



Unit 4: Stewardship and Risk Management



As adults leading the 4-H program, we play a big part in teaching young people to be good leaders and citizens. If we are good stewards of the organization and take steps to protect young people, they learn from that. Let's begin with stewardship.

Stewardship of Resources



Stewardship refers to the organization's resources and is a very important part of 4-H work for volunteers, youth and staff. Good stewardship is about accountability, responsibility, and setting clear expectations.

4-H as a "Public" Organization



4-H is owned by the public. It carries a federal tax-exempt status and is designated as "public" because it receives a substantial part of funding from federal, state, and local government sources. This public nature means that staff and volunteers have certain responsibilities that go with the use of the 4-H Name and Emblem—responsibilities that include program, human, and fiscal stewardship.

Volunteers and members of 4-H clubs, committees, and other groups are responsible not only to their own group, but also to the University and the public at large.



Purdue University Extension is an Equal Opportunity Educator and Employer



Being a public organization means that programs conducted by 4-H must be open to all regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and more. We must ensure that programs have welcoming environments and that they reflect the demographics of our local communities.

Good program stewardship means that all efforts associated with the 4-H name and emblem offer learning experiences of the highest quality and that they are organized for the sole purpose of educating young people to learn leadership, citizenship, and other life skills.

4-H is a Public Investment



4-H is a publicly owned program and it has a responsibility to deliver quality youth development experiences for young people. We can usually very easily talk about the value of the program to those members and to their families. *But* because 4-H is a public investment, it must also deliver “public value”—benefits to community members not directly a part of the program.

In order to deliver public value, we must make sure that we are not simply providing private benefits to individual young people, but also providing benefits to the community in which those young people live. Public value might include the work that 4-H members provide to improve their community through service-learning activities, or members developing leadership skills and motivation to support their communities as adults.

Regardless of your volunteer position, you will exercise your responsibilities consistent with policies and procedures that serve the best interest of the young people and the communities in which they live.



Federal and State Policies



The use of the 4-H Name and Emblem is protected to the same extent as the Presidential Seal and the Olympic Rings. All 4-H groups must follow federal and state policies and rules regarding its use.

For example, if you raise money in the name of 4-H, you are responsible for protecting the good name of 4-H. You are responsible for both how the money is raised and how it is used. All monies raised using the 4-H name must be used only for 4-H-related activities, education and character building.

If you are interested in fundraising or entering into any type of contract on behalf of 4-H, you will need to talk with your local 4-H Extension professional regarding appropriate steps to take.

Name and Emblem Authorization



Staff members are authorized to use the name and emblem. Chartered 4-H Clubs and 4-H Affiliates, such as 4-H Councils and Fair Boards, can also use the name and emblem and can offer tax exemption status to their donors and contributors.

Other groups, such as the Indiana 4-H Foundation and 4-H camps can use the name and emblem by special agreement.

Risk Means Uncertainty



Along with good stewardship practices, 4-H volunteers need to know about and follow good risk management practices. A risk is any uncertainty about an event that threatens an organization's ability to accomplish its mission.

Risk covers the many unexpected incidents that can happen to the participants, the spectators, the properties, and even the reputation of 4-H.



Risk Management



Risk management is the practice regarding emergency procedures, supervision of young people in 4-H, volunteer screening and other policies, appropriate levels of insurance, record-keeping, and use of vehicles and equipment in support of the program.

Handling Risk



As a volunteer, you will be asked to plan for the unexpected as much as possible. While you plan an event or activity, take time to consider the risks and develop a risk management plan.

Be sure to follow established program guidelines. Never hesitate to ask for help or for clarification from staff. And finally, do what a reasonable, cautious person would do.

General 4-H Volunteer Policies



There are specific volunteer policies in place to ensure the safety of young people in 4-H. All individuals complete the volunteer screening process before they are approved as 4-H Volunteers. The county 4-H Extension professional will notify you regarding acceptance and placement. Results of the screening are confidential.

This volunteer orientation, training for your position, and support from other volunteers and staff all assist in your success with your volunteer position. All volunteers are required to adhere to and annually sign the Adult 4-H Behavioral Expectations.



Policies When Supervising Youth



4-H volunteers typically spend much of their volunteer time with young people. The recommended adult-to-youth ratio for Indiana 4-H programs is 1 adult for every 10 youth.

Certain higher-risk activities call for more adults, and chaperoning situations have added age requirements for volunteers.

At no time should one adult be left alone with one 4-H member (other than his or her own child).

Health information, reports of incidents, and other information that you may receive about individual youth or families must be treated as confidential. However, volunteers should be attentive to the physical and emotional state of all children participating in programs.

Signs of injury or suspected child abuse or neglect should be reported to local law enforcement authorities. By state law, each citizen in Indiana is considered to be a mandatory reporter. The volunteer should also contact the county 4-H Extension professional with this information.

Insurance



Purdue University provides liability insurance for approved 4-H Volunteers who are acting within the scope of their assigned responsibilities.

The Indiana 4-H program provides limited accident/injury insurance coverage for all 4-H members and 4-H Volunteers.

Individuals are personally responsible for events held on their property. Insurance for vehicles follows the owner, regardless of who is driving.



When Accidents Happen



No matter how many risk management steps we take, accidents and emergencies can occur. If an emergency occurs with a 4-H member or volunteer, responsible volunteers must ensure that emergency care has been provided. Be sure to contact the county 4-H Extension Professional as soon as is reasonably possible.

Stewardship and Risk Management Resources



It is important for all 4-H volunteers to understand that they are responsible to know and follow the policies that coincide with their volunteer positions.

We hope you have learned a little more about stewardship, 4-H as the public organization, and important risk management practices in our program that will help you accomplish 4-H's mission with young people.

Please contact your local 4-H Extension Professional if you have additional questions.

This concludes unit four of this orientation. Unit five covers Adult Behavioral Expectations of you as a 4-H volunteer.