

# Chapter 3

## Getting to Know the County

Richard Clark, Ph.D., Extension Specialist, 4-H Program Management

Getting to know your county – its geography and the people – is one key to your success as a 4-H/Youth Development Professional. This section can help you to accomplish that goal by providing questions to find answers to within your county. This will help you become more familiar with your co-workers as well.

As the 4-H agent in a county, it is important to get a general feel of the demographics of the area. A good map of the county is a great help as you work through this section to help you visualize and orient yourself to the community.

Describe the demographics of your county. Is it mostly urban, suburban or rural?

What is the county's population? Where do most of the people live?

What is the youth population of the county? How many children are

Ages 5 to 8? \_\_\_\_\_

Ages 9 to 12? \_\_\_\_\_

Ages 13 to 15? \_\_\_\_\_

Ages 16 to 19? \_\_\_\_\_

Where is the heaviest concentration of young people in the county?

What is the county's employment situation? List some of the major employers in the county.

Have there been any lay-offs or mass hires recently?

How easy is it for teens to find jobs in the county? What kinds of jobs are they able to find?

Are there any major parks or wilderness areas in the county? Does the county have many natural resources (such as oil or mineral deposits, or timber land)?

What is the ethnic makeup of the county? Are there pockets of particular ethnic groups.

List at least three issues facing the residents of the county.

Where are the school districts located and how many are there in the county? What kinds of 4-H programs were done in those districts during the past year?

## **Identifying Key People**

Some of the key people for you to know in your county are the other Extension staff members and county 4-H leaders. As you complete the information below, set up appointment to meet with these people to get to know them better

County Extension Program Staff

County Extension Chair:

4-H Personnel:

Agricultural Personnel:

Home Economics/EFNEP Personnel:

CNRD Personnel:

County Secretarial Staff:

Other Members of the County Extension Team:

President and members of 4-H Advisory Committee:

## **Locating 4-H Groups**

Within your first few weeks on the job, it is vital to begin getting to know each of the 4-H groups within your county. One of the best ways to do this is to call the main group volunteers and club advisors and arrange a time for you to attend one of their meetings. At the meetings you will have a chance to let the members get to know you better and you will also learn how each group functions and their main interests.

During the meeting if possible, otherwise soon afterwards, list some of the things you found interesting about the people and activities of the group. After visiting many of the groups, this will help you later to remember names and faces as well as increase the time it takes you to feel at home with the 4-H members in your county.

It also might prove helpful for you to develop a chart that lists 4-H groups in your county by community, along with a few characteristics. An example is shown below.

### Community

Group	Club 1	Club 2	Club3	Club 4
Type of 4-H Group				
Number of members				
Age range of members				
Number of volunteers/advisors				
Number of project leaders (if appropriate)				
Number of teen leaders (if appropriate)				
Other information				

## **Expanding Your Youth Development Network**

Human resources are your most valuable assets as a 4-H/Youth Development professional. To make the best use of this valuable resource, learn to know who and where those resources are and begin networking.

Networking is the systematic process of developing helpful contacts, linking people for assistance and support, and helping each other find needed resources, information, opportunities and comments. In other words, networking is meeting people you need to know to do what you need to do. A networking relationship is two-way; persons in a network give and receive valuable information and support to each other and each other's goals. Effective networking is task-oriented as well as people-oriented.

Because so much networking is informal, you may not be aware that the process is happening. Networking occurs over lunch, after work, in the restroom, and during conference breaks. Becoming aware of current networks one is already in, and developing an awareness of how to develop networks for excellence is important for self development as well as important to getting one's job done effectively.

There are many benefits that the organization gains from people who are able to effectively use human resources. The goal of this section is to provide you with a useful tool for expanding and keeping track of your network contacts.

## Local Youth Services Information

The Local Youth Services Information Form is an example of a tool that can be used when visiting agencies to start building your network of human resources. This form can be found in the Project 2000 manual developed by Tom Archer, Ph.D., of Shelby County.

### Local Youth Services Information

Year of Last Update:

Name of Youth Service:

Year Established:

Address:

Name of Key Contact Person:

Day Phone:

Evening Phone:

Description of Service(s): (Maximum 50 word summary):

Major Objective(s):

Eligibility Requirements for Participation:

Summary of major service(s) offered ("X" indicates services offered):

- Education—Job Skill Development
- Education—Outdoor
- Education—Life Skill Development
- Education—Material Load
- Education—Volunteer Development
- Recreational/Social
- Spiritual/Religious
- Personal Counseling
- Legal
- Consultation/Referral
- Lodging
- Financial Assistance
- Medical/Health Care
- Parent Education
- Career
- Other (list): \_\_\_\_\_

Sources of Funding:

- County Government
- Local Foundation
- State Government
- User Fees
- Non-Profit Organization
- Federal Government

\_\_\_Municipal Government  
\_\_\_United Way  
\_\_\_Local Business/Industry  
\_\_\_Other (list)\_\_\_\_\_

Annual Budget (total cash expenses for one year):

Estimated number of different youth served per year: Total \_\_\_\_\_

Percent by Age:

\_\_\_5-8 yr. olds +  
\_\_\_9-13 yr. olds +  
\_\_\_14-17 yr. olds =  
\_\_\_100 percent

Percent by Sex:

\_\_\_male +  
\_\_\_female =  
\_\_\_percent

Percent by Residence:

\_\_\_rural +  
\_\_\_non-rural=  
\_\_\_100 percent

Number of Paid Staff: \_\_\_\_\_

Total hours expended per week by all paid staff: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Volunteers who help to conduct programs/activities:

Number of Adult Volunteers (18 years old and older): \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Youth Volunteers (under 18 years of age): \_\_\_\_\_

Other information: