

Maryland State 4-H Volunteer Handbook

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
EXTENSION



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Introduction to 4-H

What is 4-H?

4-H is the largest youth development organization in the United States with about 6 million participants and over 25 million alumni! The Maryland 4-H Youth Development Program provides a supportive setting for youth to reach their fullest potential. Children learn beneficial cognitive and life skills through community-focused, research-based, experiential educational programs. These programs may include community clubs, school-based programs, public workshops/ classes, and camp. Participation is open to all youth ages 5-18. The Clover Program serves 5-7 year old participants and the 4-H Program serves 8-18 year old participants.

Through 4-H, young people engage in various projects, events, and activities with adult volunteers, teen leaders, and their families that result in positive youth development. Regardless of the programs, each 4-H group involves youth, family, and community members working and learning together.

4-H values diversity and inclusion of all children, regardless of background or identity. 4-H has an over 100-year tradition of voluntary action through strong public and private partnerships at federal, state, and community levels. Local volunteer leaders and youth practitioners partner with local Extension staff from the University of Maryland to provide direct leadership and educational support to young people in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

History of 4-H

In the late 1800's, researchers discovered that adults in the farming community did not readily accept new agricultural developments from university campuses. However, they did find that young people were open to new thinking and would experiment with new ideas

and share their experiences with adults. In this way, rural youth programs introduced new agriculture technology to communities.

Community clubs became an important step to help youth learn about the industry in order to solve important agricultural challenges. A. B. Graham started a youth program in Clark County, Ohio, in 1902, which is considered the birth of 4-H in the United States. The first club was called "The Tomato Club" or the "Corn Growing Club". T. A. Erickson of Douglas County, Minnesota, started local agricultural after-school clubs and fairs that same year. Jessie Field Shambaugh then developed the clover pin with an H on each leaf in 1910, and by 1912 they were called 4-H clubs.

Learn more about 4-H by viewing the 4-H

History video accessible at <https://go.umd.edu/4hhistory>

The passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 created the Cooperative Extension System at USDA and nationalized 4-H. By 1924, 4-H clubs were formed and the clover emblem was adopted. Cooperative Extension combines the expertise and resources of federal, state, and local governments and is designed to meet the need for research, knowledge and educational programs. Today, 4-H has expanded to provide youth learning opportunities in agriculture as well as a variety of other projects such as leadership, communication, S.T.E.A.M. and much more!

Source: <https://4-h.org/about/history/>



4-H Name & Emblem

The 4-H Name & Emblem is officially protected by the United States Government under Title 18 U.S. Code 707. The situations and manner in which it may be used can be found on the National 4-H Headquarters website: <https://nifa.usda.gov/4-h-name-and-emblem>.

Who Delivers 4-H?

4-H is delivered by Cooperative Extension—a community of more than 100 public universities across the nation. In Maryland, the 4-H program is delivered through University of Maryland Extension (UME). UME is a department within the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Maryland College Park. Every

Maryland 4-H Vision

Maryland 4-H aspires to be recognized as a leader in youth development, inspiring youth and adults to learn, grow, and work together as a catalyst for positive change.

Maryland 4-H Mission

The Maryland 4-H Youth Development Program provides a supportive and inclusive setting for all youth to reach their fullest potential in a diverse society. Youth learn beneficial and cognitive life skills through community focused, research-based experiential education programs.

Source: <https://extension.umd.edu/4-h>

county and city in the state has an extension office with a 4-H program. To locate an extension office in Maryland go to <https://extension.umd.edu/locations>.

4-H reaches youth in every corner of the state – from urban neighborhoods to suburban schoolyards to rural farming communities. Maryland 4-H professionals and volunteers

provide a caring and supportive program to over 50,000 youth, helping them grow into true leaders in communities.

Source: <https://4-h.org/about/what-is-4-h/>

4-H Programs and Delivery Modes

In 4-H, youth complete hands-on projects in areas like health, science, agriculture and civic engagement in a positive environment. They receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on active leadership roles. 4-H programs include:

4-H CLUBS: There are several types of clubs in Maryland 4-H. These include Community Clubs, Project Clubs, Activity Clubs, In-School Clubs, After-school Clubs, Military Clubs and Clover Clubs. A 4-H club is generally comprised of enrolled youth members and adult volunteers/4-H trained staff, who are recognized and authorized to deliver 4-H programs and activities.

4-H clubs can be established to serve youth in certain geographical areas or to provide youth with specialized experiences in a unique program area, such as livestock education or robotics. 4-H Clubs usually meet in a community location such as a community center, military installation, farm, library or school and must meet specific guidelines to qualify for club status. (See Maryland 4-H Family Guide).

Members may belong to more than one club in order to obtain special project information, participate in special activities, or for the convenience of travel. Youth and adults are generally expected to join and participate in a 4-H program in their county/city of residence. However, families may request approval to join a 4-H program in a county/city other than where they live.

4-H AFTERS-SCHOOL PROGRAM: A 4-H Afterschool Program provides an opportunity for youth to engage in hands-on activities

during after school hours. These programs are typically held at after school programs like YMCA's, Boys and Girls Clubs, Police Athletic League (PAL) centers, recreation centers, libraries, and community centers.

4-H SCHOOL ENRICHMENT: The 4-H School Enrichment Program provides educators with the opportunity to bring 4-H into the classroom. Through collaboration with public and private schools, teachers and students in rural, suburban, and urban areas have access to 4-H resources through curriculum, teacher trainings, special events, and field trips. This method of delivering life skills to youth in the classroom uses 4-H curriculum as part of daily class lessons or as an intensive all-day special event. Research shows that classrooms where 4-H is offered observe higher standardized test scores, increased attendance, and decreased tardiness. The 4-H lessons offered through school enrichment link University research to 4-H's experiential learning model, allowing students to do, reflect and apply what they've learned.

4-H SUMMER CAMPS: Camps educate and provide learning opportunities for youth ages 5-18. There are several camp programs available to youth throughout the summer. These include overnight resident camps, short-term special interest camps, and day camps. All camping opportunities are publicized and are open to all youth. Older members serve as youth leaders at camp for the various responsibilities. Adult UME volunteers and/or Extension Educators coordinate and supervise these camps.

Contact your local 4-H program to get involved in any of these programs.

Source: Maryland 4-H Club Leader Guide Book



Volunteer Opportunities and Benefits

Volunteer Opportunities

4-H has a variety of volunteer opportunities available. Some volunteer roles are listed below:

- 4-H Club Leader
- 4-H Project Leader
- 4-H Activity Leader
- 4-H Superintendent
- 4-H Fair Helpers and Judges
- Judging Opportunities
- Coaching
- Chaperones
- Camp Adult Volunteers
- Committee Members

For more information on these opportunities, please contact your local 4-H program: <http://extension.umd.edu/locations>

Benefits

UME 4-H volunteers play a significant role in helping youth to reach their full potential. Volunteers help youth learn leadership, civic engagement and life skills through projects and activities. These experiences help guide youth into becoming excellent leaders and contributing members of society. The diversity of knowledge and skills of volunteers expands the creativity, opportunities and reach of the Maryland 4-H program.

Some benefits of volunteering with the 4-H program are:

- Becoming the teacher you never knew you were.
- Gaining a natural sense of accomplishment by working with youth and adults.
- Increasing your self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Strengthening your compassion for helping others.

- Providing opportunities to develop new skills, strengthen past skills, and learn something new.
- Being recognized within your community for your contributions.
- Strengthening and improving the quality of the Maryland 4-H program.
- Multiplying the efforts of the Maryland 4-H program by providing more opportunities to youth in the community.
- Engaging in local, state, regional and national experiences as a volunteer.
- Strengthening interpersonal skills.
- Networking with others you meet while volunteering.
- Improving youth's health and wellbeing.

The following traits can contribute to improving a volunteer's experience:

- A positive attitude.
- Ability to be an excellent role model that youth can rely on.
- A compassionate heart and willingness to help others.
- An open mind to different ideas and diverse audiences.
- Motivation to contribute to program efforts.
- Ability to work independently and as a team player.
- Strong leadership and communication skills.
- Ability to provide an inclusive and welcoming environment for youth to feel a sense of belonging.

University of Maryland Extension 4-H Volunteer Program

The Maryland 4-H Program requires individuals volunteering with youth to become Certified UME 4-H Volunteers in order to provide a safe and inclusive environment for youth to learn, grow and thrive. Individuals who wish to become Certified UME 4-H Volunteers must apply to their local 4-H Program and be vetted, on boarded and trained to serve on behalf of the University of Maryland Extension and Maryland 4-H Program.

Volunteers directly report to and serve at the discretion of their local 4-H program. The local 4-H Program has decision authority over local 4-H programs and issues. The Maryland 4-H Program has decision authority over all statewide policies and programs. There is an organizational structure in place to provide support, direction and guidance for volunteers and their service to the organization.

Maryland 4-H Organizational Structure

Maryland 4-H Program Leader - guides and supervises the Maryland 4-H Program, works directly with local 4-H Programs and provides indirect support to volunteers. Has final decision authority over all 4-H Program policies and procedures.

State 4-H Program - consists of specialists, coordinators and staff at the State 4-H Office. Provides structure and guidance to 4-H programs, events and activities. Has decision authority over 4-H policies and procedures. Provides direct support to state program volunteers and indirect support to all UME 4-H volunteers.



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NATURAL RESOURCES**



State Government



USDA/NIFA



Local Government

Local Area Extension Director/Baltimore City Extension Director (AED/BCED) - provides administrative supervision to local Extension offices. Provides guidance and support as needed for the local program and volunteers.

Local 4-H Program - provides direct leadership for all county/city volunteers. Serves as volunteer managers and supervisors, tasked with providing volunteer development and communication of volunteer opportunities. Has decision authority over county/city 4-H programs.



4-H Enrollment System: 4HOnline

Once volunteers have gone through the steps to become certified, they must create a volunteer profile in 4HOnline at <https://v2.4honline.com/#/user/sign-in>. Individuals that have completed the process will be accepted by the local 4-H program in the system. The 4-H Online system allows for volunteer management, communication, event registration and annual re-enrollment.



