
Job Description - 4-H General Club Leader and Assistant Leader

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Purpose

- The club leader has the primary responsibility to lead the 4-H club through its annual work. The assistant leader supports the club leader and carries out designated duties.

Responsibilities

- Contribute to the missions of the Alberta 4-H program.
- Advise and support club members, project leaders and parents.
- Ensure the Alberta 4-H registration and leader screening procedures are completed and that required provincial and district fees are submitted.
- Help to recruit project leaders.
- Keep the best interest of all 4-H members in mind at all times.
- Share information received from the Regional 4-H office and District 4-H Council with the club. If the District Council representative is not the general or assistant leader, it is the representative's responsibility to share information from District Council with the club.
- Help the club's elected officers learn and carry out their duties; assist them in developing agendas, finding meeting places and using proper parliamentary procedure at club meetings.
- Support members as they develop and carry out the club's program plan.
- Explain club requirements and member expectations to members and families at beginning of the year.
- Communicate regularly with project leaders and ensure they hold regular project meetings.
- Encourage members to complete their yearly 4-H diaries.
- Ensure club follows Alberta 4-H policies.
- Ensure club has a current constitution and follows it (the default constitution can be found on page 63).
- Work with other 4-H clubs, district councils, Key Leaders and the community. Share information from these sources with the club.

Requirements

- Minimum of 18 years of age.
- Positive, enthusiastic and honest.
- New leaders and those being re-certified must complete the Alberta leader screening procedures consisting of an application form, three written references and a criminal record check. Existing leaders must re-certify every five years.
- New leaders must complete a level one Leader Training program within one year of their approval as a leader.
- Valid driver's licence, if transporting youth.

Other Skills That Are Helpful

- Organizational, communication, delegation and time management skills.
- Ability to work with diverse age groups and a variety of learning levels.
- Basic understanding of financial book keeping.
- Basic knowledge of parliamentary procedure.

Time Commitment and Expenses

- Approximately 15-20 hours per month depending on extent of club activities, committee work and district involvement; a minimum of six general meetings per year.
- Expenses may include out of pocket expenses for club supplies that are usually reimbursed by club funds (Receipts must be submitted to club treasurer). Other personal expenses may include mileage, phone calls and meals.

Supervision

- Leaders are responsible to the club and must be elected or approved by the 4-H members each year.
- The club leader supervises project leaders, assistant leader, resource people, judges and members.
- New leaders are on probation until all screening procedures have been completed and approval is received from regional screening committee.

Benefits

- Fun!
- Enhance leadership, communication and organizational skills.
- Opportunities for leadership training, personal growth and travel.

A 4-H Key Leader is an experienced volunteer 4-H leader who works with a district council and with local 4-H clubs to help other 4-H volunteer leaders deliver the 4-H Program. Contact the 4-H Specialist for your region to obtain the name of your 4-H Key Leader.

How to Register Your Club and 4-H Leaders

1. In September you will receive a Club Start Up Package from your regional 4-H office which includes:
 - ◇ A Club Registration and Supplies CD, containing all the information and forms needed to register your club, apply for club sponsorship, and order supplies.
 - ◇ A Club Registration Report from the previous club year (continuing clubs only). This report outlines registration information for all members and leaders who were registered with your 4-H Club the previous club year.
2. Copies of the Volunteer Leader Application Package
3. At your club's organization meeting collect all the information from members and leaders that you will need to complete the registration and determine supplies that will be needed. The Club Supply Catalogue and a blank copy of your Club Registration Form (including a supplies order and club sponsorship section) can be printed for referral to at your meeting, however only typed forms will be accepted by the 4-H and Agriculture Education Branch Registrar.
4. Collect the required fees for each member. The provincial membership fee is \$55 plus any district or club fees.
5. Complete your club registration (including your supplies order and club sponsorship application) by following the instructions on your Club Registration form (available on your Club Registration and Supplies CD).
6. If you have any questions about completing the registration, please contact your key leader or the 4-H and Agriculture Education Branch Registrar on 780-427-4426.
 - ◇ What is a 4-H Club Contact? Each 4-H club identifies one person to be the 4-H club contact on the club registration form. Most often this person is the general club leader. Sometimes another registered 4-H leader is selected to be the club contact. This person has important responsibilities:
 - ◇ Receive information and supplies from the 4-H office. You are the only person in the club receiving the club mailing. Mailings are sent 2 - 4 times per year. Club Supplies and Achievement Day Ribbons are sent after the club is registered in the fall. Packages are distributed through approved local Alberta government offices. Canada Post is only used occasionally for sending letters.
 - ◇ Distribute information and supplies - To the general club leader if not yourself. To the project leaders: project related information. To the club executive: club business information.
 - ◇ Share the information
7. Volunteer Leader Applications – All documents (including references) must be received by the Alberta 4-H Screening Committee before December 15th of the club year.
 - ◇ Distribute the Volunteer Leader Application Package you received in your club start-up package to the leaders who must apply to the Alberta 4-H Screening Committee this year and advise these leaders of the December 15th deadline.
 - ◇ All new leaders must apply this year. New leaders are on probation until approved by the regional 4-H screening committee and must not be allowed unsupervised access to 4-H members while on probation.
 - ◇ Existing leaders must reapply every five years. Check the club registration report from your previous club year for the last screening date of your continuing leaders.
 - ◇ Give a package to any leader who has had a break in leadership of more than five years.
8. Obtain a club cheque payable to the 4-H Foundation of Alberta to cover your club's provincial membership fees (\$55 for each member). If applying for club sponsorship, you should also obtain a void club cheque for direct deposit of your sponsorship funds. Your insurance, district and regional fees should be sent to your District Council Treasurer.

Read the Leading The Way - Article 2 - What is a 4-H Club Contact for more information. A copy of all Leading The Way articles are available in your club binder, from your Key Leader or 4-H specialist in your region or on the 4-H web site under Resources.

9. Send all required registration information and payment to the 4-H and Agriculture Education Branch Registrar. All existing club registrations must be received by the 4-H and Agriculture Education Branch Registrar by December 1st of the club year to be recognized as an official 4-H club. Only official clubs are able to receive 4-H supplies and participate in 4-H events. Continuing club registrations will not be accepted after this time unless extenuating circumstances pertain and a \$100 late fee will be applied. New clubs may registrar at any time with the approval of the region's 4-H specialist.
10. How can changes to club registration be made after my club registration is submitted?
 - ◇ The Club Registrar will have access and can update club information using the online 4-H club registration system until December 31 of the current club year. As of January 1, the Club Registrar will still have access to the system but to only update personal information (e-mail addresses, mailing addresses and phone numbers) and to download information. The Club Registrar must be a registered and screened leader in the club with internet access. If your club signed up for the online registration last year, the username and password are still valid.
 - ◇ Changes to club registration (additions, substitutions, project changes etc.) can also be made by completing the Club Registration Update form available on the Club Registration and Supplies CD and the Alberta 4-H web site.



Alberta 4-H Leader Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct Policy applies to all Alberta 4-H leaders involved with 4-H clubs, districts, regional councils, and the Alberta 4-H Council. There are general rules of conduct necessary to provide a high standard of service.

Each 4-H Leader is expected to conduct himself/herself towards others in the following manner:

- Will speak and act with respect and dignity to all participants and supporters of any activity within the 4-H community.
- Will, to the best of their ability, promote the motto “Learn to Do by Doing” and the philosophies of the 4-H program they represent.
- Will respect the confidential nature of information regarding specific council or 4-H program affairs that they may have access to (until such time as the information may become public within the established processes in the Alberta 4-H organization).
- Will not use their position of trust for personal advantage or profit/gain.
- Will accept their duty to know their responsibilities thoroughly and expect to be evaluated based upon their performance. 4-H Leaders are expected to take part in learning opportunities available to them.
- Will direct any criticism of the performance and related duties of any 4-H leader to that individual. If unresolved, and after informing that individual of the intent to do so, may direct in confidence, the criticism to the club leadership team (or refer to: Alberta 4-H Grievance Policy #9.02).
- When constructive feedback/criticism of their performance is directed to them, the 4-H Leader is to listen attentively and respond respectfully and will do all that they can to rectify the problem.
- Will refrain from making unauthorized representation to outside bodies in the name of the 4-H program and all its partners.
- Will ensure that outside interests do not bias their judgment or jeopardize their competence.

