

Ohio 4-H

***Community
Service
Officer's
Handbook***

Name of Community Service Officer _____

Year _____ Age as of January 1 _____

County _____

Name of Club _____

4-H Advisor Signature _____



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Community Service Officer

Welcome

Congratulations on your new role as your 4-H club's community service officer! By serving as a 4-H Club Officer, you will help shape important decisions in your club. Every successful 4-H club has a strong leadership base from its club officers. Your club trusts that you will help guide them through your leadership, and that you will respect their opinions and ask for their assistance by forming committees. As an officer, you must fulfill your club's expectations by being responsible, respectful, a good listener, a hard worker, a team player, and a leader. Good luck!

Outstanding 4-H club officers will . . .

- Be honest
- Be enthusiastic
- Be dependable and follow through on obligations
- Be a hard worker
- Be a team player—work well with other members and adults
- Be organized
- Be prompt and prepared for meetings and activities
- Be kind, polite, and friendly
- Be respectful to others including the property of others
- Be open to suggestions and ideas of others
- Behave in an appropriate manner at club meetings and in public
- Be willing to learn new skills and strive to improve skills
- Be willing to take on new challenges
- Be willing to help when no one else will help
- Set a good example for others and be good role model
- Be creative
- Dress appropriately
- Give credit to others, rather than take credit
- Help guide the club, rather than control the club and its members
- Promote the club's opinion and wishes instead of your own
- Understand and carry out the duties of your office



- Serve as a representative of the 4-H organization to your family, school, community, state, and country
- Strive to “**Make the Best Better**”

If you are prepared to do each of these things, you will be on the road to becoming a great officer.

You hold the key to gaining the respect of your peers and the advisors by striving to work hard to accomplish the goals of the club. These goals are accomplished through the team work of the officers and the advisors. Each member should play an integral part of working towards the club’s goals in harmony. *Club advisors should provide guidance in the process, and help the officers plan the club’s program for the year.*

Your Role as a Community Service Officer

“*I pledge my hands to larger service—for my club, my community, my country, and my world*” is recited by members at the beginning of every 4-H meeting. Think back to the last time you recited those words. Did you think about the meaning of the words? Did you question whether you had made a noble attempt to live up to the 4-H pledge’s words? Most of us have not reflected on the actual meaning of the words we have memorized.

Your role as your club’s community service officer is to be responsible for all aspects of one or more community service projects that your club participates in this 4-H year. You will give leadership to the project and will delegate responsibilities to other club members, advisors, parents, and community members.

Before You Begin . . .

All 4-H clubs are encouraged to perform at least one community service project per year. Look back at the types of community service projects your 4-H club has been involved with in the last three years. Now ask yourself these questions:

- Did you do a different project each year or were projects repeated in the last few years?
- Did you like the project?
- Was it fun or creative?
- What did the other club members think?
- What did you not like about the project?
- What could you do to improve the project?
- Did you see the impact it had on the community or people involved?



How was the community service project organized?

- Where did the club get the idea for the project?
- Who decided on the project?
- Did club members do the project because the club advisor suggested it?
- Who planned the project?
- Who did the project?
- Who evaluated the project?
- Who reported the project to the community?
- Did the entire club participate? Was everyone—4-H members, advisors, and parents—involved?

Reflecting on past community service projects will help you and your club have a more meaningful project for this year. Remember, it takes leadership from you and team work from the entire club to “make the best better.”

You Are the Strongest Link

Your new position as community service officer enables you to connect with your friends, fellow members, advisors, parents, and your community. By creating a fun, meaningful community service project where everyone plays an active role, you will help others build stronger skills while helping your community.

Follow these steps as you guide your 4-H club through a worthwhile community service project:

- Choose the community service project.
- Plan the community service project.
- Do the community service project.
- Evaluate the community service project.
- Publicize and report the community service project.

Not only should you follow these five steps for success, but as the leader, you should try to involve everyone in all the steps. Often adults are the major contributors to the idea, decision-making, and planning. You, as the community service officer, can delegate jobs to the other club members and adults so all are actively involved.

Let’s take a closer look at the five steps and how to make them work for your club. Be sure to keep a notebook with all the details of your community service project so you can share easily with your club, parents, and community members.



Choose the Perfect Community Service Project

Ideas

- Ask every member to share a new idea that would benefit the community.
- Invite community members who work with local organizations to speak with your club or ask them for ideas about your community's needs (such as hospice, children's services, Family and Children First Council, PTOs, Rotary Club, Lions Club, hospitals, community action, health department, city council, nursing homes, and others).
- Conduct a survey at your school, church, neighborhood store, or mall asking about the issues and needs of the community.
- Contact the local media for ideas—newspaper, radio, television.
- Look for ideas on web sites such as the National 4-H Council at www.4husa.org, Make A Difference Day at www.makeadifferenceday.org, Youth Service America at www.ysa.org, and Points of Light at www.pointsoflight.org.
- Look at your club's interests and how their talents can be best used.
- Don't forget to look at resources available to your club—money, time, tools, etc.
- Consider the amount of time required to complete the project.