Volunteer Annual Review and Renewal

Volunteers must annually renew their agreement with Maryland 4-H in order to remain an active 4-H volunteer. The renewal process is managed through 4HOnline and opens at the start of each calendar year. Volunteers that wish to continue their service must re-enroll by March 1 in order to maintain the protections afforded to them under the Maryland Tort Claims Act and to work in their appointed volunteer role. The local 4-H Team has the discretion to re-appoint volunteers based on their re-enrollment, annual review and ability to meet the expectations of the 4-H program.

A voluntary annual review survey may be sent to volunteers via email at the end of the year. The survey asks questions about the volunteer's service, impacts, needs, concerns and stories. Volunteers are asked to complete the review survey to help the Maryland 4-H program better understand our volunteer's experience. The local 4-H Team will review these surveys to assist in the re-appointment of volunteers.

Positive Youth Development (PYD) Practices

Youth development can be defined as a process which prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them to become socially, morally, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent. (National Collaboration for Youth Members, March 1998). Positive youth development aims to understand, educate and engage children in productive activities as opposed to focusing on the deficits and problems that young people encounter through their development.

The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development led by Tufts University surveyed more than 7,000 adolescents from diverse backgrounds across

42 U.S. states. The study discovered that the structured out-of-school time learning, leadership experiences, and adult mentoring that young people receive through

their participation in 4-H plays a vital role in helping them achieve success.

See link for detailed information:
<https://4-h.org/about/research/>

4-H volunteers are not only essential to 4-H programming, but also to supporting positive development of the youth within the 4-H Program. All volunteers that interact with youth on behalf of the Maryland 4-H Program should utilize the following information and practices to help youth thrive and develop into kind, caring, and contributing members of their community.



* In his 2007 book "The Good Teen," Richard M. Lerner included this additional outcome

4-H'ers are...

4X more likely to give back to their communities

2X more likely to make healthier choices

2X more likely to participate in STEM activities

The 4-H Essential Elements

Essential elements are critical to effective youth development programs. These elements help youth become competent, contributing citizens. Created from traditional and applied research characteristics that contribute to positive youth development, they help professionals and volunteers who work with youth view the whole young person, rather than focus on a single aspect of life or development.

These elements focus on social, physical, and emotional well-being, and are necessary for positive youth development. Each individual element is important. However, it is the combination of these elements that create an environment that promotes positive youth development. The elements revolve around our 4 H's.

Belonging	Mastery
Positive relationship with a caring adult An inclusive environment A safe environment	Engagement in learning Opportunity for Mastery
Independence	Generosity
Opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future Opportunity for self-determination	Opportunity to value and practice service for others

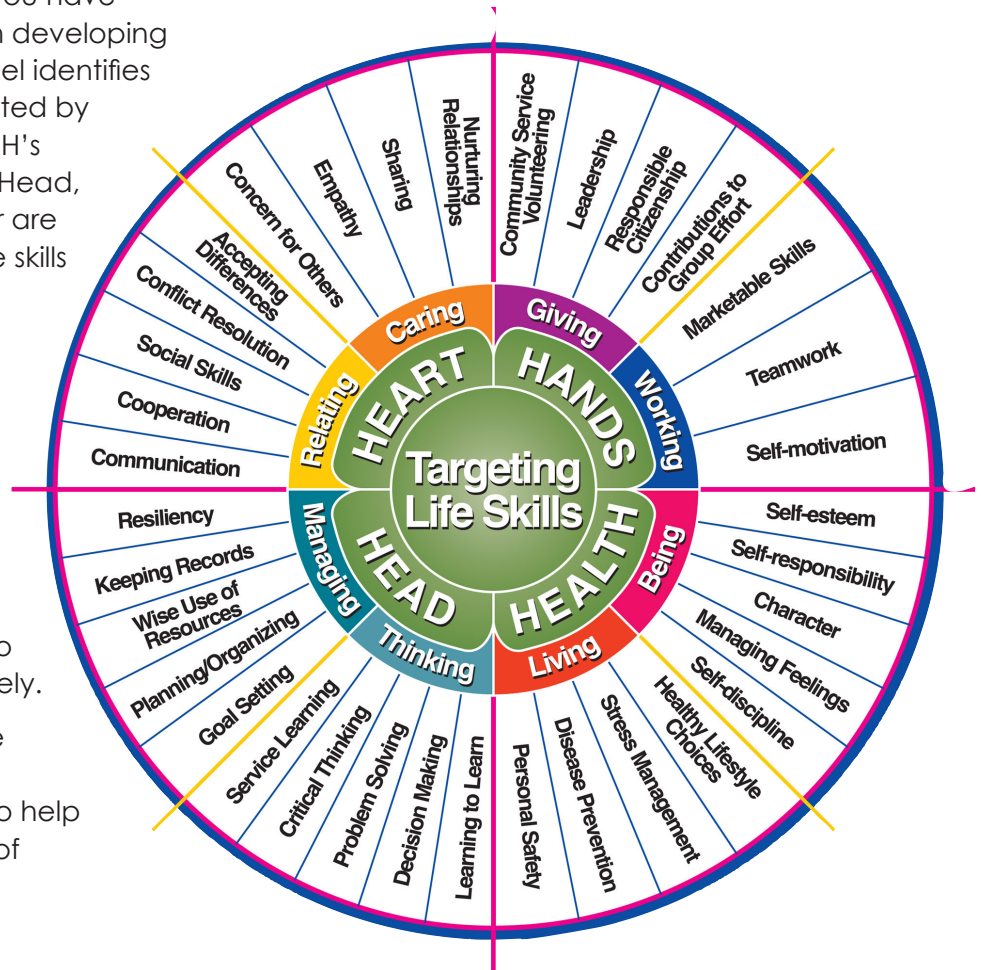


Targeting Life Skills Model

As a volunteer working with youth, you have many opportunities to assist youth in developing life skills. The Targeting Life Skills Model identifies and divides the major life skills targeted by 4-H youth development by the four H's from the 4-H Clover that represents Head, Heart, Hands and Health. These four are further divided into categories of life skills and then into specific general skills.

As you capitalize on the youth's interest in exploring 4-H, your challenge is to provide age-appropriate skills until they are learned and able to be used every day. By using the Targeting Life Skills Model to help youth fully internalize both exploring 4-H content and life skill practices, they gain the ability to apply both types of skills appropriately.

Targeting Life Skills Models is a guide for planning activities to ensure 4-H members are gaining life skills and to help volunteers see the interrelatedness of activities and learning.

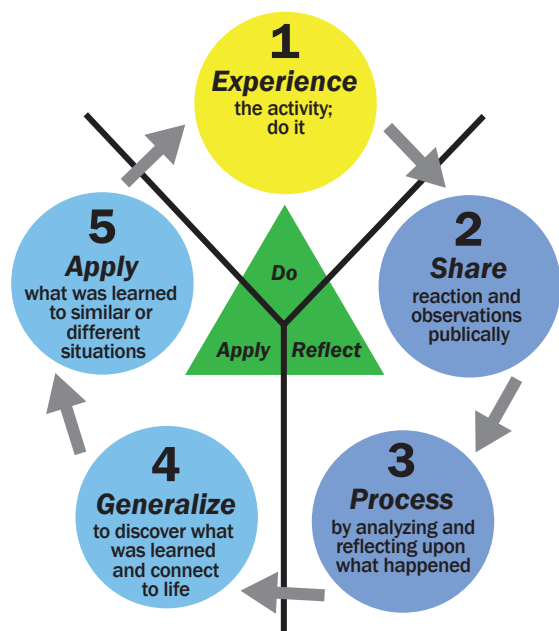


Source: Iowa State University

Head	Heart	Hands	Health
Thinking	Relating	Giving	Living
Learning to Learn Decision-making Problem Solving Critical Thinking Service Learning	Communications Cooperation Social Skills Conflict Resolution Accepting Differences	Community Service-volunteering Leadership Responsible Contribution to Group	Healthy Life-style Choices Stress Management Disease Prevention Personal Safety
Managing	Caring	Working	Being
Goal Setting Planning/organizing Wise use of Resources Keeping Records Resilience	Concern for Others Empathy Sharing Nurturing Relationships	Marketable/useful Skills Teamwork Self-motivation	Self Esteem Self Responsibility Character Managing Feelings Self Discipline

Experiential Learning Model

The Experiential Learning Model represents how youth should be engaged through and at 4-H programs, events and activities. Youth should DO something, conduct an experiment, try to bake a cake, etc. They should then REFLECT by sharing and discussing the experience in order to APPLY what they learned to future situations and learning opportunities.



Source: National 4-H Headquarters

Ages and Stages of Youth Development

The 4-H program engages youth ages 5-18.

4-H AGE CATEGORIES

(As of January 1st of the current year)

Clover 4-Hers: 5- 7 Years Old

Junior 4-Hers: 8-10 Years Old

Intermediate 4-Hers: 11-13 Years Old

Senior 4-Hers: 14-18 years old

Youth in each 4-H age group have the ability to grow and develop physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually. The Ages and Stages of Youth Development can help volunteers support and encourage youth to develop skills based on their current abilities. It is important to remember that everyone develops at different rates and some youth may develop in different stages from their peers. Volunteers should work with their local 4-H team to develop programs that are developmentally appropriate for the youth.

Ages and Stages of 4-H Youth Development

Jamie Tomek, Extension Assistant
Mary Jo Williams, State 4-H Youth Development Specialist

Missouri 4-H Youth Development Programs

As a leader you will be working with 4-H members who can have an important role in helping 4-H members grow and develop. Start where members are in their development and encourage them to grow physically, socially, intellectually and emotionally.

Remember, 4-H club or project group members will develop at their own pace, but there are some characteristics that each age group may share. These characteristics and their implications for you, as a volunteer, may be helpful to consider in planning a project group or club activity.

Early childhood		Middle childhood	
Characteristics	Implications for volunteers	Characteristics	Implications for volunteers
Physical			
Learn best if physically active	Provide experiences that encourage physical activity: running, playing games, painting, etc.	Spirited, with boundless energy.	Provide active learning experiences.
Have better control of large muscles than small muscles.	Use projects that can be completed successfully by beginners. Craft projects could end up messy.	Girls will be maturing faster than boys; some may be entering puberty.	Avoid competitions between girls and boys.
Period of slow, steady growth	Provide opportunities to practice skills.	Large and small muscle development, strength, balance, and coordination are increasing.	Plan activities that allow youth to move about and use their bodies.
Social			
Learning how to be friends. May have several "best friends."	Small group activities are effective for practicing social skills and allow for individual attention.	Enjoy group activities and cooperation. Feel loyal to group or club.	Emphasize group learning experiences and form groups to plan activities together.
Beginning to experience empathy for others, but are still selfish.	Make-believe and role-play activities help children to understand how others might think or feel.	Prefer to be with members of the same sex.	Plan learning experiences to be done with members of the same sex.
Boys and girls may enjoy playing together, but prefer same gender groups by the end of this developmental period.	Engage young children in mixed-gender activities.	Admire and imitate older boys and girls.	Encourage experiences with and mentoring by older youth.
Intellectual			
Easily motivated and eager to try something new, but have short attention spans.	Plan a wide variety of activities that take a short time to complete.	Interests often change rapidly and do best when work presented in small pieces.	Allow for many brief learning experiences and give simple, short directions.
More interested in doing activities rather than completing them.	Focus activities on the process rather than producing a product.	Very greatly in academic abilities, interests, and reasoning skills.	Offer activities appropriate for a wide range of abilities so that all children have a chance to succeed.
Thinking in concrete. Must have seen it, heard it, felt it, tasted it, or smelled it in order to think about it.	Demonstrate activities. Use the senses to help youths experience things.	Easily motivated and eager to try new things.	Provide a variety of different activities.
Naturally curious and want to make sense of their world.	Allow for exploration and spontaneity in activities. Be flexible.	Emotional	
Sensitive to criticism. Don't accept failure well.	Find ways to give positive encouragement and assistance. Plan activities in which success can be experienced. Facilitate cooperation, not competition.	Comparisons with other youth is difficult and erodes self-confidence. Prefer recognition and praise for doing good work.	Instead of comparing youth with each other, help youth identify their own successes by comparing present and past performances for the individual.
Becoming less dependent upon parents, but still seek adult approval and affection.	Offer support and plan small group activities, with an adult supervising every 3-4 youths.		

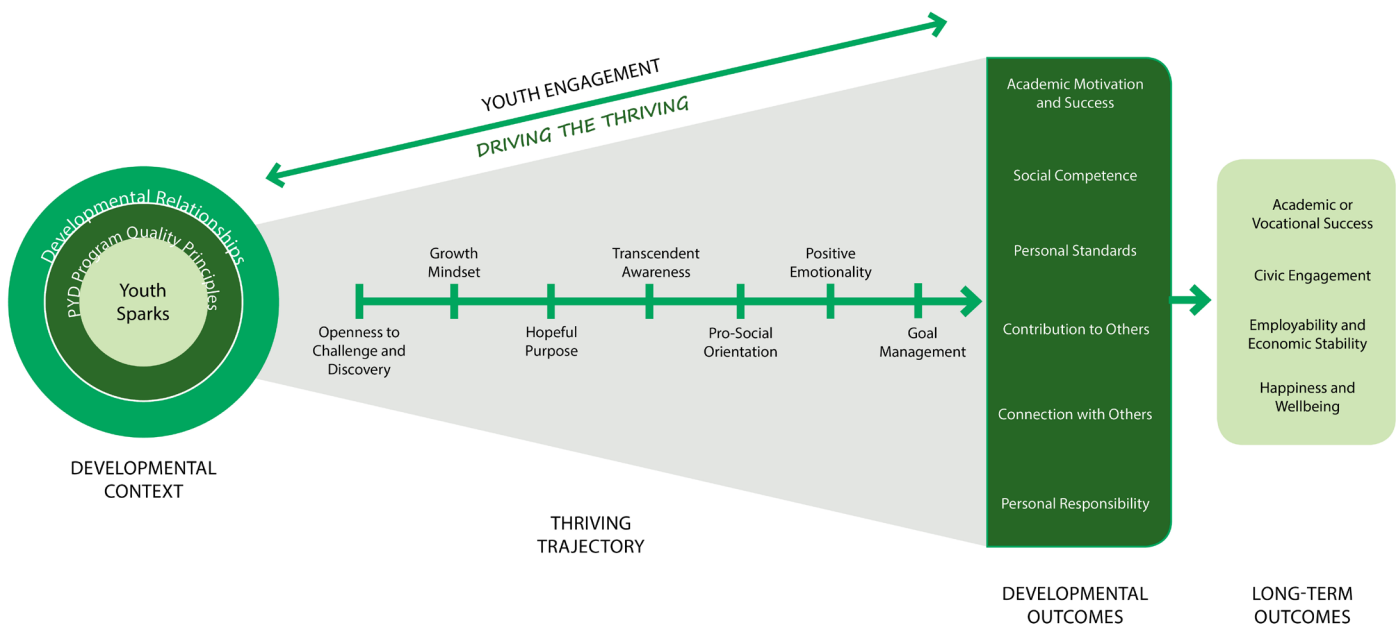
Published by MU Extension, University of Missouri-Columbia LG 782

The 4-H Thriving Model

This model is based on a positive youth development (PYD) approach that recognizes all youth have interests, abilities, and strengths that can be enhanced by participation in 4-H programs. The 4-H Thriving model predicts that youth who participate in 4-H programs that provide a high quality developmental context will thrive, and thriving youth achieve key developmental outcomes.

Encouraging youth engagement: 4-H has its greatest impact on positive youth development when youth are fully engaged in the program, especially when youth participate for multiple years in 4-H. Youth should be encouraged to participate in 4-H actively and regularly, as well as participate in extended 4-H learning opportunities at the local, state, national, and even international level.

See the link for more detailed information:
<https://health.oregonstate.edu/thriving-model/home/about>



Policies and Procedures

4-H has made a commitment to expand our reach through the *Promise to America's Kids Vision*. This vision asserts that "In 2025, 4-H will reflect the population demographics, vulnerable populations, diverse needs and social conditions of the country. This vision has the elements of inclusion, caring adults, and volunteers and staff reflect the diversity of the population" (4-H National Headquarters, 2015). In 4-H, we strive to ensure that every child feels a sense of genuine belonging. We foster this through building relationships, increasing our awareness and appreciation of cultures, and providing culturally relevant experiences to meet the diverse needs of youth. We encourage our volunteers to join us on this journey to increasing accessing and opportunities for Maryland's youth.

All volunteers serve on behalf of UME and are expected to adhere to the following policies to create a positive, safe and inclusive environment for all participants of the 4-H Youth Development Program.

Equal Opportunity and Access

Affirmative Action Statement

All 4-H programs must comply with Title VI, Title IX and Program Accessibility expectations to further the educational purposes of the 4-H Youth Development Programs. Volunteers will make all reasonable efforts to provide public notification, and support, of the AA statement listed below:

University of Maryland programs, activities, and facilities are available to all without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, age, national origin, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, religion, protected veteran status, genetic information, personal appearance, or any other legally protected class.

Contact your local 4-H program on the required and appropriate usage of this statement when creating publications.

<https://agmr.umd.edu/sites/agmr.umd.edu/files/files/documents/admin-services/archive/UME%20Affirmative%20Action%20Plan%20-%202003.pdf>

Americans with Disability and Accessibility Policy

Volunteers should provide reasonable accommodations for eligible youth to allow participation in 4-H programs. A notification statement on registration paperwork should be used to assist in meeting the needs of participants. Reasonable accommodations should be made in a timely manner and on an individualized and flexible basis.

Volunteers should contact their local 4-H Educator for clarification and/or assistance.

The University of Maryland Extension is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive educational, working, and living environment for people of all abilities. We are committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability

Volunteers are invited to participate in the "Increasing Cultural Awareness & Equity in Extension Programs" equity modules to gain related resources. Visit campus.extension.org:

- The login pane is on the left hand side of the screen.
- Enter existing login credentials or choose "Create New account"
- Once logged in, search for the course "Increasing Cultural Awareness & Equity in Extension Programs"
- Enter the Enrollment Key (your state name: Maryland)
- Select "Enroll Me"

shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University, or be subjected to discrimination.

From University of Maryland Disability & Accessibility Policy and Procedures, 2016.

https://www.president.umd.edu/sites/president.umd.edu/files/documents/policies/VI-1.00D_3.pdf

Discrimination against individuals on the grounds of disability is prohibited. The University also strictly prohibits retaliation against persons arising in connection with the assertion of rights under this Policy.

Maryland Tort Claims Act

Maryland Tort Claims Act is a special legal protection that provides volunteers the immunity from suit, and not simply immunity from liability, when acting within the scope of their duties as a Maryland 4-H Volunteer. If a volunteer's actions cause harm to an individual participating in a program, activity or event to the degree of a lawsuit, this Act will protect the volunteer.

To qualify for this protection, volunteers must be:

- On-boarded according to the **UME Volunteer Policies** and **Procedures and Onboarding Process**,
- Enrolled and approved as a UME 4-H Volunteer in 4-H Online for current program year by March 1,
- Have a current appointment agreement, background check and position description(s) on file with local UME Office.
- Complete any additional requirements per the local or state 4-H program or UME.

They must also comply with the following stipulations:

- Work within their scope of duties as listed in their official position descriptions.
- Actions that caused the "harm" cannot be grossly negligent.

- Actions that caused the "harm" cannot be malicious.

[UME Maryland Tort Claims Act](#)

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

Volunteers of the University of Maryland 4-H Youth Development Program are considered mandatory reporters. For this reason, Maryland state law and University policy require all adults to report suspected child abuse or neglect to their local 4-H program.

Volunteers that suspect a child is being abused, witness or are told by a child that they are being or were abused are required to file a report. No proof is required, only a suspicion based on observations and/or direct reports from a youth.

Reporting requirements:

Depending on the nature of the suspicions and/or immediacy of the observations, the initial report may be to one of the following authorities:

- Report to the local 4-H program
- Report to Child Protective Services
- Report to Police (911 if it is an emergency)

Due to the sensitive nature of these reporting situations, it is essential to maintain a high



level of confidentiality. Sensitive information should be narrowly confined to being shared with 4-H Team overseeing the program and first responders assessing the situation.

See the link for more detailed and specific information about the signs and signals of child abuse and neglect.

[Volunteers as Youth Advocates](#)

Volunteer Expectations

Being a 4-H Volunteer is a privilege, not a right. Individuals that serve on behalf of the 4-H Youth Development Program are required to adhere to the following expectations in order to create a positive, safe and inclusive environment for all participants.

