



## Wyoming 4-H Volunteer Leader: Policies, Training, and Screening



State-wide policies are in place to ensure a safe environment for all youth and adults who participate in the University of Wyoming Extension 4-H Program. Providing a safe environment for youth and adults in the Wyoming 4-H Program is our highest priority and is achieved through appropriate screening and training.

4-H volunteer leaders serve as representatives of the University of Wyoming Extension. 4-H volunteer leaders must comply with all federal and state nondiscrimination laws and policies. Volunteer leaders are also expected to abide by the behavior standards for volunteers established by the University of Wyoming Extension 4-H Program, and to conduct themselves as positive role models for youth.



### **State 4-H Policies regarding volunteer leaders in the UW Extension 4-H Program:**

- All 4-H programs and activities must be supervised by an approved 4-H volunteer leader or a UW Extension Educator.
- Adults that are at least 19 years of age prior to January 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year may apply to be a 4-H volunteer leader.
- An adult can apply to become a 4-H volunteer leader at any time of the year. To be approved as a 4-H volunteer leader, adults must create a family profile in 4-HOnline, successfully complete the required training, and complete screening with a criminal background check and a motor vehicle records check.
- Individuals who have ever been convicted of a crime against children or a vulnerable adult, a crime of a sexual nature, or a felony involving violence will not be approved as a 4-H volunteer leader.
- The UW Extension State 4-H Office Staff will evaluate other offenses identified in the background check based on when the offense occurred and relevance of the offense to the potential volunteer's desired role.
- Every 5 years, a 4-H volunteer leader is required to participate in additional training. Each year training opportunities will be offered to enhance your role as a 4-H volunteer leader and in your 5<sup>th</sup> year, you will be required to participate in one of the available trainings.
- Every 5 years, a 4-H volunteer leader is required to provide permission for a criminal background check. Between the initial background check and 5 year rescreening, it is the responsibility of the 4-H volunteer leader to inform the county 4-H educator of circumstances that may affect the results of the current background check.
- 4-H volunteer leaders are required to complete the UW Motor Vehicle Record check annually.
- If deemed necessary, any time during a volunteer's time of service with UW Extension 4-H Program, a new or additional background check may be requested. Failure to complete the new background check may result in dismissal as a 4-H volunteer leader.
- All shooting sports and horse related 4-H events, competitions, and/or activities must be directly supervised by a 4-H volunteer leader who has received additional required UW 4-H training designated by the State 4-H Program for the discipline, event, competition, or activity being supervised.
- All 4-H sponsored youth activities that involve overnight stays must be supervised by a minimum of two designated, adult chaperones. The chaperones can be two official 4-H volunteer leaders or one 4-H volunteer leader and a UW Extension employee or two UW Extension employees. Chaperones for overnight stays must be at least 21 years of age and complete the additional chaperone training.

- 4-H councils and committees are under the direction of the county 4-H educator to organize, plan, implement and evaluate the 4-H program.
- Following is a list of volunteer roles that have direct, ongoing contact with youth. Adults in these roles must be approved as a 4-H volunteer leader.
  - Judging coaches
  - Organizational club leaders
  - Project leaders
  - County project development committees
  - Chaperones
  - Providing transportation for 4-H members other than their own children
  - Handling club or county committee/group finances
  - Any other specific roles as identified by the county 4-H educator
- A 4-H volunteer leader can be terminated from their service to the program for any reason.

### **Process to become a 4-H volunteer leader:**

An adult can apply to become a 4-H volunteer leader at any time of the year.

- 1<sup>st</sup> – create a family profile in 4-HOnline
- 2<sup>nd</sup> – complete the New Leader Orientation – You must complete ONE of the available options which are described under Training Requirements below
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – complete screening with a criminal background check through UW Department of Human Resources (every 5 years)
- 4<sup>th</sup> - complete the motor vehicle check through UW Risk Management (annually)



### **Training Requirements:**

**New 4-H Volunteer Leaders** – New 4-H volunteer leaders must complete New Leader Orientation. There are two options available; you must complete one of the two. These trainings are free of cost to the volunteer.

