



Dear Potential 4-H Volunteer:

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with the Minnesota 4-H Youth Development Program. Volunteers are the cornerstone that supports the positive development of Minnesota's Youth. We are pleased you have chosen to join the nearly 14,000 talented 4-H volunteers from across the state who are helping youth reach their full potential through their involvement in 4-H.

There are three steps to becoming a Minnesota 4-H Volunteer:

- Complete and submit the 4-H Volunteer Application form
- Complete the 4-H Volunteer Background Check
- Complete the 30-minute 4-H Volunteer Orientation

The three steps can be completed in any order; however all of them must be completed to be considered as a potential 4-H Volunteer. Once you have completed the three steps of the screening process (the application, the background check, and the orientation), you will be notified by the regional Extension office of your volunteer status.

- **4-H Volunteer Application Form**

If this form is not already attached to this letter, you can download it from the University of Minnesota Extension 4-H volunteer webpage at www.4-H.umn.edu/volunteer. Click on “*Apply Now to Volunteer*” which will bring you to the area that has the application form. This form is interactive and can be filled out online, printed, signed and turned into your local county Extension office. A paper copy of the form can also be obtained from your county Extension office. To find your county Extension office location, go to www.4-h.umn.edu/counties. Applications must be submitted to the local county Extension office to initiate the screening process, so it is important to turn it in soon as possible.

- **Complete the 4-H Volunteer Background Check**

In addition to an application, all potential volunteers are required to complete the 4-H Volunteer Background Check as part of the University of Minnesota's risk management strategy to prevent child abuse and ensure the safety of all youth participants. This process is also in place to protect the volunteers and the University of Minnesota. Youth remain our top priority and the University of Minnesota Extension desires to promote an environment which encourages positive youth development.

The University of Minnesota Extension, in cooperation with The McDowell Agency, Inc. of St. Paul, Minnesota is working to conduct the 4-H Volunteer Background Check. All information gathered in the screening process is considered private and confidential.

Contact The McDowell Agency, Inc. with any questions:

Office: 651-644-3880

Address: 1714 University Ave W

Toll Free: 877-644-3880

St. Paul, MN 55104

Email: anna@mcdowellagency.com

Fax: 651-644-3877

- **Complete the 30-Minute 4-H Volunteer Orientation**

The 4-H Volunteer Orientation provides individuals with an overview of the 4-H Youth Development Program and the key factors that contribute to a meaningful experience for both volunteers and youth in the program. To participate in the online orientation, go to www.4-H.umn.edu/volunteer and click on the *Volunteer Orientation* link. On that page, you will find the downloadable 4-H Volunteer Orientation as well as links to other orientation resources.

At the end of the online orientation, please click on the *UMSurvey* link, enter your name and address, then answer the brief set of evaluation questions. Completing the survey serves two purposes: 1) it records your completion of the 4-H Volunteer Orientation as part of screening, and 2) it helps staff to ensure a quality orientation process for 4-H volunteers throughout the state.

The 4-H Volunteer Orientation is also available in print, DVD, and other formats which may be accessed on the website above or from the county or regional Extension offices. Alternative formats will include instructions for accessing the evaluation survey and demonstrating that you have completed the orientation.

What Next?

Enroll in 4HOnline, the 4-H database that ensures that you receive newsletters and other important communication about upcoming events or deadlines. To enroll online, go to www.mn.4Honline.com and check out the “Enrollment Guides” link to walk you through the steps. Be sure to check “Yes” to the question “Are you a volunteer?” To enroll via paper, request paper forms from your county office or print them (see link above or your county Extension website.) Enrolling is a separate process from volunteer screening. Youth and adults enroll each year to remain “active” in our database.

After you have completed the three steps of the screening process, you will be notified by the regional Extension office of your volunteer status. Upon being approved and registered as a Minnesota 4-H volunteer, the 4-H program coordinator or director in your county may contact you to discuss volunteer opportunities. This informal discussion is designed to learn more about your areas of interest in 4-H and how to best utilize your skills and talents.

If you have any questions about this process, please contact your county or regional Extension office. For office locations and contact information, please visit the following website:
www.4-h.umn.edu/counties.

Thank you for sharing your time and talent with the youth of Minnesota. We look forward to your involvement with the 4-H Youth Development Program!