Policy # 2.02
Alberta 4-H
Leader Code
of Conduct
Policy. A
copy of all
the Alberta
4-H Program
Policies &
Procedures
are available
in your club
binder, from
your Key
Leader or 4-H
specialist in
your region
or on the
4-H web
site under
Resources.

The Leadership Team

The success of a 4-H club depends largely on how assistant leaders, parents, senior members and other resource people are involved. The club leader is not expected to do all the work. A leadership team can be very effective because there is:

- Greater efficiency, because people share the workload.
- Solid support for decisions, because they are reached as a result of united effort.
- Greater leadership potential because every member is a contributor.
- Greater continuity of leadership if one or more members of the group end their involvement.

Rotating Responsibilities

Research has shown that a 4-H volunteer's tenure is increased when there is a rotation of leadership responsibilities. For example, every few years one of the assistant leaders can take a turn as club leader. This increases interest and incentive because of new challenging roles and a larger variety of learning experiences for each leader. Research also indicates that a volunteer's tenure is greater if the individual serves as an assistant leader before serving as a club leader.

Delegating Responsibilities - Involving Others

Creating an environment where people are willing to help is part of your role and is the basis for effective delegation. Delegating means giving people the authority to act and the freedom to make decisions. A good delegator:

- Knows the tasks that need to be done.
- Knows the abilities, time available and willingness of potential helpers.
- Is willing to accept the decisions of others.
- Recognizes the efforts of people who help.
- Doesn't take over when helpers have difficulty completing a task, but does know how and when to give support.
- Promotes cooperation, coordination and communication.

People help when:

- The task is clear and specific.
- They know the people they will be working with.
- They feel that what they are asked to do is useful.
- They are allowed to make suggestions.
- They receive recognition for their work.

Recruiting And Involving Volunteers

Defining Jobs

What does your 4-H club need to have done? This is important to know before you head out on the recruitment trail! A job description, prepared by you, will help to clarify what the job is. Refer to the club leader's job description at the beginning of this chapter.

Recruiting

To find the best person for a particular job you may have to actively recruit. Here are some ideas that may help:

- Consider asking:
 - ◊ Former 4-H members, parents, grandparents or retired people in the community.
 - ◊ New residents (ask them before other organizations descend on them).
 - ◊ Persons in the community who have had no 4-H involvement, but do have the skills the club could use.

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Recruiting And Involving Volunteers (continued)

- Place an ad in the local paper. Plan to have an assistant leader and assistant project leaders. With their experience, they may feel comfortable moving into the leader position another year.
- Ask two volunteers to job share. “*Two heads are better than one*” when coming up with ideas. The work load won’t seem as heavy and they can support each other.
- Invite a prospective adult to a 4-H club function and let them see what it is all about.
- Prospective volunteers can help, even if they don’t know a lot about the project. Every club needs help with program planning, driving, making lunch, phoning and keeping records.

Matching the Person with the Job

A person is more likely to enjoy, perform well and grow in a job matched to personal needs and interest. Talk with the volunteer about the job, and their skills and interest. The “*Getting Involved*” form in the Appendix can be used to help the potential volunteer think about personal skills and choose a job that will be comfortable for them.

