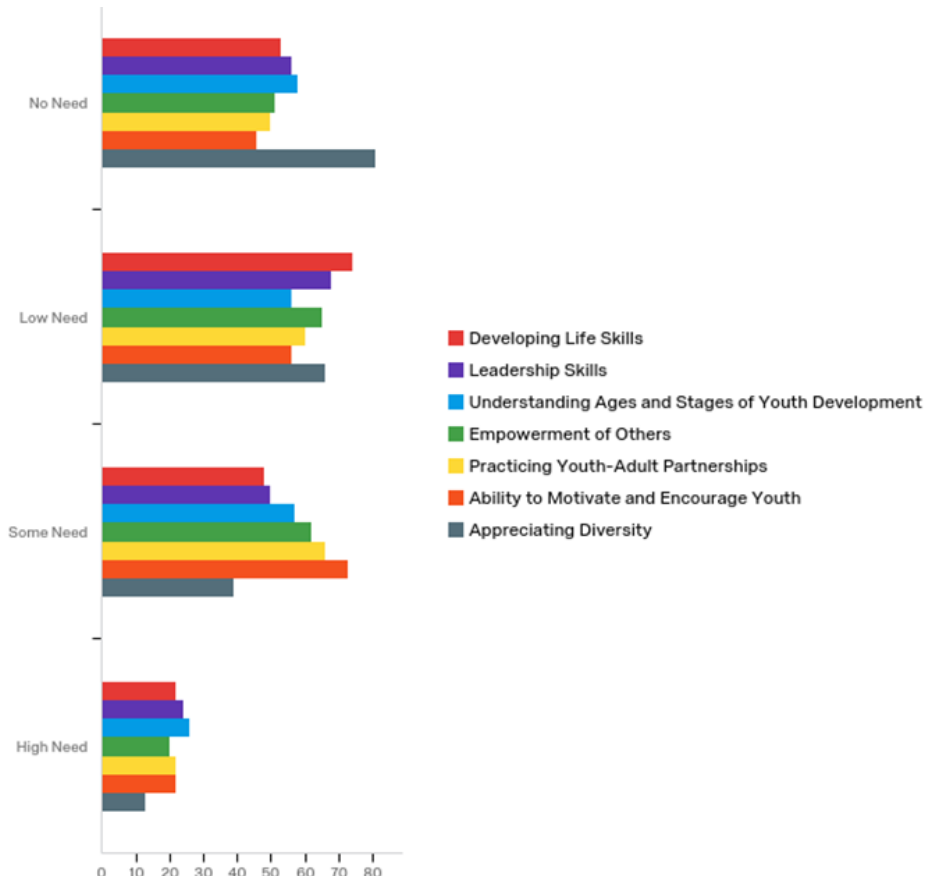

#	Competency	No Need		Low Need		Some Need		High Need		Total
1	Organization and Structure of Extension	23.86%	47	29.95%	59	**32.99%**	65	**13.20%**	26	197
2	Upholding the 4-H Mission	39.80%	78	30.61%	60	19.90%	39	9.69%	19	196
3	Risk Management/ Risk Reduction	22.34%	44	41.12%	81	28.43%	56	8.12%	16	197
4	Liability Awareness and Reduction	16.75%	33	39.09%	77	**32.99%**	65	**11.17%**	22	197
5	Club Management	24.49%	48	31.12%	61	**33.67%**	66	**10.71%**	21	196
6	Behavior Management	28.57%	56	27.55%	54	**30.61%**	60	**13.27%**	26	196
7	Recordkeeping	28.93%	57	29.95%	59	**30.46%**	60	**10.66%**	21	197
8	Financial Management	31.82%	63	35.35%	70	26.26%	52	6.57%	13	198
9	Computer Skills	33.50%	66	33.50%	66	23.35%	46	9.64%	19	197

