
4-H LEADS FOR LEADERS

KEY LEADER

905010

Leader's Guide



Key leaders are middle managers who help extend the delivery of high-quality educational programs for youth. A key leader is a person who has special knowledge and experience in organizing 4-H, expertise in specific projects or activities and has the ability to work with others effectively. A key leader is selected by Extension agents or committees to aid, train and advise local volunteers so they can guide members in developing their skills.

Qualifications

The qualifications necessary for the role of key leader are:

- practical or specialized training in organizing 4-H or in a project or activity area;
- ability to work with others;
- ability to teach;
- organizational ability; and
- enthusiasm, patience and understanding.

Middle-Management Roles

Key leaders support the 4-H program in organizational, project, and activity or event roles that in most cases extend across an entire county or area.

Responsibilities of organizational key leaders may include a combination of tasks.

Recruitment and public relations tasks:

- promote 4-H to the general public through displays, promotional events, news articles, radio and television, and other public relation techniques;
- give 4-H presentations to civic and community organizations;
- organize new 4-H groups by recruiting 4-H members and volunteers; and
- assume responsibility to insure that 4-H is available in a geographic area;

Support of 4-H clubs:

- serve as a source of knowledge and experience to 4-H club leaders;
- help new clubs plan and conduct programs and successfully complete their first club year;
- provide volunteers with on-the-spot help;
- acts as a liaison between 4-H leaders and the county Extension office; and
- offer training for 4-H volunteers and parents.

Responsibilities of Key Project or Activity and Event Leaders

A distinction must be made between the leader of a county-wide project group and a key leader. The leader of a county-wide project group is limited to working with boys and girls enrolled in that project. The key leader trains the trainers and works with other adults to assist them in their work with club members.

The key leader should work with the Extension agent and sees that the following responsibilities are carried out:

- Keep up-to-date on training materials.
- Conduct training with volunteers.
- Answer questions about projects, activities or events, either by telephone or by personal visits.
- Act as chair of special activities or events.
- Assist in the promotion and development of understanding about projects and activities.
- Involve other volunteers in planning and carrying out programs.
- Encourage youth and leader participation and innovation.
- Help identify and make resources available to local project, activity and event leaders.
- Inform the Extension staff of needs, and new developments in the project or activity or event area.
- Act as, or recruit a superintendent of project exhibits at the county fair or show.
- Manage county-wide judging contests or demonstrations related to the project or activity or event.

- Counsel with Extension agents on policy changes and implement new policies and procedures as they are decided upon.

This diagram represents the middle-management role of the key leader to the Extension agents and the local volunteers.

What Can the Key Leader Expect of the Extension Agent?

The key leader should expect the Extension agents to provide the following:

A collegial relationship

- shows positive regard for the key leader;
- is available for consultation and conversation; and
- respects the individuality and integrity of key leaders.

Resources

- has general knowledge of the subject matter;
- helps clarify questions and concerns of key leader; and
- supplies key leader with literature needed in their role.

Organizational help

- consults with key leader to develop a plan to carry out their responsibilities;
- facilitates plans by assisting in arrangements, handling correspondence to local project leaders, ordering materials and so forth; and
- coordinates role with total 4-H program.

Promotion

- gives guidance to key leader in promoting the project, activity or event considering the total county 4-H program; and
- gives guidance to local clubs and organizational leaders in promoting the project or activity.

Teaching expertise

- assists key leader in designing or conducting training for project leaders;
- helps keep key project leader up-to-date in subject matter;
- gives guidance in determining teaching methods; and
- assists in evaluation process.

Learning abilities

- is alert to available resources;
- accepts ideas from others; and
- keeps current on policies, project changes and related activities or events.

Advantages of Using Middle-Managers

- More members can be accommodated in the county 4-H program because agents can supervise a larger program with the assistance of key leaders.
- Key leaders often have been organizational or project leaders and have a personal understanding of volunteer's problems
- The key leader can provide the Extension staff with feedback on training needs of the leaders, project changes or adaptations needed.
- Project leaders receive more training because of volunteers with expertise in the county to help them.
- New volunteers get help more quickly when there is a key leader on call. Leaders sometime feel more comfortable with another leader than with an Extension agent.
- Skilled leadership often is attracted to the county 4-H program through the contacts of the key leader.
- More ideas and suggestions flow from volunteers through the key leaders to the Extension agent.
- Key leaders often take time to collect and distribute resources to volunteers than agents are able to do. At state or district workshops, the key leaders can act as county representatives in collecting materials and information.

- Through training meetings, project leaders get a better understanding of the project and material and do a more effective job in leadership.
- Community resources are used more effectively.
- Key leaders free time for agents to work in other areas.
- Key Leaders provide for continuity in the county program when there is a change of agents.
- Volunteers feel more committed when they receive more support, training and feedback.

Position Description

Use the format of the position description on the *Activity Leader's Guide* (90501M) to design specific responsibilities.

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Project Meeting Plan

Date: _____ Time: _____

Place: _____

Project phase: _____

Topic (or skill to be taught): _____

What are members to accomplish? _____

<i>Supplies and Equipment</i>	
What is needed?	Who brings?

<i>Things to do</i>		
Example:	Who is in charge?	Who is to do it?
Introductory remarks Demonstration of topic Discussion by group Group participation Record review and help Judging or other activity Summary Recreation		

What can members do before the next meeting? _____

What is the topic of the next meeting? _____

What supplies do members need to bring to the next meeting? _____