Deciding on the Project

- List projects on large paper or poster board.
- Have members vote on the projects by giving them five colored, sticky dots to put on their favorite ideas. Members can use all five dots to vote on one project or vote on five different ideas. Narrow it down to the top two or three most popular ideas, then decide which will work for your club.
- List the projects' benefits and challenges. Decide from your list which would fit your club's needs best. Time, resources, dates, money, or equipment needed may factor into the club's decision.
- Remember a good project meets the needs of the community.

Plan the Club's Project

Duties of the Community Service Project Committee

- Meet separately from the regular club meeting. The committee can meet before or after the club meeting or on another day.
- The committee members should include a few members and one advisor.
- The committee should bring an outline of work to be done on a calendar for the club.
- Have space on the work sheets/calendar for club members to sign up for various duties.



- At the 4-H club meeting, the committee should give the members the calendar and ask for volunteers for the various work assignments. Make sure everyone is involved. Many assignments will take more than one person.

Planning considerations

- How many volunteers will you need for the project?
- Who is available to help on the day of the project? Remember to include adults.
- Assign groups with a leader for the various jobs—gathering supplies, money, transportation to the event, refreshments, publicity on the radio, newspaper, television, and contacting any agencies involved (including safety personnel—police, nurses, etc.).
- Do you need an added insurance policy on members involved in your project?
- Do you need permission forms or medical histories of participants in case of an emergency?
- Have first aid kits on site.
- Do 4-H members have permission to ride with an adult or another teen member?

Organization—“Who’s on first? Who’s on second?”

- Does every volunteer know what they are responsible for?
- Do the volunteers know what time to arrive?
- Do the volunteers know who is in charge?
- Do the volunteers know who to ask or where to find things?
- Do the volunteers know where they are going?
- Do they know when they will finish? This is important for youth who may need a ride from a parent.
- Did you write and make copies of your volunteer assignment list to share with each participant?
- Do you have a list of phone numbers—members, adults, emergency, organization, etc.?

Do the Community Project

Putting the Project in Motion

- If all the details with “who, what, when, where, and how” have been given to all the participants, then you are ready to let the fun begin.
- Take a copy of your plans to the event listing all the responsible parties and their phone numbers. Sometimes the best laid plans can go astray.
- Have a cellular phone on hand with telephone book and numbers.
- Bring any permission forms and medical forms with you to the project. Arrange for a back-up person (an adult) to be responsible for these papers.
- Explore with your advisor whether or not a first aid kit will be available. The medical forms will give the advisor permission to administer the first aid for minor injuries such as cuts and scrapes.



- In case of a medical emergency, make sure one of the leaders has a cell phone and can call 911. If cell phone coverage is weak in parts of your county, keep in mind that calling 911 may mean driving into the nearest town or village.
- Begin on time. End on time.
- Remember to clean up any trash from the project area. Respect the area.
- At the end, praise everyone who participated. Thank your helpers.

Evaluate Your Project

Include All Participants in the Evaluation

Evaluation can be done by group discussion, by writing a journal or news article, or by taking a survey of the participants. Were you the strongest link?

Reflection

- Did everyone have a role?
- Did everyone follow through with his or her assignment?
- Was the time frame adequate to complete the project?
- What changes would you recommend if your club plans to do a similar project?
- How were your supplies, money, resources, or refreshments?
- Who benefited from the project?
- Was it fun and creative?
- Did you enjoy doing it?
- Did club members and adults think others benefited from the overall project?
- Did the club publicize the success to the community?
- Did you consider applying for an award, like Make a Difference Day?
- Would you recommend the project for others?

Publicize Your Project

Don't be shy—Report your successes

- Inform the local media of what your club accomplished including who, what, where, when, and why.
- Ask someone to take pictures for news stories or future publicity. Pictures for your 4-H historian book and news reporter book will be treasured later.
- Assign several club members to tell community leaders about your project—4-H Extension Office, Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, PTOs, city council, community boards, elected officials, etc. By sharing your ideas with others, your project may grow to other areas or more people will become involved in the future.



- Form a committee to send thank-you notes to anyone who helped make this project a success.

If you have been able to organize a meaningful community service project that your club members have had fun participating in, then . . . **YOU are the strongest link to your community!**

Required Documents for the Community Service Officer

- List of club members with phone numbers, addresses, and e-mail
- List of club advisors with phone numbers, addresses, and e-mail
- List of community service ideas generated
- Written report about your community service project including who was involved, who benefited, and why it was important to do this project. Use the five steps and add the task assignments of members and adults
- Press releases or news articles about the community service project
- Receipts (or copies) of expenditures
- Pictures of the club members in action performing the community service project
- Copy of a thank-you letter sent
- Poster with photos for the Junior Fair Building of your club doing the project

Optional Items

- Publicity—radio transcripts, fliers, and any promotional information given to others
- Documentation of visits to other 4-H clubs, organizations, civic organizations to promote the project
- Examples of free items that were given to a group
- Ideas on how to expand the project to other groups
- Invite a community leader of a community agency to speak at your club meeting
- Prepare a display about your project in a public place such as the library, school, grocery store, doctors' offices, etc.
- Do a radio or television spot about your community service project
- List of web sites for community service ideas to share with others



I pledge

My head to clearer thinking,

My heart to greater loyalty,

My hands to larger service, and

My health to better living

For my club, my community, my country, and my world.