Adult Code of Conduct

All adults participating in any 4-H event, activity or program are expected to comply with the Maryland 4-H Adult Code of Conduct. They should act in accordance with the six pillars of Character Counts and positively support the 4-H program by being Trustworthy, Respectful, Responsible, Fair, Caring and being a good Citizen. Adults should avoid unacceptable behaviors and actions under the Code of Conduct. Infractions against the Code of Conduct are subject to sanctioning under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and at the discretion of UME Faculty/Staff.

See the link for more detailed information: [Maryland 4-H Adult Code of Conduct](#)

Youth Code of Conduct

All youth participating in any 4-H event, activity or program are expected to comply with the Maryland 4-H Youth Code of Conduct. They should act in accordance with the six pillars of Character Counts and positively represent the 4-H program by being Trustworthy, Respectful, Responsible, Fair, Caring and being a good Citizen. Youth should avoid unacceptable



behaviors and actions under the Code of Conduct. Infractions against the Code of Conduct are subject to sanctioning under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and at the discretion of UME Faculty/Staff.

Adults serve as a role model for the Code of Conduct. Actions that youth witness are often mirrored in their own interactions. All adults are encouraged to behave in the equivalent manner you wish to see youth behave.

Volunteers should utilize the Youth Code of Conduct to manage behaviors and reinforce expectations.

See the link for more detailed information: [Maryland 4-H Youth Code of Conduct](#)

Sexual Harassment

Creating an environment free of sexual misconduct is the responsibility of all members of the 4-H community. UME is committed to fostering a climate that is free from sexual misconduct through procedures that promote prompt reporting by individuals of their experiences or observations.

The local 4-H program will manage all reports of misconduct and individuals suspected of inappropriate actions may be sanctioned.

The University of Maryland Extension is committed to a working and learning environment free from sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, intimate partner violence/abuse, sexual exploitation and sexual intimidation. Sexual misconduct will not be tolerated. It corrupts the integrity of the educational process and work environment, and violates the core mission and values of the University.

Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Usage

All participants at official UME sponsored activities and events are prohibited from:

- Possessing, using and/or distributing of Illegal and/or illicit drugs.
- Misusing and/or abusing prescription and over the counter drugs.
- Possessing, consuming and/or distribution of alcohol.

The behaviors listed above are infractions against the Code of Conduct and are subject to sanctioning under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure at the discretion of UME Faculty/ Staff. Volunteers should also refrain from using tobacco, smokeless tobacco and/or tobacco substitutes in the presence of youth.

Confidentiality

Volunteers may have access to certain sensitive information about individuals in performing required duties as a UME Volunteer. Sensitive information may include an individual's medical, financial, insurance, and/or other personal and confidential information.

Volunteers will not use, or share, personal information about others outside the requirements of their UME Volunteer duties. Volunteers will be held personally liable for failure to protect or distribute unauthorized information. Such behavior is an infraction of a volunteer's appointment agreement

and is subject to sanctioning under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and at the discretion of UME Faculty/Staff.

Conflict of Interest

4-H Volunteers should not promote private or personal interests in conjunction with the performance of their duties as a UME Volunteer. Any action that can reasonably be construed as a conflict of interest with UME programs is an infraction of a volunteer's appointment agreement and is subject to sanctioning under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure at the discretion of UME Faculty/Staff.

Animal Science Code of Ethics

All 4-H members that participate in an animal science project are required to sign and follow the Maryland 4-H Animal Science Code of Ethics. All volunteers assisting with an animal science related project, event and/



or activity should know, understand and enforce the expectations for animal welfare and care outlined in the Code of Ethics.

See the link for more detailed information:

<https://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/images/uploaded/Maryland%204-H%20Code%20of%20Animal%20Science-2018.pdf>

Social Media Policy

Social media provides powerful tools for communication, to both share information about

our programs and engage in dialogue with the community. Clubs, groups or other entities that utilize the 4-H name and emblem should follow the Maryland 4-H Social Media guidelines to maintain a positive and professional platform of communication.

See the link for more detailed information:

[Maryland 4-H Social Media Guidelines](#)

Fundraising Policy

Fundraising is one of the major ways to help 4-H clubs financially support their activities. By raising funds as a group, a club can help to make sure its activities are affordable for all club members. There are specific fundraising guidelines and limitations for 4-H clubs and groups including receiving approval from the local 4-H program prior to conducting any fundraiser.

See the link for more detailed information:

<https://extension.umd.edu/4-h/volunteers/fundraising>

Risk Management

Risk management is the identification, assessment and prioritization of risks. Managing risks allows us to create a positive and safe environment for everyone participating in 4-H programs. All volunteers along with their 4-H team should review their programs and activities for risk for the safety of the youth we serve and to protect ourselves and the organization from potential risk and liability.

Supervision Ratio

Every 4-H event, program and activity must be supervised by at least two UME Certified Volunteers, 4-H Faculty and/or 4-H Staff. Adult: Youth ratios vary based on the age of youth. Clover age youth (5-7 yrs.) require two UME volunteers with a ratio of one volunteer to every five youth. For all other youth, ages 8 and up, two UME volunteers are required with a ratio of one volunteer to every 10 youth. In a mixed age group, the age of the youngest child will determine the adult to youth ratio to be followed.

The above supervision ratios are for short and controlled meetings and/or activities. Increased adult supervision is necessary for extended periods of time (especially overnight) or situations with greater risk.

Universal Precautions and First Aid

Universal Precautions are a method of infection control in which ALL human blood and tissue are treated as potentially infectious materials. It does NOT apply to tears, saliva, urine, sputum, sweat, nasal secretions or feces, unless they contain visible blood. Universal precautions are intended to prevent transmission of Hepatitis, HIV infections and other contagious diseases.

Volunteers leading 4-H events, programs and activities should be prepared to provide basic first aid in case of emergencies. Individuals providing first aid involving blood are encouraged to use personal protective barriers and proper handwashing procedures. Having access to a well-maintained first aid kit and knowing participants' emergency contact information is essential. Volunteers are encouraged, but not required, to become certified in First Aid and CPR. Individuals that provide emergency assistance regardless of certification are protected under the Good Samaritan Law.

See the link for more detailed information:

[UME Universal Precautions and Volunteers](#)

Incident and Accident Reporting

Volunteers should report moderate medical situations or accidents as well as behavior incidents that may require disciplinary action. Reporting guidelines should be followed and forms should be submitted to the county/city 4-H Team in a timely fashion.

See the link for more detailed information: Instructions (pending)

[Incident Report Form](#)

[Examples](#)

Forms for Organizing Special Events

Volunteers who wish to organize a special event, such as a workshop, training or organize a competition team will have additional expectations and guidelines depending on the specific program they wish to offer. Volunteers should contact their county/city 4-H office to prepare the appropriate registration, communication or organization or communication materials required for special programs.

Liability and Release Form

This is a document that is utilized to inform parents and youth of risk associated with program participation. It can be modified to suit a specific program and should be signed by parents/guardians prior to youth participation in _____.

Volunteers may contact their local 4-H Team to request a copy of this form.

Health Forms

Health Forms are used to prepare for proper accommodations of health needs during events. These standardized documents that can be used in preparation for an extended program where parents may not be present to report on behalf of their child's health. There are program specific forms include Camp Health Form, Event Health Form as

well as Medication Form, Medical Clearance Form and Sunscreen Authorization Form.

Volunteers should contact their local 4-H Team to obtain copies of all needed forms.

Permission to Travel Form

Unless it is listed in a volunteer's position description, volunteers are not required to drive youth to and from 4-H events, activities and programs. Volunteers are encouraged to not drive youth for their own protection since there is no personal liability protected provided to them since it is not a required duty.

If a volunteer chooses to drive a youth, they are taking on the risk and liability.

Volunteers may contact their local 4-H Team to request a copy of this form.

Publicity Release Form

They say a picture is worth a thousand words and nowhere is this more true than in marketing and PR. Pictures and videos captured at 4-H events, activities and programs can be a great way to show the amazing opportunities 4-H offers to youth. In order to utilize such images, individuals must have signed a Publicity Release Form which can give the organization permission to use their image for specific purposes.

Volunteers may contact their local 4-H Team to request a copy of this form.

Volunteers organizing registration materials for a program are encouraged to contact their county/city 4-H Team for the forms appropriate for their program.



Chaperoning

A chaperone is an individual that takes on the **care, custody** and **control** of youth in the absence of parental supervision or involvement. Chaperones are typically used for programs over 3 hours in length and foster the development of independence on behalf of the youth. Additional paperwork and preparations for the youth (i.e. registration) and for the chaperone (i.e. training, etc.) may be required take on the higher duties and responsibilities.

Chaperones can be used:

- **During single day events**, such as a workshop day where parents drop off/sign in their children and do not stay to supervise or assist.
- **On field trips** where parents entrust their child(ren) to the supervision of another and do not attend or participate.
- **During overnight night events**, such as a lock in, camp or retreat where parents drop off/sign in their child(ren) and do not stay to supervise or assist.
- **On overnight/out of state trips** where parents entrust their child(ren) to the supervision of another and do not attend or participate.

4-H Chaperones assume a higher level of responsibility than their regular volunteer role as they are serving in loco parentis, "in place of a parent" on behalf of 4-H Program. They are responsible for youth's health, well-being and safety throughout the duration of the activity, event or program and are expected to provide a safe, positive and inclusive environment for all participants in the name of 4-H. Therefore, a 4-H Chaperone should meet the following criteria:

Volunteers organizing registration materials for a program should contact their county/city 4-H Team for the forms appropriate for their program.

- Must be an approved Certified UME 4-H Volunteer with their local 4-H Program.
- Must be at least 21 years old. *Some programs may have a higher age expectation.*
- Must have at least 1 year of service as a Certified UME 4-H Volunteer. *Some programs may have a higher service expectation.*
- Must work with at least one other Certified UME 4-H Volunteer or Faculty/Staff member to serve in a leadership role for the program.
- May be vetted and selected to serve as a chaperone for a specific program.
- Should have a chaperone position description on file with their local 4-H Team to cover the specific duties assigned that are above and beyond their regular duties.
- Should maintain adequate supervision ratios based on the age of the youth
 - 5-7 years of age- 5:1 youth/adult ratio
 - 8-13 years of age- 8:1 youth/adult ratio
 - 14-18 years of age- 10:1 youth/adult ratio

Link to chaperone factsheet, need to finish and eventually post on web

Dynamic & Virtual Engagement

How and Why is PYD still relevant and critical in this time?