Inviting an Adult to Consider a Job

A person who **chooses** to accept a job will be much more committed to doing it well. Giving a person a choice begins with personal contact. The “*one-to-one*” approach is the most effective way of asking. The asking can be done by the general leader or by other experienced leaders or members in the club. Potential volunteers will be flattered by a well thought out approach. Here are some tips for talking about a position with a prospective volunteer:

- Show interest in the person as a person.
- Know essential information about 4-H and the job. Be prepared for questions.
- Explain why the job is important and how the job will benefit their child and the club.
- Match the person with the job. Help the person see that it is a job that they can do.
- Give clear and reasonable job expectations using a job description. Be particularly clear about the amount of time required and beginning and ending dates.
- Tell your recruit what kinds of training, resources and support are available.
- When the person is ready, ask for a decision. This may come right away, or they may want to think about it for a few days.

Involvement

Plan together to accomplish the job. The person who says “*yes*” needs to join the team as soon as possible. Bring the new volunteer into the team while interest is high. The new volunteer can help with planning, can be trained by the person presently doing the job and can begin to get acquainted with club members and resources.

Share the load and don’t work your ready-and-willing volunteers too hard. When jobs become overwhelming, break them up into smaller tasks and involve more people.

Follow up as appropriate. A phone call or “*coffee visit*” will help keep commitments firm.

Training

- Training has already begun through discussion of the job description with the volunteer.
- New 4-H leaders must take “*new leader training*”. Your key leader or regional 4-H specialist will have more information about this training and other opportunities.
- Have experienced volunteers orient new ones. Printed materials and records should be given to the new person. The retiring leader may remain “*on call*” for guidance as needed.

Involving Parents In 4-H

There are important reasons why 4-H club leaders should involve parents in the club and its activities. Parent interest and cooperation is a major factor in determining the child's attitude towards club activities. If the parents are keen, enthusiastic and willing to help in any way they can, it does much toward creating the same attitude in the club member. The child also requires the active support of parents for such things as helping to find ways to finance project materials, transportation for club events and assisting with project difficulties.

The 4-H Family

Alberta 4-H offers numerous activities that the whole family can participate in. The entire family is welcomed and encouraged to attend meetings, achievement days and social events; parents and families of 4-H members play a large role in having a successful club.

Parents can help improve the 4-H experience by:

- Staying informed
- Promoting 4-H in their community
- Demonstrating personal interest
- Volunteering their services and knowledge
- Supporting 4-H activities
- Developing a sense of fair play
- Showing appreciation to local 4-H leaders and supporters
- Encouraging members to take on leadership roles in the club

What do parents want to know about 4-H?

If you want parents involved in 4-H, you must be able to provide them with the following information:

- How will 4-H help my child? Why should my child join 4-H? What are the goals of the club?
- What is expected of me and my child? How much time will it take? Will it interfere with school work? How much will it cost? What is involved in completing a project? How much help will I need to give my child?
- Do I attend all meetings? Am I butting in if I stay and get involved? What kinds of things could I do that would benefit my child and the club?
- What are my fund-raising responsibilities? What are the dates of club activities?

Involving Parents In 4-H (continued)

Tips on Better Parent Cooperation

Ask Parents

- For their consent when the child joins 4-H.
- To come together occasionally to discuss club activities.
- To attend meetings when possible in order to stay informed.
- To help with parts of the club program that they have an interest or skill in.
- To encourage their child to complete projects and attend club, district, regional and provincial activities.
- To allow members to organize and operate their own club.

A copy of the Getting Involved Form is included in the Appendix.

Inform Parents

- Make them aware of the objectives of 4-H and how it can benefit their child.
- Tell them what materials or assistance their child will require to complete the project.
- Tell them what duties are expected of them.
- Take the opportunity to discuss the club program and their child's progress. Remember the parent's interest is almost always related to their own child's membership and progress.

Involve Parents

- Hold regular meetings in parents' homes
- Specifically invite them to events planned by the club.
- Ask them to help with parts of the club program they may be interested in or have special ability for.
- Express appreciation for their help both privately and in public.

Stress the development of fair play. What the club member learns in the process of winning an award is more important than the award itself. Have parents encourage their child to participate for the learning experience and not for the prizes and awards.



Managing Misbehaviour

Unacceptable behaviour, what's a leader to do?

