# Roles of the 4-H Volunteer

Volunteers and parents are valuable partners in the 4-H program, and their contributions can have a profound impact on the lives of 4-H members long after they reach adulthood.

The research-based, learn-by-doing 4-H model equips kids with skills such as problem solving, decision making and communicating -- essential for them to succeed in school, college, careers and communities. Volunteers have a vital role to play in 4-H clubs, after-school programs, community service, civic engagement and camping programs.

As a volunteer, you may be able to

* Teach young people in an area of personal passion
* Feel pride in making a big impact in the lives of others, youth *and* adults
* Develop new and current skills in teaching and in your area of interest
* Understand your community better and make a positive difference in it

There are many ways to volunteer, including volunteering short-term in a SPIN club or as a trip chaperone, or longer-term volunteering such as leading an after-school or traditional club.

Overall Qualifications for a 4-H Volunteer

* Keep participants safe.
* Be intentional about providing positive youth development and education.
* Work cooperatively with Extension staff, youth, other volunteers, and families.
* Be guided by the Essential Elements of 4-H, and provide educational opportunities for youth to experience Belonging, Mastery, Generosity, and Independence.
* Help young people be involved in all types of decision-making, at all ages.
* Be willing to stay informed and model life-long learning.

Benefits to a 4-H Volunteer

* Watching others, grow, adapt, and learn.
* Making positive contributions to youth, families, community, and state.
* Feeling the rewards of sharing your skills, knowledge, and time.
* Being recognized by the local and/or state 4-H program for your contributions.
* Developing lifelong friendships.
* Enhancing personal skills and/or potential career options.

All 4-H volunteers complete an application and background check, interview with county 4-H program staff, and provide references before working directly with youth. Ongoing training is made available to volunteers. More information is available from:

[www.extension.umn.edu/youth/mn4-h/volunteer/](http://www.extension.umn.edu/youth/mn4-h/volunteer/)

[oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/volunteer](http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/volunteer)