Positive Youth Development (PYD) emphasizes personal wellbeing and maximum personal development, rather than merely adequate development characterized by a lack of problems (Arnold, 2018; Benson & Scales, 2009). PYD is designed to support youth and communities

through crisis (Arnold, 2020):

- The challenges of the national crisis such as the Great Depression helped shape 4-H positive youth development
- PYD emphasizes the whole child, not activities alone
- PYD provides buffering relationships and supportive contexts
- PYD supports and enhances existing youth assets

Maryland 4-H must harness the strengths of PYD as we respond to the unprecedented needs of communities. Youth are navigating through complex circumstances related to a global pandemic and public health crisis, access to basic needs (i.e. food, water, shelter), mental health & wellness, access to technology and broadband services for virtual learning, and a global movement towards racial and social justice.

These events will have long lasting impacts on the positive development of youth and communities. Some of the realities related to living through a pandemic coupled with systemic racism and oppression include:

- An acceleration of inequity
- A widening opportunity gap leaving millions of youth behind
- Trauma and emotional distress that will have negative effects on youth's mental health and their ability to learn

Check out these resources to learn more about current trends and opportunities related to mental wellness, racial justice, and the opportunity gap:

- [National 4-H Study on Youth & Mental Health](#)

- [National 4-H Study on Racial Injustice and Teens](#)
- [National 4-H Study on the Impact of Digital Skills & Access among Teens](#)

Virtual Connections Promising Practices

4-H has traditionally been conducted in-person to develop a sense of belonging and allow for hands-on learning. 2020 has required us to utilize technology and other creative methods to stay connected, provide programs, host club meetings and offer new and unique opportunities for youth and volunteers. Our quick pivot during 2020 has highlighted our creativity, resiliency and ability to overcome obstacles in our virtual transition. We have also identified effective practices that can be used to broaden connections and opportunities. Below, you'll find helpful hints and resources as you expand safe and accessible opportunities for virtual or hybrid engagement.

Safety and Security

Provide adequate supervision for all virtual or in-person 4-H activities and programs. There must be at least 2 Certified UME 4-H Volunteers, UME Faculty/Staff or a combination of the two present and responsible for supervising and potentially for the care, custody and control of participants.

- Maryland law prohibits the recording of any conversation (by any means) without notice and consent of all affected parties. A parent/guardian must sign a publicity release consent prior to recording any virtual connection.
- Reach out to teens, young adults or other tech savvy "assistants" to help host and/or manage virtual connections.
- Be mindful of security settings and platform options to manage interactions and practice virtual connections before hosting.

Fostering Youth Engagement

Virtual Connection

- Use cameras and mics whenever safe and appropriate to help create a sense of Belonging.
- Focus on the fun of 4-H by including virtual

games and engaging activities. Some ideas include:

- ◊ dance breaks
- ◊ icebreaker and energizer activities led by youth and teens
- ◊ mindfulness activities
- ◊ demonstrations and time for individuals to share
- Use breakout rooms to nurture relationships.
- Use annotations, virtual white boards, chat boxes and reactions to provide a variety of ways for participants to engage with the content, and interact with others. This can create a sense of belonging and nurture relationships.
- Use electronic newsletters, email and social media to communicate information and opportunities to strengthen/nurture relationships.
- Offer and seek out volunteers to run Virtual Activity Clubs at the local or state level to spark imagination and broaden relationships.

Blended Approach

- Develop and distribute “activities in a box” that provide materials for participants to complete projects or activities.
- Offer creative challenges that require participants to build, create or develop something according to specific guidelines to “compete” for recognition. Offer a virtual demonstration or sharing event to highlight finished products/projects.
- Offer virtual connections for club meetings and activities along side in-person offerings. Consider how to present to both audiences including having a dedicated technology person.
- Use electronic newsletters, email, social media, texts, phone calls and/or mailings to communicate information and opportunities to strengthen/nurture relationships.

Virtual Resources

Virtual Learning and the 5 E Lesson Elements

Resource to link virtual platforms and tools with the 5 E’s of Learning.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rlomx3mK7IGs5oei- eoDjCw3PayEyMAY3c5uXzkOH68/edit?usp=sharing>

Virtual Connect: Engagement Opportunities and Expectations

Overview of how to prepare, conduct and provide security to virtual connections.

https://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/docs/Virtual_Connect_Engagement_Opportunities_and_Expectations_4_13_20.pdf

Connecting Virtually to Engage 4-H Youth

Recorded presentation to provide volunteers with ways to utilize online platforms to connect with youth.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VWQ4pixJtk&feature=youtu.be>

A Resource Tool for Volunteers to Select Appropriate Platforms/Applications

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nEtXft5LVjn5eKjzUzUHdtHbMnCkdPs8/view>

Zoom Participant Tool Guide

Easy visual aid designed to help lead a zoom call.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qLZukXMJ5m-WICtrHLYMaqYxUjgwKiKF/view?usp=sharing>

Virtual Fundraising

Recorded presentation to provide creative ways to conduct online fundraisers to support clubs and/or 4-H Programs.

<https://vimeo.com/458134903>

Virtual Club Elections

Resource for club leaders to help conduct online club elections in a fair and equitable manner.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pLtanl4SFbovGZDDfaF72dhxXn0VBE5j/view?usp=sharing>

University of Maryland Extension 4-H Youth Development Program Virtual Showcase Toolkit

Resource to support the organization and delivery of a virtual show.

<https://agnrgroups.umd.edu/4-h/management-resources/virtual-dynamic-engagement>

Resources

4-H History

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaRiYB_AxGA
<https://4-h.org/about/history/>

4HOnline

(youth and volunteer membership system)

<https://v2.4honline.com/#/user/sign-in>
<https://extension.umd.edu/4-h/youth-families/4-h-online> Support resources for youth, family and volunteer enrollment.

Affirmative Action Statement (internal)

<https://agnr.umd.edu/sites/agnr.umd.edu/files/files/documents/admin-services/archive/UME%20Affirmative%20Action%20Plan%20-%202003.pdf>

Ages and Stages of Youth Development

<http://extension.missouri.edu/fnep/lq782.pdf>

Americans with Disabilities Act (internal)

https://www.president.umd.edu/sites/president.umd.edu/files/documents/policies/VI-1.00D_3.pdf

Incident Reporting

Guidelines

[Report Form](#)

[Examples](#)

Animal Sciences Code of Ethics

https://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/_images/uploaded/Maryland%204-H%20Code%20of%20Animal%20Science-2018.pdf

Chaperone Fact Sheet

Insert link to document

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

Insert link to document

Fundraising Guidelines

<https://extension.umd.edu/4-h/volunteers/fundraising>

Experiential Learning Model

http://florida4h.org/clubs/files/101.10_Using_Experiential_Learning_Model.pdf

<https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource/Experiential-Learning-Model.pdf>

Maryland 4-H (mission, vision, etc.)

<https://extension.umd.edu/4-h>

Maryland 4-H Programs

<https://extension.umd.edu/locations>

Maryland 4-H Youth Code of Conduct

[Youth Code of Conduct](#)

Maryland 4-H Adult Code of Conduct

[Adult Code of Conduct](#)

Maryland Tort Claims Act

[Maryland Tort Claims Act](#)

Social Media Policy

[Social Media Policy](#)

Targeting Life Skills Model

https://4-h.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/101.9_Targeting_Life_Skills.pdf

The 4-H Essential Elements

<https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/essential-elements-4-h>.

The 4-H Thriving Model

<https://health.oregonstate.edu/thriving-model/home/about>

The Tufts Study of Positive Youth Development

<https://4-h.org/about/research/>

The 5 C's of Positive Youth Development

<https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/wi4hvolunteers/files/2017/09/1-5-Cs-Handout-Lerner-2007.pdf>

<https://y4y.ed.gov/uploads/media/The5CsPositiveYouthDevelopment.pdf>

Universal Precautions

Insert link to document

What is 4-H?

<https://4-h.org/about/what-is-4-h/>

Appendices



Universal Precautions and Volunteers

Universal precautions is an approach to infection control to treat all human blood and certain human body fluids as if they are known to be infectious for HIV, HBV and other bloodborne pathogens. (Bloodborne Pathogens Standard [29 CFR 1910.1030\(b\)](#) definitions). Volunteers who find it necessary to help a person during a medical emergency should use universal precautions measures to protect themselves to the best of their ability.

Universal precautions apply to blood, other body fluids containing visible blood (such as saliva contaminated with blood), bodily tissues and specific fluids: such as semen, vaginal secretions, cerebrospinal, synovial, pleural, peritoneal, pericardial, and amniotic fluids. Universal precautions do not apply to feces, nasal secretions, sputum, sweat, tears, urine, and vomitus unless they contain visible blood.

Universal precautions involve using **barriers** to protect against contact and performing a disposal/clean-up process to protect others. Universal precautions include

- Using personal protective barriers when exposed to body fluids, such as vinyl or latex gloves, disposable cloth towels, wads of gauze or paper towels. When removing protective gear correctly do not touch the contaminated side of the item.
- Proper removal of protective gear. When removing protective gear correctly do not touch the contaminated side of the item. Fold or roll the item so contamination is contained inside the item, not on the outside/exposed portion.
- Disposing of contaminated materials, including gloves, in an approved bio-hazard container or labeled bags (as appropriate). *Gloves should never be re-used.*
- Washing hands with soap and water immediately after exposure.
- Cleaning surfaces and or solid objects contaminated with blood or saliva by thoroughly washing with soap and water and disinfecting with a 30 second contact of household bleach diluted with water at a strength of 1:10 (Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 2010). Allow to air dry or wipe with a disposable cloth. This solution has a 24-hour shelf life and must be mixed fresh daily.