Q#4 - According to the VRKC Taxonomy, volunteers should demonstrate the ability to plan, implement and evaluate research-based learning opportunities that effectively promote positive personal development. Identify your need to develop (learn/practice) each specific skill from the **Educational Design and Delivery**


Legend:
- Use of Age-Appropriate Activities
- Utilization of Multiple Teaching Strategies
- Understanding of Differences in Learning Styles
- Knowledge of Subject Matter
- Team Building Skills
- Application of Experiential Learning
- Program Evaluation Methods

#	Competency	No Need		Low Need		Some Need		High Need		Total
1	Use of Age-Appropriate Activities	29.65%	59	36.18%	72	24.62%	49	9.55%	19	199
2	Utilization of Multiple Teaching Strategies	26.26%	52	26.26%	52	35.35%	70	12.12%	24	198
3	Understanding of Differences in Learning Styles	30.46%	60	30.46%	60	27.92%	55	11.17%	22	197
4	Knowledge of Subject Matter	26.13%	52	34.67%	69	28.14%	56	11.06%	22	199
5	Team Building Skills	23.47%	46	31.63%	62	32.14%	63	12.76%	25	196
6	Application of Experiential Learning	23.20%	45	39.18%	76	26.29%	51	11.34%	22	194
7	Program Evaluation Methods	20.71%	41	34.85%	69	34.34%	68	10.10%	20	198

Q#5 - According to the VRKC Taxonomy, volunteers should demonstrate the ability to intentionally and appropriately apply the principles and best practices that result in the positive development of youth. Identify your need to develop (learn/practice) each specific skill from the **Positive Youth Development** category of the VRKC.
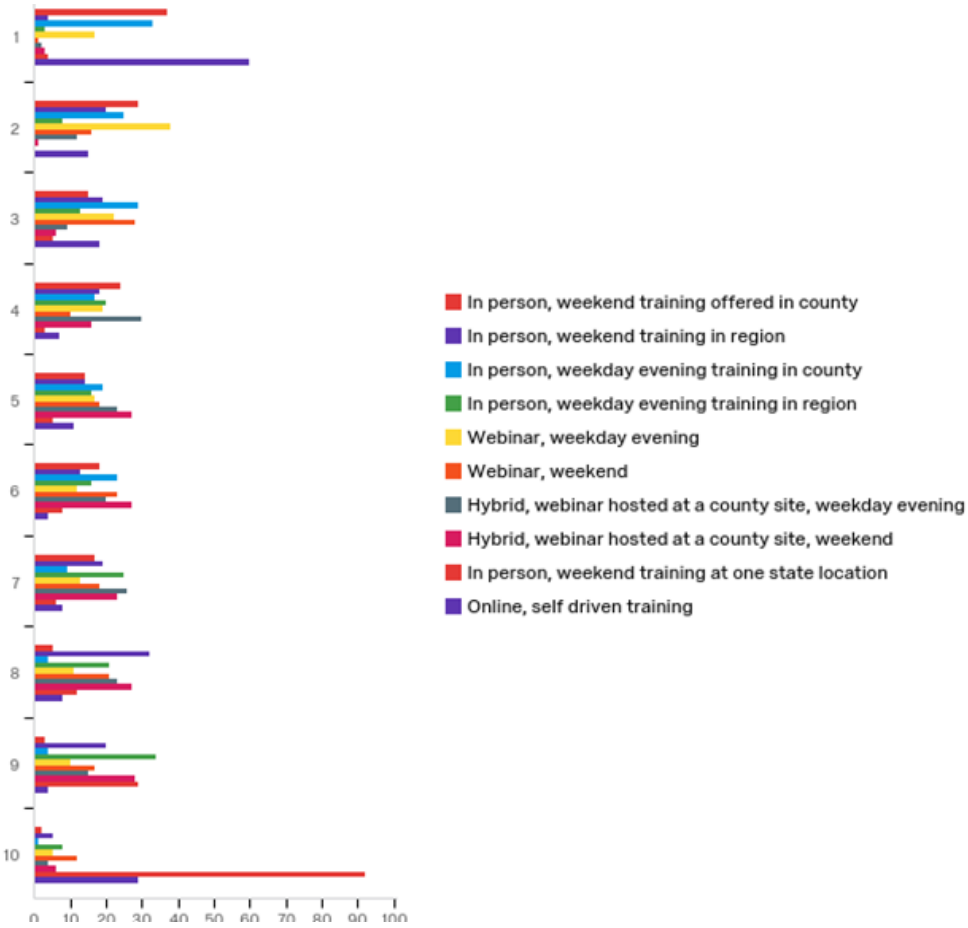