- You can participate in a face to face orientation. Contact the County Extension Office for information about new leader orientation taught in a group or individual setting.
- Complete the online orientation – available on the Wyoming state 4-H web site: <http://www.uwyo.edu/4-h/> Click on For Volunteers and the New Leader Orientation is under Training Opportunities. There are several sessions, each between 10 and 15 minutes in length.

Individuals who complete one the on-line New Leader Orientations are also required to participate in a short meeting with the county 4-H educator. This provides the prospective volunteer an opportunity to learn specifically about the county program. It also gives the county 4-H educator a chance to get to know the adult who wants to volunteer in the county 4-H program.

Optional training which can be very helpful to new 4-H volunteer leaders is the 4-H Volunteer e-Learning Course. This on-line course includes several 20 minute modules and covers information about the purpose and philosophy of 4-H, the essential elements of positive youth development, how to conduct club meetings, after school programs and other types of gatherings, as well as techniques and tools for working with youth groups. The following instructions outline how to access the 4-H Volunteer e-Learning Course:

- All of the modules in the E-learning Volunteer Training can be accessed from the Wyoming state 4-H web site under For Volunteers.
  - The password is *volunteer*

- Each module includes a completion certificate. The state 4-H office receives notification when a prospective volunteer leader completes an e-learning module.
- The state 4-H office will communicate the completion status to the county extension office.

**Existing 4-H Volunteer Leaders** - Every 5 years a 4-H volunteer leader is required to participate in additional training that will benefit the volunteer's role in 4-H. There are many methods and/or opportunities to receive the training:

- Complete the 4-H Volunteer e-Learning Course
- Attend county training offered by the 4-H educator or another designated 4-H volunteer leader
- Attend 4-H training offered at a district, state or regional level
- Attend external training around subject matter related to the volunteer's role in the 4-H program
- Attend training provided through their employment that would relate to their 4-H volunteer role (i.e. in-service training done through school district, leadership or management courses, etc.)



## Screening:

To protect your privacy and ensure confidentiality, information for both the criminal background check and the motor vehicle check will be submitted on-line by you. If you do not have an e-mail address, contact the County Extension Office for options to complete volunteer screening. There is no out of pocket cost for a prospective 4-H volunteer leader to complete the screening process.

Screening of the **criminal background check** conducted through the UW Department of Human Resources will include convictions of child endangerment, crimes of a sexual nature, felony involving violence, and financial crimes. Individuals who have ever been convicted of a crime against children or a vulnerable adult, a crime of a sexual nature, or a felony involving violence will not be approved as a 4-H volunteer leader. All information gathered in the screening process is considered private and will remain confidential and will only be released as required by law.

In addition to the criminal background check, the **motor vehicle record (MVR) check** is completed by the UW Department of Risk Management. The MVR includes moving violations and at fault accidents in the past 12 months and any major convictions in the past 36 months. A flagged MVR check may result in restrictions to the 4-H volunteer leaders' approval to transport 4-H members who are not their own children.

## **Congratulations! You are a 4-H volunteer Leader with the University of Wyoming Extension!**

Upon completion of the steps to be approved as a 4-H volunteer leader, you will be entered into the state data management system. As a University of Wyoming 4-H volunteer leader you are entitled to protection under the University of Wyoming's general liability and insurance programs for actions related to the conduct of your official 4-H activities and duties so long as:

- Your appointment as a 4-H volunteer leader is current;
- You conform with the policies and core values of the University of Wyoming Extension 4-H Program;
- You have obeyed all applicable laws, regulations, procedures, and
- You are performing within the course and scope of your role as a 4-H volunteer leader.



**Thank you for helping create a safe environment  
for everyone involved in our UW Extension 4-H programs**