Additional best practices include:

- Picking up sharp objects such as broken glass using a broom and dustpan, tweezers or other object.
- Disposing of the sharp objects in a solid container such as a detergent bottle or coffee can rather than a plastic bag. Use a biohazard label or label with a caution notice.
- Seeking medical attention for any significant exposure to blood from another person.
- Completing and submitting an incident report to the local UME faculty/staff member. Records should be maintained according to OSHA standards and shared with the University of Maryland

[https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.1030#1910.1030\(b\)](https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.1030#1910.1030(b))
<https://health.maryland.gov/qahealth/substance-abuse/Pages/Good-Samaritan-Law.aspx>

Updated and revised, 2019. J. Morris.
 Reviewed, 2020. UME Volunteer Taskforce



Maryland Tort Claims Act and Volunteers

The State of Maryland provides statutory protection for State government units, employees, and volunteers. Through the Maryland Tort Claims Act (MTCA), the State provides volunteers legal immunity from suit, when a claim results from proper performance of their volunteer duties. The MTCA does not protect or “insure” volunteers against all liability, but it does provide them a legal defense if they are sued for something that happens while they are performing their duties as a volunteer.

In order for a volunteer to invoke the MTCA protection against suit, they have to show that they were not negligent in performing their duties, and that they did not intentionally cause or allow the harm to happen. The MTCA defines “negligence” as “unintentional failure to exercise the care that a prudent or reasonable person usually exercises. It is doing something that a person using ordinary care would not do.” “Ordinary care” is “that caution, attention or skill that a reasonable person would use under similar circumstances.”

Certain actions, such as intentional infliction of harm or willful/intentional disregard, remain outside the scope of the MTCA protection. A volunteer who is found to have intentionally caused or allowed a harm to happen will not be protected under the MTCA.

A UME volunteer is a person who provides a service to or for the State, who is not paid in whole or in part by the State, who satisfies all other requirements for designation as a UME volunteer,* and who is performing within the scope of his or her duties. As such, he/she may be protected by the MTCA if the following requirements are met.

***Requirements include:**

- Screened, vetted and on-boarded as a Certified UME Volunteer or Episodic Volunteer by local UME faculty/staff according to the UME Volunteer Policies and Procedures and Onboarding Process,
- Enrolled as a UME 4-H Volunteer in 4-H Online for current program year (4-H Only),
- Original appointment agreement and record of current appointment agreement on file with local UME Office. (4-H volunteers recertified annually through 4-H Online),
- Current position description(s) on file with local UME Office. (Must have been signed within the last 3 years).

A tort is a wrong that harms an individual and can result from a particular action taken by the volunteer, whether or not intentional, or from a failure to act when there is duty to do so. Lawsuits by others seek to recover damages by the injured person. The volunteer and UME may be held liable for the torts for which the State has waived its sovereign immunity.

To qualify for personal liability protection, the incident in question must have occurred within the scope of the volunteer’s public duties and committed without malice or gross negligence. Each of these items are discussed in detail below.

Scope of duties – includes all matters within the delegated or instructed authority of the volunteer most often defined by the position description. In other words, if the individual committed the alleged tort in the course of official State duties, then the State will defend the action and accept the liability, and the individual will be protected.

The Act does not protect individuals guilty of gross negligence, malicious acts, civil rights violation or criminal acts regardless of whether they were working within their scope of duties as described in their position description.



Maryland Tort Claims Act and Volunteers

Gross negligence is defined as “carelessness which is in reckless disregard for the safety or lives of others, and is so great it appears to be a conscious violation of other people's rights to safety.”<https://dictionary.law.com/Default.aspx?selected=838>

Malice is a conscious, intentional wrongdoing such as a civil wrong which includes ill-will, hatred or total disregard for the other's well-being.

<https://dictionary.law.com/Default.aspx?typed=malice&type=1>

A volunteer that acts within their scope of duties, taking the proper care and caution to manage risks that may arise in the best way possible and maintaining a professional and dignified attitude should be eligible for protection.

Volunteers also have an interest in maintaining their privacy, which is a right recognized in Maryland. An individual may recover damages from another person, including a volunteer, for invasion of privacy. Therefore, the UME privacy disclosure statement should be used when collecting personal information, perceptions or opinions.

The MTCA does not address the issue of court representation, but separate statutory provisions deal with representation of State officers and employees for all types of suits. The Attorney General’s office policy is to interpret the MTCA and these statutes in a parallel manner for volunteers. If a volunteer acts within the scope of authorized public duties and without malice or gross negligence, then he or she probably will be entitled to sovereign immunity (protection as part of the State) in a tort action under MTCA and to legal representation provided by the State.

Criminal charges are sometimes brought that relate solely to the performance of public duties. If the charges do not produce an adverse decision, the individual may apply through the Attorney General’s office to the Board of Public Works for reimbursement of legal fees and costs incurred in defending against the charges. (Gov. Off. on Vol. & the MD Council of Dir. of Vol. Serv., Volunteer Management in MD: Legal Liability & Insurance Issues, Baltimore, MD 1992).

A volunteer should report any potential concerns and/or situations to their local UME faculty/staff member as they arise. Documentation may be requested and should be completed in a timely manner. Follow-up communication may be required from either the local Extension office or State Program office.

Volunteers as Youth Advocates

Child Abuse and Neglect Signs and Reporting

UME 4-H Volunteers help provide a safe and inclusive environment for youth and should serve as advocates to help protect youth from suspected child abuse and neglect. Maryland state law and University policy require all adults to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Therefore, if a volunteer witnesses or is told about child abuse or neglect they are required to report to their 4-H Team and the appropriate authorities. Below you will find information regarding child abuse law, signs, and reporting requirements applicable to you as a UME Volunteer.

Child Abuse & Neglect

Child **ABUSE** is *physical or mental injury or any act of sexual molestation or exploitation of a child under age 18.*

Child **NEGLECT** is *failure to give proper care and attention to a child under age 18, including leaving a child unattended.*

A child may be abused or neglected by any:

- parent,
- person who cares for, has custody of, or is responsible for supervising a child, or,
- household or family member.

Child abuse or neglect exists when circumstances indicate:

- that a child's physical or mental health or welfare is being harmed,
- a child is at substantial risk of being harmed or,
- there is sexual abuse of a child, whether physical injuries are sustained or not.

Signs of Child Abuse & Neglect

Physical Abuse Include (not an exhaustive list):

- unexplained bruises: or a pattern of bruises
- cuts and burns to the body
- rope marks or burns
- fractures/broken bones
- welts, abrasions
- bite marks or puncture wounds

Signs of Sexual Abuse Include (not an exhaustive list):

- injury/reported pain/ itching in genital area
- sexual knowledge or behavior inappropriate for child's age.
- verbalization of sexual involvement or victimization
- sexually inappropriate and/or suggestive behavior
- difficulty sitting or walking

Signs of Neglect Include (not an exhaustive list)

- pattern of poor hygiene
- untreated serious medical problems
- obvious malnourishment
- child left unattended or without supervision
- inadequate clothing for weather
- child has a pattern of exhibiting withdrawn, shy, sad, or fatigued behavior in addition to one or more of the indicators noted above.

Volunteers as Youth Advocates

Child Abuse and Neglect Signs and Reporting

You are required to report child abuse or neglect when:

- You observe acts of child abuse or neglect,
- You observe signs of child abuse or neglect even if you did not witness the acts,
- You are told of child abuse or neglect by another person who has direct knowledge,
- You are told directly by a victim of child abuse or neglect, regardless of age, or
- You are told of past abuse by an adult survivor.

Immediately contact your supervising Extension employee if you observe any person physically or sexually abusing a child. You must report other non-emergency situations within 48 hours of learning of the abuse or neglect.

Do not conduct your own investigation. Listen to what has been disclosed to you and report the information/observations when you become aware of it.

How to Report:

1. Immediately notify your supervising Extension employee
2. In consultation with your supervising Extension employee,
 - a. **Notify the local Police** (if child is in imminent danger or abuse is happening at current event)
 - b. **Contact Child Protective Services (CPS)**
 - c. **Prepare a written report** to be sent to the Chief of Police and Child Protective Services within 48 hours that includes, if known:
 - Name and age of the victim when the incident occurred, identity (name) of the alleged abuser and the relationship to the child, and details related to the alleged abuse or maltreatment.

Confidentiality: Volunteers are required to maintain confidentiality for any and all medical, financial, insurance and other personal information they are told or that is shared with them during the performance of their duties. Volunteers may be sanctioned/terminated for failure to protect or the unauthorized use of personal information. Information contained in reports and records associated with child abuse/neglect is highly sensitive and must be protected as confidential. Limit information sharing only to those who have a legitimate need to know. Do not share information with a suspected or potential abuser, which may include a parent or guardian.

Protection: Any individual who in good faith makes or participates in making a report of suspected child abuse or neglect is immune from civil liability or criminal prosecution and is protected from any institutional reprisal that might otherwise result from compliance with the reporting laws or policies. Any individual who fails to report suspected child abuse may be subject to disciplinary action.

Adapted from *UMD Child Abuse Neglect Postcard*, 2019. J. Morris.
 Reviewed, 2020. UME Volunteer Taskforce



Maryland 4-H Adult Code of Conduct

A goal of the Maryland 4-H Program is to provide opportunities for children and youth to build character. Maryland 4-H supports the CHARACTER COUNTSSM six pillars of character: **TRUSTWORTHINESS, RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, FAIRNESS, CARING, AND CITIZENSHIP.** In order to ensure Maryland 4-H programs provide positive environments for all individuals to learn and grow, 4-H Adults agree to abide by these expectations of behavior:

- ✿ I will be **TRUSTWORTHY**. I will be worthy of trust, honor, and confidence. I will be a model of integrity by doing the right thing even when the cost is high. I will be honest in all my activities, and I will not cheat, lie, knowingly give false information, or be dishonest in any other way. I will follow through on commitments I make and responsibilities I accept. I will not engage in illegal or unethical behavior.
- ✿ I will be **RESPECTFUL**. I will show respect, courtesy, and consideration to everyone, including youth participants, other adults/volunteers, those in authority, and myself. I will act and speak respectfully. I will not use vulgar or abusive language or cause physical, mental, or emotional harm. I will dress in a manner that is appropriate, tasteful, and respectful for youth. I will take care of property and facilities and will not intentionally cause harm or damage. I will appreciate diversity in skill, ability, gender, ethnicity, family, and personal beliefs. I understand that Maryland 4-H does not tolerate statements or acts of discrimination or prejudice.
- ✿ I will be **RESPONSIBLE**. I will be responsible, accountable, and self-disciplined in the pursuit of excellence. I will live up to high expectations so I can be proud of my work and conduct. I accept my personal responsibility to be informed of and follow policies, rules, and procedures of Maryland 4-H and 4-H events or activities in which I am involved. I will be accountable for my choices and actions and I will take responsibility for any mistakes or misconduct in which I participate.
- ✿ I will be **FAIR**. I will be just, fair, and open-minded. I will assist with events by following the rules, not taking advantage of others, and not asking for special exception or consideration. I will demonstrate good sportsmanship and will accept the final outcome of events and contests.
- ✿ I will be **CARING**. I will be caring in my relationships with others. I will be kind and show compassion for other people and living things. I will treat others the way I want to be treated. I will show appreciation for the efforts of others. I will help members of my group to have a good experience by striving to include everyone.
- ✿ I will be a **GOOD CITIZEN**. I will be a contributing and law-abiding member of the organization, community, and society. I will not abuse illegal or illicit substances. I will refrain from using tobacco, tobacco products, or tobacco substitutes in the presence of youth at 4-H events. I will not act in a manner that is threatening, harassing, demeaning, or violent toward others, and I will not use technology or media to promote such actions. I will be respectful to the environment and contribute to the greater good. I will promote a spirit of inclusion by welcoming individuals from all backgrounds in my club and community. I will positively represent Maryland 4-H by holding myself to the standards of the 4-H Pledge and Motto.