#	Competency	No Need		Low Need		Some Need		High Need		Total
1	Developing Life Skills	26.90%	53	37.56%	74	24.37%	48	11.17%	22	197
2	Leadership Skills	28.28%	56	34.34%	68	25.25%	50	12.12%	24	198
3	Understanding Ages and Stages of Youth Development	29.44%	58	28.43%	56	28.93%	57	13.20%	26	197
4	Empowerment of Others	25.76%	51	32.83%	65	31.31%	62	10.10%	20	198
5	Practicing Youth-Adult Partnerships	25.25%	50	30.30%	60	33.33%	66	11.11%	22	198
6	Ability to Motivate and Encourage Youth	23.35%	46	28.43%	56	37.06%	73	11.17%	22	197
7	Appreciating Diversity	40.70%	81	33.17%	66	19.60%	39	6.53%	13	199

Q#6 - According to the VRKC Taxonomy, volunteers should demonstrate the ability to develop effective relationships, work competently with individuals and groups, and express empathy and understanding for others. Identify your need to develop (learn/practice) each specific skill from the **Interpersonal Characteristics** category of the VRKC.
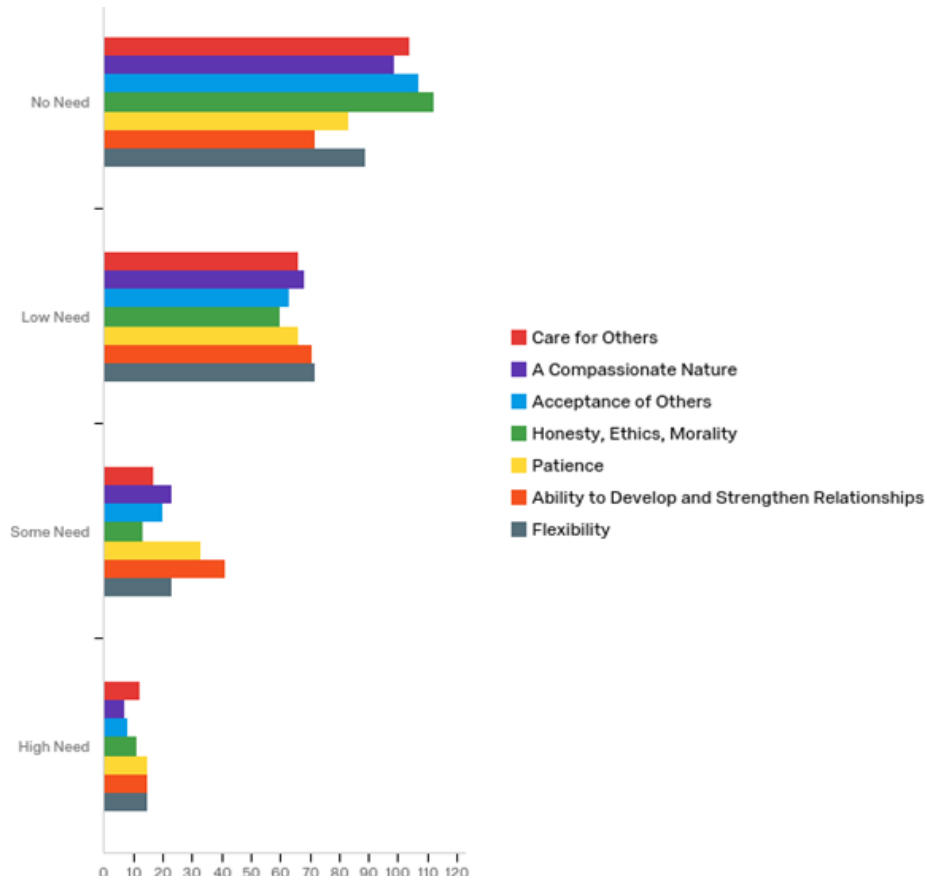
#	Competency	No Need		Low Need		Some Need		High Need		Total
1	Care for Others	52.26%	104	33.17%	66	8.54%	17	6.03%	12	199
2	A Compassionate Nature	50.25%	99	34.52%	68	11.68%	23	3.55%	7	197
3	Acceptance of Others	54.04%	107	31.82%	63	10.10%	20	4.04%	8	198
4	Honesty, Ethics, Morality	57.14%	112	30.61%	60	6.63%	13	5.61%	11	196
5	Patience	42.13%	83	33.50%	66	16.75%	33	7.61%	15	197
6	Ability to Develop and Strengthen Relationships	36.18%	72	35.68%	71	20.60%	41	7.54%	15	199
7	Flexibility	44.72%	89	36.18%	72	11.56%	23	7.54%	15	199