This question has challenged leaders since 4-H began. At a meeting, a leader can face the challenges of general rowdiness, talking back, members not listening or talking amongst themselves - just to name a few. Because this type of behaviour can cause some adults to lose their temper, it's important to know what are acceptable and unacceptable ways to respond to these situations as a 4-H Leader.

When first confronting a situation where a youth is misbehaving:

- Take a step back and take a deep breath, this will help to calm emotions.
- Behaviour is goal oriented so try to find the cause of the behaviour.
- When speaking to the youth, focus on the behaviour and not the youth's character.
- Don't take the behaviour personally and try not to respond to it emotionally or instinctively - be as neutral as possible.
- Once calm, as a leader, there are a number of choices of how to handle the situation.

Steps to Managing Misbehaviour

1. Once the inappropriate behaviour has taken place, it can not be undone. Make the incident into a learning situation for that youth. Remember that good discipline is fair, consistent, immediate, positive, appropriate in intensity and effective. Sounds difficult, but it becomes easier with practice.
2. Take the member aside privately, so not to humiliate them in front of the others. Talk to them about what has happened. Only you may speak - this is not a discussion. Be sure to express yourself in simple, clear language and speak only of the behaviour not the person. Express how their behaviour has disappointed you using your tone of voice, facial expression and words. Remember, however, to keep the talk brief. Remind the member how important they are to the club and to you. At the end of your talk, make sure that the member understands why they are "*in trouble*" and then finish on a positive note.

Also keep in mind, when the talk is over, it is over!

3. Allow the member to experience the consequence of their actions. A good practice is to create the consequence with the member. A consequence should be related to the incident, respectful of all those involved and reasonable. For example, if the member was found to have put graffiti on the bathroom wall, the best consequence maybe to clean the walls of the bathroom. One thing to remember with the use of consequence is that things usually get worse before they get better. The member will try to test your commitment to it. It can be difficult, but as the leader, you must remain kind and firm during the test period. Punishment may get a quicker result, but with the use of consequence, the member will develop responsibility for their own behaviour - as long as the leader lets them be responsible for solving their own problems. It can be very difficult to hold back and to let members learn on their own. 4-H is a "*safe*" environment and what better place for members to make a mistake and learn from it?

The follow reactions to misbehaviour are unacceptable:

- To hit, push or physically abuse a youth.
- To berate a youth through name calling, insulting character or verbal abuse.
- Attempting to intimidate a youth through yelling or swearing.
- Physically threatening a youth.

Often the above types of punishments come from acting out of emotion. As an adult, the 4-H Leader must stay in control of his/her emotion and act in a calm rational manner.

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Managing Misbehaviour (continued)

“An ounce of prevention”

This proactive approach can save leaders the difficulty of having to deal with inappropriate behaviour later on. At the beginning of the club and project year, the leaders and members should sit down as a group, and together create a set of ground rules. If done as a group, it will give members ownership and make them feel both responsible and respected. The types of rules that should be addressed include how members will treat each other, conduct in meetings, standards for participation in the club and whatever is important to both the leader and member. Try to summarize rules into five key points so it is easier to remember and therefore comply. Post the rules at each meeting and if a situation arises, refer all members back to the posted rules that they created at the beginning of the year.

As a leader, be aware of the early signs that a situation is about to develop and be prepared:

- If the group is bored or restless use a rouser to wake them up.
- If your group is overexcited, slip in a quiet activity like cleaning up, or working on a puzzle.
- If meetings never start on time due to a member that won't settle down, five minutes before the meeting, give them a time warning. Have members on “*clock-watching*” and “*round-up*” committees to help get the others settled and then start the meeting on time.

Often good planning, a “*grab bag of tricks*” and some insight will be indispensable tools to keep order.

See mistakes as opportunities to learn and know that some members will need to learn a lesson over and over again. Remember that you, as a leader, are a role model and members will do what they see you doing.

If you treat everyone with fairness and respect, you will quickly earn the respect and admiration of the members in your club. Plus you will teach the members in your club that this is the behaviour that is expected of them towards others.