



Connecticut 4-H



## Teen Leadership Program

*A Guide to Leadership Opportunities for Connecticut 4-H Members*

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Accepted by the University of Connecticut 4-H Team on February 21, 2008

**Mission Statement:**

The Connecticut 4-H Teen Leadership Program has been designed to provide opportunities for youth to learn and practice leadership, citizenship and life skills that empower them to become competent and productive members of society.

**Goals:**

The Connecticut 4-H Teen Leadership program strives to meet the following goals:

- Provide leadership opportunities for teens
- Provide opportunities to interact with a diverse group of people
- Increase the visibility of 4-H and 4-H opportunities to the general population
- Increase the sense of community responsibility in teen participants
- Enhance life skills
- Develop workforce preparation skills
- Promote effective Youth-Adult Partnerships (YAP)

**Youth-Adult Partnerships**

Youth-adult partnership exists where (a) there is mutuality in teaching and learning among youth and adults; (b) each age group sees itself as a resource for the other; and (c) each age group offers what it uniquely can provide. Positive growth in youth leadership experience, skills, and increases in desired outcomes (listed below) should be expected results of effective youth-adult partnerships.

**Leadership Program Desired Outcomes:**

The Connecticut 4-H Teen Leadership program strives to achieve significant positive growth in the following outcomes or skills that are utilized, applied and demonstrated by teen leaders:

- Communication –
  - Enhanced effective listening skills
  - Improved speaking skills
  - Improved writing capabilities
  - Increased effective interactions with peers and adults
  - Effective use of technology to enhance communication skills
- Personal Development –
  - Enhanced self-management skills
  - Increased personal responsibility demonstrated
  - Demonstrated integrity and honesty
  - Increased awareness of self-knowledge skills
- Thinking Skills –
  - Enhanced development of creative and critical thinking
  - Improved positive decision-making
  - Enhanced problem solving skills
- Interpersonal Skills –
  - Enhance and increase effective youth-adult partnerships
  - Increased effective contributions to group interactions
  - Enhanced ability to work with diverse groups
  - Increased effectiveness in expressing points of view and acknowledging other points of view
  - Willingness to consider new or opposing ideas
  - Enhanced ability to negotiate

- Sharing Knowledge –
  - Effectively mentor and/or teach others
  - Share knowledge and skills
  - Develop and/or teach workshops or information sessions
  - Citizenship opportunities
  
- Resources Management –
  - Effectively identify, organize, plan and allocate resources, including:
    - Time
    - Funding
    - Materials
    - Facilities
    - People
    - Other
  
- Life-long Learning –
  - Effectively acquire and use new knowledge
  - Evaluate, organize, maintain and communicate new information and increased knowledge gained through traditional methods as well as through the use of various types of technology

**Leadership Program Evaluation:**

The Connecticut 4-H Teen Leadership program is evaluated several ways. Process and outcome evaluations are conducted; data and information are continually collected from staff, volunteers and youth. Impacts are reported annually based on goals and desired outcomes as represented above. Additional evaluation methods may be applied to determine the effectiveness, impacts, outcomes, and results of events, functions, and/or programs.

**Connecticut 4-H Teen Leadership Opportunities:**

Available programs and opportunities may change and evolve over time based on program effectiveness, funding, youth interests, future opportunities, and other needs or considerations.

Teens may assume leadership roles at club, county, state and regional levels in the Connecticut 4-H Program. Each county may have different procedures or criteria in order to participate in a specific teen leadership role. Be sure to contact the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System County 4-H office near you for further details about any program in which you are interested.

## **Local & County Level Teen Leadership Opportunities**

### **Club or Group:**

A 4-H club or group is defined as enrolled youth members and approved volunteer leader(s) working together and who meet regularly through the year. Members keep records, are involved in a variety of activities or focus on a particular topic area. The group or club has officers, holds business meetings, participate in county or state activities and follow regulations of the University of Connecticut 4-H Program. Teens may provide leadership in an organized 4-H club or group as an officer, committee member or chair, or in the position of a junior or teen leader. Local club or group adult volunteer leaders provide guidance.