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Maryland 4-H Adult Code of Conduct Agreement

Adult Code of Conduct:

Maryland 4-H expects adults participating in programs to conduct themselves in an acceptable manner and in accordance with the Maryland 4-H Code of Conduct outlined on the reverse of this document. Adults, both parents and volunteers, who engage in unacceptable conduct are subject to sanctions. Adult behaviors that are unacceptable under the Code of Conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Possession, use, or distribution of alcohol and/or illegal or illicit drugs while attending a 4-H program or event
- Use of tobacco, tobacco products or tobacco substitutes, including smokeless tobacco, e-cigarettes, smokeless “vaping” devices, and/or other nicotine delivery devices, in the presence of youth at a 4-H program or event
- Abuse and/or misuse of prescription or non-prescription drugs or substances
- Sexual advances or activities involving youth
- Actions that create a hostile environment such as sexual innuendo, slander, profane language, racial/ethnic slurs or other disparaging remarks or hostile/bullying behavior
- Use of physical punishment for discipline
- Actions that create an unsafe environment, such as irresponsible or potentially hazardous behavior
- Failure to report suspected neglect and/or physical or sexual abuse to appropriate authorities
- Lying, cheating, or other unethical practices
- Physical, verbal, emotional, or mental abuse of, or threats toward, another person
- Theft, destruction, or abuse of property
- Use of electronic devices and/or social media to bully, demean, harass, or threaten another person
- Use of technology to create, post, or transmit to or willingly receive from youth unacceptable content such as that containing profanity, advocacy of use/possession of alcohol or drugs, violence, sexually explicit content, etc
- Promotion of religion or political preferences
- Breach of personal or professional confidentiality

Maryland 4-H Disciplinary Policy and Procedures:

An adult, parent, or volunteer in a 4-H program who engages in conduct that may jeopardize the health or safety of themselves, youth, other people, or the integrity of 4-H may be sanctioned or removed from the program or activity. The appropriate action will be made at the discretion of the University of Maryland Extension (UME) faculty/staff member.

Following the incident of inappropriate conduct, the individual will be notified in writing of the nature of any unacceptable conduct and potential sanctions. In such cases:

- The county/city UME faculty or staff member with overall responsibility for the program will set up a meeting to hear the individual. At the discretion of UME or at the request of the individual, a committee may be appointed by UME to review the matter.
- Following the meeting, the individual will be notified in writing of the outcome of the meeting and any sanction(s) to be imposed.
- Sanctions may be appealed in writing within seven (7) calendar days after the individual receives notice of the decision, to the Area Extension Director (AED). The AED will consult with the appropriate State 4-H Specialist(s) in considering the individual’s appeal. The individual will be notified in writing of the decision of the AED.
- The decision of the AED may be appealed in writing to the State 4-H Leader within seven (7) days after the individual receives notice of the decision. The individual will be notified in writing of the State 4-H Leader’s decision. The decision of the State 4-H Leader is final.

BEHAVIOR PLEDGE

I have read the Maryland 4-H Code of Conduct and the Maryland 4-H Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. I will support and uphold these principles, and will model positive behavior for all 4-H youth and families. I will support the individual in charge of maintaining appropriate behavior at 4-H programs, events, and activities. I am aware that my actions and decisions affect me and others and that poor actions or decisions may result in restriction or revocation of my access to current and future 4-H programs. I agree to accept the appropriate and logical consequences of my actions as determined by Maryland 4-H and University of Maryland Extension.

Adult/Volunteer Printed Name

Adult/Volunteer Signature

Date



Maryland 4-H Youth Code of Conduct

A goal of the Maryland 4-H Program is to provide opportunities for children and youth to build character. Maryland 4-H supports the CHARACTER COUNTSSM six pillars of character: **TRUSTWORTHINESS, RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, FAIRNESS, CARING, AND CITIZENSHIP**. In order to ensure Maryland 4-H programs provide positive environments for all individuals to learn and grow, 4-H participants agree to abide by these expectations of behavior:

- ✿ I will be **TRUSTWORTHY**. I will be worthy of trust, honor, and confidence. I will be a model of integrity by doing the right thing even when the cost is high. I will be honest in all my activities, and I will not cheat, lie, knowingly give false information, or be dishonest in any other way. I will follow through on commitments I make and responsibilities I accept. I will not engage in illegal or unethical behavior.
- ✿ I will be **RESPECTFUL**. I will show respect, courtesy, and consideration to everyone, including other program participants, those in authority, and myself. I will act and speak respectfully. I will not use vulgar or abusive language or cause physical, mental, or emotional harm. I will dress in a manner that is appropriate, tasteful, and respectful for youth. I will take care of property and facilities and will not intentionally cause harm or damage. I will appreciate diversity in skill, ability, gender, ethnicity, family, and personal beliefs. I understand that Maryland 4-H does not tolerate statements or acts of discrimination or prejudice.
- ✿ I will be **RESPONSIBLE**. I will be responsible, accountable, and self-disciplined in the pursuit of excellence. I will live up to high expectations so I can be proud of my work and conduct. I accept my personal responsibility to be informed of and follow policies, rules, and procedures of Maryland 4-H and 4-H events or activities in which I participate. I will be accountable for my choices and actions and I will take responsibility for any mistakes or misconduct in which I participate.
- ✿ I will be **FAIR**. I will be just, fair, and open-minded. I will participate in events by following the rules, not taking advantage of others, and not asking for special exception or consideration. I will demonstrate good sportsmanship and will accept the final outcome of events and contests.
- ✿ I will be **CARING**. I will be caring in my relationships with others. I will be kind and show compassion for other people and living things. I will treat others the way I want to be treated. I will show appreciation for the efforts of others. I will help members of my group to have a good experience by striving to include everyone.
- ✿ I will be a **GOOD CITIZEN**. I will be a contributing and law-abiding member of the organization, community, and society. I will not use illegal or illicit substances such as tobacco, alcohol, or drugs. I will not act in a manner that is threatening, harassing, demeaning, or violent toward others, and I will not use technology or media to promote such actions. I will be respectful to the environment and contribute to the greater good. I will promote a spirit of inclusion by welcoming individuals from all backgrounds in my club and community. I will positively represent Maryland 4-H by holding myself to the standards of the 4-H Pledge and Motto.

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Maryland 4-H Youth Code of Conduct Agreement

Youth Code of Conduct:

Maryland 4-H expects youth participating in programs to behave in an acceptable manner and in accordance with the Maryland 4-H Code of Conduct outlined on the reverse of this document. 4-H participants who engage in unacceptable conduct are subject to discipline. Youth behaviors that are unacceptable under the Code of Conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Possession, use, or distribution of alcohol and/or illegal or illicit drugs
- Possession or use of weapons or dangerous materials
- Possession or use of tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, e-cigarettes, smokeless “vaping” devices, and/or other nicotine delivery devices
- Misuse of prescription or non-prescription drugs or substances
- Sexual activity
- Lying, cheating, misrepresenting project work, or other unethical practices
- Unauthorized absence from program site
- Physical, verbal, emotional, or mental abuse of, or threats toward, another person
- Theft, destruction, or abuse of property
- Use of electronic devices and/or social media to bully, demean, harass, or threaten another person
- Use of technology to create, transmit, post, or willingly receive unacceptable content such as that containing profanity, advocacy of use/possession of alcohol or drugs, violence, sexual misconduct, nudity, etc

Maryland 4-H Disciplinary Policy and Procedures:

A participant in a 4-H program who engages in conduct that may jeopardize the health or safety of the participant, other people, or the integrity of 4-H will be immediately dismissed from the program or activity. This determination and dismissal will be made at the discretion of the University of Maryland Extension (UME) faculty/staff member or UME volunteer in charge of the program or activity. The dismissed youth participant’s parent or guardian will be responsible for providing transportation away from the program or event.

Following dismissal from a program, the 4-H participant and his/her parent or guardian will be notified in writing of the nature of any unacceptable conduct for which sanctions, up to and including suspension or dismissal from 4-H programs or activities, are being considered. In such cases:

- The county/city UME faculty or staff member with overall responsibility for the program will set up a meeting to hear the 4-H participant. The 4-H participant’s parent/guardian will be present at this meeting. At the discretion of UME or at the request of the 4-H participant, a committee may be appointed by UME to review the matter.
- Following the meeting, the 4-H participant and his/her parent/guardian will be notified in writing of the outcome of the meeting and any sanction(s) to be imposed.
- Sanctions may be appealed in writing within seven (7) calendar days after the 4-H participant receives notice of the decision, to the Area Extension Director (AED). The AED will consult with the appropriate State 4-H Specialist(s) in considering the 4-H participant’s appeal. The 4-H participant and his/her parent/guardian will be notified in writing of the decision of the AED.
- The decision of the AED may be appealed in writing to the State 4-H Leader within seven (7) days after the 4-H participant receives notice of the decision. The 4-H participant and his/her parent/guardian will be notified in writing of the State 4-H Leader’s decision. The decision of the State 4-H Leader is final.