Q#7 - Rank the following volunteer development/training options based on your desire/ability to attend.

- ■ In person, weekend training offered in county
- ■ In person, weekend training in region
- ■ In person, weekday evening training in county
- ■ In person, weekday evening training in region
- ■ Webinar, weekday evening
- ■ Webinar, weekend
- ■ Hybrid, webinar hosted at a county site, weekday evening
- ■ Hybrid, webinar hosted at a county site, weekend
- ■ In person, weekend training at one state location
- ■ Online, self driven training

	Question	1st Choice		2nd Choice		3rd Choice	
1	In person, weekend training offered in county	22.56%	37	17.68%	29	9.15%	15
2	In person, weekend training in region	2.44%	4	12.20%	20	11.59%	19
3	In person, weekday evening training in county	20.12%	33	15.24%	25	17.68%	29
4	In person, weekday evening training in region	1.83%	3	4.88%	8	7.93%	13
5	Webinar, weekday evening	10.37%	17	23.17%	38	13.41%	22
6	Webinar, weekend	0.61%	1	9.76%	16	17.07%	28
7	Hybrid, webinar hosted at a county site, weekday evening	1.22%	2	7.32%	12	5.49%	9
8	Hybrid, webinar hosted at a county site, weekend	1.83%	3	0.61%	1	3.66%	6
9	In person, weekend training at one state location	2.44%	4	0.00%	0	3.05%	5
10	Online, self-driven training	36.59%	60	9.15%	15	10.98%	18

The Maryland 4-H Volunteer Needs Assessment could easily be replicated by 4-H programs or educators from other states. It could help identify and understand the training needs of their volunteers and assist in providing training tailored to their needs and of benefit to the program and youth they serve. Incorporating the assessment into the on-boarding or regular evaluation process could help to gather data to design annual training opportunities or a menu of training modules.

4-H faculty seeking to provide volunteer development to address the identified training needs can find resources aligned with the VRKC on the 4h.org website. Accessible through the Volunteer Development link with a user name and password, resources available include a PowerPoint presentation and lesson plan for each of the 43 competencies associated with the six domains of the taxonomy. Each lesson plan includes activities to engage volunteers in experiential learning to teach, strengthen or enhance the identified skill or characteristic. Taking into consideration the training preferences of volunteers (Q#7), the highest rated being Online, self-driven trainings (36.59%), it may be beneficial to select intentional activities from the lesson plans to create short video or autonomous trainings.

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