



So You Have Been Asked to Be a 4-H Project Leader

There are four steps to becoming a 4-H Project Leader:

1. Understand what a project leader does and agree to the task.
2. Enroll in 4-H Online as a volunteer leader.
3. Complete a 4-H volunteer Screening Consent Form and undergo “painless screening”.
4. Complete a one-time volunteer orientation workshop (can be done in-person or on-line).

This information sheet is to help you understand all four steps. Additional information can be obtained by visiting the Missouri 4-H Website: <http://mo4h.missouri.edu/volunteer.aspx> or contacting Dave Hileman, 4-H Youth Development Specialist at 636-583-5141, or hilemand@missouri.edu.

1. What is expected of a project leader?

4-H project leaders are expected to conduct at least 6 hours of meeting time to provide opportunities for 4-H members to learn new skills and information about the project. This is done by teaching the information to the members, by finding others who can teach the skills or information, or a combination of both. Leaders can use a combination of their own knowledge, knowledge of others, and the 4-H project literature. Most of the project literature includes several activities to help teach project skills and information. The activities are designed with clear instructions that anyone can follow. Project leaders will have to purchase the literature, or ask the club to purchase them. The cost to purchase the literature for each project will be about \$16.00 to \$20.00 (for most project literature includes three units of member manuals and one leader manual).

Expenses for supplies and materials for the project are the responsibility of the families. Project Leaders should give the families some idea of what the cost will be early in the project. Some volunteers choose only to charge the families for expensive supplies, while others charge for all supplies.

Project Leaders consider their own time, and the schedules of the members in setting up project meeting dates and times. It is ideal to find a time that meets everyone’s needs, but because everyone has very busy schedules, the project leader sets the time and date of the meetings for when most families can participate. Project Leaders also determine where the project group will meet. Often project meetings are held at the home of the project leader.

2. How do I enroll as a 4-H project leader?

When you know what project or projects you will lead, and which 4-H Club you will be connected to, you are ready to enroll online as a 4-H project leader. You will need log in to your family 4-H Online account to enroll yourself as a volunteer.

If you do not have family members enrolled in a 4-H Club, you will need to set up a family 4-H Online account before you can enroll as a volunteer. You will find a link to the Missouri 4-H Online site from the Missouri 4-H Volunteer page at <http://www.4h.missouri.edu/volunteer.aspx>.

As you enroll through the 4-H Online system, you will find additional expectations of adults who wish to serve as 4-H volunteers. Read these carefully before typing your electronic signature agreeing to follow the expectations.

Contact the Gasconade County MU Extension office if you need assistance with enrollment.

A 4-H volunteer must re-enroll in 4-H Online each year.

3. Granting permission for volunteer screening.

Because volunteers may be working with children from other families, all volunteers must be screened for child abuse, neglect, and criminal records. Your written permission is required before we can begin the screening process. You will need to complete an Annual Background Screening Consent Form (available from the MU Extension Office or online at <http://4h.missouri.edu/documents/lg639.pdf>) and return it to the Gasconade County MU Extension Office. Once you return the consent form, screening will take place without any further work on your part. When screening is complete you will receive a postcard telling you that you can begin working with 4-H members. Volunteers must complete a consent form and be screened each year. There is no cost to volunteers for this process.

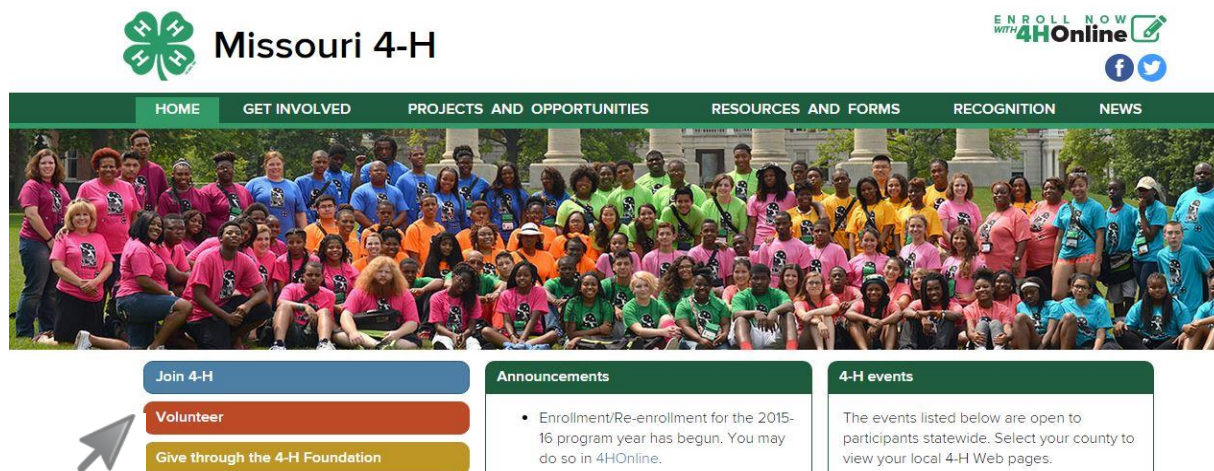
4. Complete a One-time Volunteer Orientation

Missouri 4-H is in the business of positive youth development. The 4-H Volunteer Orientation is designed to help all 4-H volunteers understand the history, philosophy, and methods that lead to positive youth development. It is important that you complete the orientation as quickly as possible to complete the enrollment process and assure you are afforded the liability and accident insurance protections a Recognized 4-H Volunteer receives when working with 4-H members. At least one face-to-face orientation opportunity will be available in Gasconade County, but volunteers can also take the orientation on-line at any time through their 4-H Online account. Instructions to access the orientation are available at <http://4h.missouri.edu/documents/4HOnline/4HOHowSignUpForTrainings.pdf>. This is a one-time requirement. Volunteers do not need to repeat the orientation each year.

Additional Help for 4-H Volunteers

A one-hour basic Project Leader training will be held each January to help project leaders with additional resources and teaching methods. In addition, volunteers can contact county 4-H staff at the Gasconade County University of Missouri Extension office at any time for additional information.

The Missouri 4-H website (see front) also has a lot of information to help project leaders. When on the site be sure to check out “Projects and Opportunities” tab for information about each project (the project brief under supplemental materials is especially helpful) and click on the Volunteer button to learn about additional resources for volunteers.



Volunteer Recognition

4-H Clubs often recognize project leaders at the club level. The Gasconade County 4-H Council recognizes one outstanding volunteer each year. However, most volunteers find that their greatest reward comes from working with their project members and watching them grow in confidence as they gain new skills and knowledge, and get the added important benefit of having another caring adult in their lives.