### **Junior or Teen Leaders: Teens 13 and older**

- **Junior leaders** assist leaders with planning, organization and implementation of group activities. Junior leaders require guidance and direction from the volunteer leader.
- **Teen Leaders** conduct activities similar to junior leaders working independently and with approval from the leader.

### **County Fair Association or Fair Boards:**

Each county has a different procedure and criteria for electing or appointing youth officers of their county 4-H fair or exposition. To be sure of the procedures in your county, contact your local 4-H office. Offices may include president, vice presidents, secretary, treasurer, and various committee members and chairs.

Teens and youth members receive leadership training in these positions and work with adult mentors or advisors throughout the year. Teens in these positions oversee meetings, manage livestock shows and non-animal exhibits, create and implement fundraising campaigns, oversee advertising campaigns, work as fair superintendents, or in other leadership roles.

### **Teen Member of a County Advisory Committee or County Extension Council:**

Teens 13 and older may have the opportunity to become a teen member of their county 4-H Advisory Committee and/or County Extension Council. Each county has their own criteria or regulations about this opportunity, if available. On local 4-H Advisory committees, teen leaders work in partnership with adult volunteers on real issues and concerns regarding their county's 4-H program; assisting with planning of events, promotional activities, and program activities. For County Extension Council membership, teen members would apply to be considered for a position as the teen member of a council. Once approved as a member, the teen works in true youth-adult partnership with adult members of the council on issues and concerns related to that county's total extension programs, fundraising for the council in support of extension programs, and with promotional activities.

### **Teen Leaders at 4-H Camps:**

Each of the Connecticut 4-H Camps provide hands-on leadership training for teens to work in a variety of positions, including as counselors, cabin supervision, and working with camp staff to provide programming to campers. Each 4-H camp has specific programs and trainings for counselors-in-training, counselor ages and positions and additional leadership roles. Contact your local 4-H office or one of the camps for additional information.

### **Teen Master/Mistress of Ceremonies:**

Be the moderator of a public speaking competition or the master/mistress of ceremonies at your county fair awards program, leader banquet, State 4-H Day or other event. Training

provided by local 4-H staff or volunteer organizing the event. Contact your 4-H office for details about your county's opportunities for teens 13 and older. Individuals also have opportunities to be commentators at Eastern States Exposition New England Center activities during Connecticut 4-H Days.

**Teen Evaluator/Judge:**

Teens ages 15 and older work with local 4-H extension offices or other adult mentors to receive training in evaluating younger members in their project areas or at county and state events such as 4-H Nutrition Food Shows, Fashion Revue Evaluations, State 4-H Poultry Day, or other local events. Contact your local 4-H office for further information.

**Community Youth Groups:**

Teens provide leadership in organizing educational, social and recreational programs for younger children, including programs in School-Aged Childcare facilities and after school programs. Curriculum materials and training are provided through the Cooperative Extension System. Currently offered in New Haven County.

**Workshop Leaders:**

Teens present educational workshops in project area specialties at local, county, regional or state programs throughout the year. This may include venues such as Connecticut State 4-H Day, County Fair Association Leadership Trainings, 4-H Nutrition Food Shows or Regional 4-H Conferences. Teens participating in this role would either apply or be recruited by a 4-H staff person to present a workshop.

**Promoting 4-H:**

Teens serve as an ambassador in promoting, enhancing and garnering resources in support of the Connecticut 4-H Program. Some examples include:

- Provide presentations for local organizations and groups
- Present promotional 4-H exhibits for public display
- Assist with resource development
- Assist with recruitment of 4-H members and volunteers

Teens are recruited for this role by county 4-H staff.

**Individual Outreach/Community Service Project:**

Teen works independently or with a small group and adult mentor to plan, organize and implement a project to positively impact a community need.