BEHAVIOR PLEDGE

I have read the Maryland 4-H Code of Conduct and the Maryland 4-H Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. I am aware that my actions and decisions affect me and others and that poor actions or decisions may result in my loss of privileges for current and future 4-H programs. I will accept the appropriate and logical consequences of my actions, as determined by Maryland 4-H.

 4-Her’s Printed Name

 4-Her’s Signature

 Date

As the parent/guardian of _____, I have read the Maryland 4-H Code of Conduct and the Maryland 4-H Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. I will support and uphold these principles, and will model positive behavior for my child and other 4-H youth and families. I will support the individual in charge of maintaining appropriate behavior at 4-H programs, events, and activities. I agree to accept the appropriate and logical consequences of my child’s actions as determined by Maryland 4-H and the University of Maryland Extension.

 Parent/Guardian’s Printed Name

 Parent/Guardian’s Signature

 Date

University of Maryland programs, activities, and facilities are available to all without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, age, national origin, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, religion, protected veteran status, genetic information, personal appearance, or any other legally-protected class.





Social Media

Best Practices and Tips

Introduction

Social media provides powerful tools for communication, to both share information about our programs and engage in conversation with each other and outside parties. These guidelines outline expectations for communicating online on behalf of Maryland 4-H Clubs and Groups.

For the purposes of these guidelines, social media is defined as accessible online networks and communities designed to allow users to easily interact and share information. Examples include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Snap Chat, Twitch, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flickr, Tumblr, blogs, etc.

Clubs and groups chartered through Maryland 4-H may develop and maintain an internet presence (websites, email, blogs, calendars, downloadable photos, audio or video) and other electronic or print media to promote and provide information about their respective programs. Individuals responsible for the development and/or maintenance of these communication venues must abide by the following Social Media Guidelines offered by the University of Maryland found at <https://www.brand.umd.edu/socialmedia.html>. In addition to this document, staff, volunteers and members are strongly advised to follow the additional Maryland 4-H Social Media guidelines:

4-H Guidelines

- In all instances, 4-H members and volunteers should adhere to the Maryland 4-H Youth and Adult Code of Conduct and represent 4-H in the best possible way.
- Most social media networks have a minimum age for use, and in most cases this is 13 and older. No member under this age should administer or participate in a 4-H social media account.
- Local, club and group social media accounts should only be used for the purposes of sharing information about and engaging in conversation around those programs and related items. They should not be used for personal or commercial purposes.
- Local accounts representing an office/local program should be administered by a UME Employee.
- Local 4-H staff should be notified prior to the creation of a club or group social media account.

An adult UME 4-H volunteer leader must be an account administrator, or in the case of open groups, be made a group member. Local 4-H staff should be invited to join all club and group social media accounts. Account administrators are responsible for monitoring the sites for questions, issues that need a response and, where applicable, to remove inappropriate content.

- Titles, addresses, and content of email, websites, and other media must reflect the club or group's designated level of authority (i.e., club, local, district, state).
- All content must adhere to 4-H and University of Maryland policies and guidelines including, but not limited to, logo usage, nondiscrimination statement, sponsorship, and privacy.
- Privacy of participants must be treated with respect including contact or personal information.
- Photographs, videos, or other media with identifiable human subjects may not be used without written permission of their parent or guardian.
- Administrators and participants must follow the policies and regulations of each social media network. All content must comply with state, federal, and international laws, including, but not limited to, accessibility, copyright, and fair use.
- As with other forms of communications, private messages on social sites (Facebook messages, Twitter, direct messages, etc.) between a youth member and an adult should include another adult, preferably the youth's parent or guardian. Adults are strongly discouraged from sharing their personal social media account with a 4-H youth.
- The 4-H charter may be revoked from clubs and groups deemed in violation of these policies and guidelines. Individuals who violate these policies may be removed as 4-H volunteers or members and may face appropriate legal action.

Social Media Tips to Keep in Mind

- Be cautious of third-party applications that can access information from social media accounts. Be certain that these applications are safe and understand fully what information they can pull from your account.
- If linking to a website outside of 4-H or University of Maryland, know what that website is and how linking to it may be construed. Be sure that the website is safe, credible and does not contain offensive content.




- A plan should be developed for when and how social media accounts will be updated and monitored. Only establish accounts you believe you have the resources to maintain. If an account is not updated for weeks or months at a time, it reflects poorly on the program and has clearly fallen out of use, at which point it should be removed. An easy way to put information on multiple social media sites is Hootsuite. There, you can schedule your messages to come out on specific days, which helps with the management of the sites.
- Always be honest about who you are or who you represent. A 4-H account need not personally identify the person(s) administering the account, but individuals should never pretend to be someone else.
- Above all, be smart and safe. Do not share content that is profane, obscene, discriminatory or otherwise offensive. Do not share personally identifying information about individuals beyond general information, with the appropriate approvals. On both personal and 4-H accounts, know your privacy and security settings and be cautious about clicking on suspicious links.^{1,2}

Working Together with the Maryland 4-H Team

The Maryland 4-H Center has created a look for Maryland Social Media images that will help increase awareness of Maryland 4-H and to create a consistent message across programs within 4-H. Maryland 4-H is making a state and national 4-H connection by using the Maryland Extension 4-H logo, a touch of the Maryland flag, and the 4-H Grows Here mark. Including a local, state or national hashtag related to the event or program will lead to greater visibility for 4-H.



Maryland 4-H social media:

 @UMEMaryland4-H
  @Maryland4H
 @Maryland4H
 Extension.umd.edu/4-h

Administrative Procedure: Social Media

Located on the University of Maryland website are guidelines for following AGNR's federal requirement of public notification for social media. Visit <https://go.umd.edu/SMPolicy19>

Reputation and Crisis Management

- A crisis is an incident or threat of campus or off-campus safety, tragedy, crime, or natural disaster. A crisis will often present a situation that threatens the college's reputation.
- It is important to manage crises effectively to avoid rumors or the sharing of misinformation. The Maryland 4-H Center and the college's Communication office will help guide local offices to respond promptly to reputation threats via media statements, press conferences, social media, etc. Our primary goal is to promote proactive messages that reinforce positive reputational points (leading research or projects, innovation, 4-H youth achievements, etc.)
- The college's communication office in partnership with the administrative team and Maryland 4-H center, will lead a response and communication strategy around crisis management. This centralized approach and policy are in place to prevent misinformation, rumor-spreading, and inconsistent messaging.
- If a crisis originates and begins to escalate on social media follow these steps:
 - Please do not join the conversation. Impulsive or reactionary responses can be misconstrued, and give additional ammunition to activists and trolls.
 - In some cases, after consultation with the communication office and Maryland 4-H Center, a prepared statement may be appropriate for posting on social media. Remember, we are in the business of education and delivering research-based information. Keep that mission in mind when commenting on social platforms, and don't be distracted by defending against attacks or hateful language. It can be a slippery slope.
 - It is entirely appropriate to block hateful or violent comments.
- If you hear of a crisis:
 - First discuss the situation with your AED.
 - If warranted contact a 4-H Specialist in the program area that is being affected and your Program Leader.
 - If necessary, additional guidance can be provided by the college's communications office. Graham Binder and Samantha Watters can be reached at binderg@umd.edu, or samurai7@umd.edu.
 - Faculty and staff should refrain from speaking publicly on behalf of the college during a crisis event. The college's communications team will determine designated spokespeople during a crisis.
 - To find out more on crisis situations where you need more guidance go to <https://wiki.moo.umd.edu/display/umeanswers/Marketing>.³

#Hashtags

Below are some hashtags to consider to increase the visibility of your program or event.

Youth

#4H
#TrueLeaders
#4HYouthInAction
#Explore
#Maryland4H
#4HProud
#4HStrong

Parents

#4HGrowsHere
#InspireKidsToDo
#4HYouthInAction
#TrueLeaders
#WednesdayWisdom
#MotivationMonday
#TuesdayThoughts
#TBT
#CooperativeExtension
#WellnessWednesday
#Explore
#Maryland4H
#4HProud
#4HStrong

Funding

#4HGrowsHere
#InspireKidsToDo
#4HYouthInAction
#TrueLeaders
#WednesdayWisdom
#MotivationMonday
#TuesdayThoughts
#CooperativeExtension
#Maryland4H

Alumni

#4HGrown
#TrueLeaders
#BecauseOf4H
#TBT
#CooperativeExtension
#InspireKidsToDo
#Maryland4H

Programs

#Livestock
#4HLivestock
#Ag
#Fair
#CivicEngagment
#4HSTEM
#ScienceSaturday
#4HCamp
#SummerCamp
#Environment
#4HHealthyEssentials
#HealthyLiving
#wellness
#fitness
#nutrition
#WellnessWednesday
#4HHealthyLiving

Volunteer

#InspireKidsToDo
#Service
#Inspiration
#ServiceSunday
#Mentoring
#ThankfulThursday
#4HProud
#4HStrong

Professional Social Media Sites

As an educator you may wish to create a professional social media presence. The university does not expect you to do this but encourages you to share your great work. Social media provides an opportunity to:

- An opportunity to have a presence in your professional world.
- An audience to be able to collect data.
- Self promotion, colleague promotion
- A way to engage with people about your research.

Some things to keep in mind as you engage in social media:

- There is an predictable nature to Social Media. You do not know what will resonate with people.
- Choose the best platform for you.
- Content is key.
- No more than 3 central topics.
- Use visuals and video when possible.
- Follow those who you want following you.
- Follow hashtags and use them.
- Negative news spreads fastest.
- Be prepared for scrutiny.
- What is the purpose of your page/site?
- Is the world your target audience?
- Professional or personal purpose?
- Are you ready for your post to last indefinitely.
- Respect others and their views.
- What would your Parent/Dean/Program Leader think about what you posted?
- You can mute or block trolls.
- You can subscribe to other people's blocked lists to decrease possible bots or trolls.

References:

¹ Maryland 4-H Development of Practitioner Group, 2018.

² Adopted from Kansas Department of 4-H Youth Development Policy Guide (2013) and The Penn State Extension Fact Sheet # 4-H Leaders and Penn State Extension Volunteers, Pennsylvania 4-H Social Media Guidelines (Jan. 2016).

³ Adapted from University of Maryland, Communications Department, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Power Point <https://wiki.moo.umd.edu/display/umeanswers/Marketing>.