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Recruiting and Training 4-H LEADERS

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RECRUITING AND TRAINING 4-H LEADERS—What Studies Show

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4-H-Youth Development

PROFILE of a 4-H Leader

What is the adult volunteer 4-H leader like?

A recent study of 237 adult 4-H leaders in 42 states revealed the following characteristics:

Two-thirds of the 4-H leaders on the job today are between age 36 and 55. Three-fourths have from two to five children and 10 percent have six or more children. 4-H leaders come from larger than average families—39 percent had four or more brothers and sisters and 70 percent had two or more.

4-H leaders have lived in one place much longer than the average—81 percent have **not** moved in the past 5 years. On the average, 80 percent of Americans **move** in a 5-year period.

It may be surprising to some that nearly half (48.5 percent) of these leaders were never 4-H members. If they were members, they had stayed in 4-H longer than the average—34 percent had 4 or more years of 4-H experience.

Volunteers spend from 6 to 40 hours per month on their work as a 4-H leader. They average about 15 hours per month or 25 8-hour days per year on 4-H.

More than 86 percent of these leaders had graduated from high school. One out of each five was a college graduate. More than half the women leaders and wives of men leaders worked outside the home. Of these, about 25 percent worked full time and 20 percent part time.

RECRUITING 4-H Leaders

What Studies Tell Us About Recruiting

1 The **recruiter** of leaders is more successful if he:

- Has a genuine interest in people and wants to find the right person for a specific job.
- Believes in the organization and its purposes and shows it in the way he lives.
- Approaches prospective leaders as individuals.
- Has a sense of timing and is flexible on points that are not matters of principle. (1) (See References).

2 Most recruits feel it is important to be asked to do a volunteer job. Less than 2 percent indicate they would volunteer their service without being asked. (1)

3 Most recruits prefer to be asked to do a specific job and to think the organization selected them for their qualifications. (1)

4 Members' preferences on characteristics of their volunteer leaders are important. One study ranked their preferences: (2)

Kindness and helpfulness	68%
Skills and talents (ability in carpentry, food preparation, etc.)	55%
Social skills	33%
Authoritativeness	17%
Respect for young people	16%
Attractive physical characteristics	12%

5 More boys than girls prefer laissez-faire leaders. (2)

6 About half of adults are interested in becoming youth leaders. (5)

7 People most willing to serve as leaders are generally young, married, have children, had at least a high school education, and participated more than average in community organizations and educational activities. (5)

8 Many people who have never served in leadership positions with youth indicated a willingness to serve. (5)

9 In one rural county in Wisconsin, 31 percent of those expressing interest in leading youth groups expressed an interest in 4-H—second only to Sunday school teaching, which received 36 percent. (5)

10 In recruiting, look for leaders who are aware of community problems, yet have strong positive feeling toward the community in which they live. In one state studied, only about half the people were aware of such problems. (6)

11 The earlier theory that leaders chosen by members made the best leaders is giving way to the theory that it is better to have members and community leaders work together in recruiting volunteer adult 4-H leaders. (3)

12 There are at least two types of volunteer leaders. (1) Those who spur interest, participation and **esprit de corps**, and (2) those who help a group reach its goals. Successful 4-H leaders have both characteristics but emphasize the latter. (4) (7)

RECRUITING—References

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TRAINING 4-H Leaders

What Studies Tell Us About Leader Training

Training programs should be based on adult needs and interests rather than on adult leaders' "obligation to youth." (1).

Leaders who attend training meetings in their early years of leadership will be more likely to attend subsequent meetings and remain active as a 4-H leader. (2) (5)

First-year leaders find leaders' manuals most helpful when they give meeting-by-meeting suggestions on what the leader and group can do. (2)

Volunteer leaders respond very well to a correspondence course designed for them. (6).

It is important to train new 4-H leaders early in their first year, or before they start, if the program is to be effective in shaping the leaders' attitude toward the philosophy and objectives of 4-H. (5)

It is useful to train adult leaders having one or more years experience separately from the beginning leaders. (5)

It is useful to train adult leaders who have a high school education or less separately from those with higher education. (5)

Organization and project leaders need orientation training on their duties and responsibilities. (3) (4)

Project leaders must be given subject-matter training. (4)

In training, the agent should recognize that volunteer first-year leaders differ in personality characteristics from the general population. Also, there are many personality differences between first-year men and first-year women 4-H leaders. (7)

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3. *Roles, Attitudes, and Desired Characteristics of 4-H Organization Leaders*, Roger Hiemstra, Iowa State University, Master's thesis, 1967.
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KEEP GOOD 4-H LEADERS

People will be more willing to become 4-H leaders and stay with the program, if you—

- Guide the selection toward those who will make good leaders.
- Ask parents to help select leaders.
- Carefully plan and provide good training meetings.
- Conduct several training meetings each year.
- Help leaders solve their problems.
- Work with leaders individually when needed.
- Have local leaders take an important part in planning the 4-H program and county events.
- Recognize leaders through newspaper articles and special events.
- Encourage 4-H members, associates, and friends to express appreciation to their local leaders.



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