



Volunteer Information Profile Module

PowerPoint Presenter's Notes

These notes are intended to be used as a general discussion outline and not as a script to be read.

Slide #1

Local volunteers historically have been, and continue to be, important partners in delivery of research-based information from K-State Research and Extension to Kansas citizens. The Kansas 4-H Youth Development Program depends on more than 10,000 adult volunteers to help youth develop into productive adults.

Parents, extension boards, and K-State Research and Extension trust that these volunteers have the best interests of young people at heart. Volunteers share responsibility with all these partners for the safety of youth.

The Kansas 4-H Volunteer Information Profile process is a tool to use in protecting youth. It is similar to processes used by other volunteer-led, youth-serving organizations, including churches, schools, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and others.

Slide #2

In the 4-H Youth Development program, volunteers serve several key roles. They are instrumental in building caring relationships with youth. Extension-agent efforts in the youth development program are multiplied through the work of volunteers. Volunteers are also important in reaching out to new audiences within the volunteer's sphere of influence in the community.

Slide #3

Within the K-State Research and Extension system, volunteers are non-paid representatives of the local extension unit and are accountable to the board, which appoints them and can dismiss them if necessary.

Slide #4

The Volunteer Information Profile (VIP) is the cornerstone of K-State Research and Extension's 4-H Youth Development protection system. The VIP was implemented in 1996 and revised in early 2006.

Individuals who want to assist with the 4-H Youth Development program complete a VIP application. The application and subsequent review process help assure that the individual's background makes that person appropriate to work with youth. The application also gives volunteers an opportunity to list their skills and interests related to the 4-H program so they can be placed in an appropriate role.

Slide #5

The VIP process is a partnership between the extension agent, the local board, and the Volunteer Information Profile Review Committee.

Slide #6

Let's take a closer look at the role of each partner. The extension agent administers the VIP process. This includes working with the extension board or program development committee to appoint the VIP Review Committee. The agent communicates with applicants throughout the process regarding the status of their applications. The agent or a Master Volunteer also conducts an orientation for applicants before they are recommended to the board for appointment.

Slide #7

The board works with the agent to appoint the review committee. Once volunteers have been approved by the committee, the board officially appoints the volunteers.

Occasionally the board might be involved in the dismissal of a volunteer who has violated the Volunteer Code of Ethics. The code will be discussed in more detail in later slides.

Slide #8

The committee reviews the VIP application and conducts reference checks and other interviews as necessary. It then recommends volunteers to the board for appointment. The

committee may also determine that some volunteers will not be recommended for appointment. (More information about this will be in a later slide).

The committee, appointed by the board, is a group of three to five community individuals. It might include law enforcement officials, social services professionals, attorneys, medical professionals, education professionals, 4-H volunteers or others. These are individuals who value the need for a safe and positive environment for youth and volunteers and who have expertise and knowledge related to youth safety.

(Note: See pages 8 and 9 of Volunteer Information Policies and Procedures for more information).

Slide #9

A successful 4-H Youth Development program depends on volunteers as non-paid representatives of the local unit. Within the program there are two different definitions of volunteers—registered and episodic.

Slide #10

Registered volunteers are those individuals who have completed the full VIP process. This includes filling out the VIP application, as well as being screened by the VIP review committee, oriented to the role of 4-H volunteer and appointed by the extension board.

Slide #11

Registered volunteers have authority to independently plan and conduct educational experiences for youth. They may have frequent one-on-one interaction with youth.

Slide #12

Examples of volunteers who would need to be registered include community and organizational leaders, project leaders, camp counselors, chaperones for activities, and coordinators of events such as 4-H Day, Day Camps, etc. (note to presenter: Add specific examples from the local program).

Slide #13

Episodic volunteers help with one-time events or activities, such as presenting workshops or judging or superintending fairs. These individuals are not required to complete the VIP because they would work with youth in a public setting, rather than one-on-one.

Slide #14

The process of becoming a registered volunteer involves five steps: (Note: These five steps are explained in more detail in slides 15-21):

- (1) The individual completes the VIP application and sends it to the local K-State Research and Extension office.
- (2) The local office acknowledges receipt of the application and contacts the references.
- (3) The application and references are reviewed by the VIP review committee.
- (4) The applicant attends a volunteer orientation.
- (5) If the applicant is recommended, his or her name is forwarded to the board for appointment.

Slide #15

Step 1 of the process is volunteer completion of the VIP application. The application requests general information, such as name and address and previous volunteer experience. Applicants also indicate areas of interest, such as working with a particular activity or project, as well as the age of youth with whom they would like to work. In addition, applicants are asked for personal, confidential information about any previous charges or convictions related to substance abuse, criminal behavior, child abuse and suspension or revocation of a driver's license. The names of three references are requested and applicants are asked to sign a Volunteer Code of Ethics.

Slide #16-19

The code of ethics outlines 14 expectations of volunteers for the Kansas 4-H Youth Development program. The expectations are outlined in the next four slides.

Slide #20

In Step 2, the extension office staff sends the applicant's references a form requesting information about the applicant's ability to work with youth and handle records and money. References are asked if they would be willing to place their children under the applicant's care, as well as whether they know of any reason why the applicant should not be considered for a volunteer position.

In Step 3, the VIP review committee examines, in a confidential setting, the application, and references. It also examines public documents, such as the KBI registered offenders list, driver's license records and the Child Abuse Hotline. If the application, references and KBI check reveal no causes for concern, volunteers will be notified that they should attend the 4-H VIP orientation session.

If there are any causes for concern in the review process, the committee will evaluate them according to procedures outlined in the VIP policy. A few examples of concerns might include use of an illegal substance or conviction of abuse, neglect or other crime against a child.

Slide #21

In Step 4, the applicant participates in the 4-H VIP orientation session. This includes a review of the philosophy of positive youth development and an overview of providing age-appropriate learning experiences. It also includes information about creating a safe, positive learning environment for 4-Hers.

In Step 5, a list of applicants who have been approved by the review committee and have completed the orientation is submitted to the extension board for appointment as registered volunteers. Registered volunteers are then placed in positions according to the needs of the local 4-H program and the volunteers' interests and skills.

Slide #22

All volunteers complete an annual VIP Renewal Form indicating if there have been any changes in their personal situations or interests since completed the VIP application. After reviewing renewal forms, the local office updates the list of registered volunteers.

Slide #23

The VIP process is crucial for protecting youth, volunteers, the local board, and K-State Research and Extension. Implementing the process fully positions the extension board to handle any difficult situations that occur with volunteers.

Slide #24

In the words of Pat McNally, K-State Research and Extension assistant director for 4-H youth development, "We must be dedicated to providing a safe, positive, caring, and nurturing environment for youth to develop life skills." Thanks to all board members for being important partners in the process.