**Additional Teen Leadership Opportunities:**

Teen leadership opportunities and seasonal leadership programs may be available through each county 4-H program. Check with your 4-H Extension Staff for information in your county.

## State Level Teen Leadership Opportunities

### **Planning Committee Member:**

Opportunities arise throughout the year for teens to be on the planning or advisory committees such as:

- State 4-H Citizenship Day Committee
- 4-H Teen Connection Conference
- State 4-H Dairy Advisory Committee
- State 4-H Horse Advisory Committee

Teens would check with county 4-H staff to obtain information and procedures for such participation.

### **Teen Member of Connecticut 4-H Development Fund Board:**

Teen membership on this board is secured through a nomination process and interviews. Terms are for one to two years, with meetings occurring quarterly; committees meeting more frequently at the 4-H Education Center at Auer Farm in Bloomfield. Teens must be at least 14 years of age to be considered and must complete and file a State 4-H Recognition form with their county 4-H office.

### **Statewide Connecticut 4-H Clubs:**

- Such clubs offer teen leadership development opportunities at a statewide level. Each club has a specific purpose and function, and has membership comprising 4-H members from throughout the state. For enrollment purposes, a statewide club needs to be registered, affiliated and approved with a county educator.
- Current state wide clubs and their function:
  - State 4-H TechTeam
    - Teens whose interest is technology work together to learn various aspects of science, engineering and technology (S.E.T.) 4-H members across Connecticut may join by contacting the volunteer leader; this group is based in Hartford County. Projects this group is involved with include creating digital slide shows for various events, creating approved 4-H websites, involvement in use of GIS-GPS technology and partnering with other clubs and groups to assist with technological activities. This group is supervised by volunteer leaders and is overseen by the Hartford County 4-H Educator.
  - State 4-H Shooting Sports Club
    - Teens involved in this group share an interest in archery. Members may join from any part of the state; the group is based at the Middlesex County Extension Center. This club focuses on learning and improving archery skills and is supervised by volunteer leaders and the county 4-H Educator from Middlesex county.
  - State 4-H Mule and Donkey Club
    - Youth who would like to study and work with mules and donkeys form this group. This animal science based club is comprised of youth members from across Connecticut; teen members assist the volunteer leaders with club organization, instruction of younger members and implementation of programs. This club is supervised by volunteer leaders and overseen by the Hartford County 4-H Educator.

- State 4-H Teen Ambassador Club
  - Teens from across Connecticut may enroll in this 4-H teen leadership club by contacting any county 4-H Educator or the club volunteer leaders. This statewide club is comprised of teen members who learn leadership development skills, presentation skills communication skills. This club is based in Hartford County and is supervised by volunteer leaders. The Hartford County 4-H Educator oversees this club.

**Connecticut Delegate to 4-H Programs at Eastern States Exposition:**

Qualified 4-H teens have opportunities to take on leadership roles in 4-H programs at the Eastern States Exposition. These roles may include delegation group leader, delegation teen leader, delegation steward, New England 4-H Program committee member. County 4-H Educators can provide details about qualification requirements.

**Participant at Other 4-H Events and Conferences:**

Teens have the opportunity to attend statewide and/or National conferences where they may further develop leadership skills. Information about these events is distributed through county 4-H newsletters and on the state 4-H website.

## **National Teen Leadership Opportunities**

To be considered for National 4-H Teen Leadership opportunities, interested teens must complete and return the Connecticut 4-H Recognition Form to their county 4-H office. The selection process may include an interview as well as application review. Additional applications may be required by specific programs.

**Citizenship Washington Focus and National 4-H Conference:**

Selected delegates attending this conference as a Connecticut delegate have opportunities to volunteer for leadership roles within the conference.

**Additional Opportunities:**

Teens may apply for other national opportunities as available. In the past these have included:

- National 4-H Technology Team
- National 4-H GIS-GPS Team
- Curriculum review committees
- Teen liaison role to various National groups or teams

Information about these opportunities is available through county 4-H Educators.

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