



INTRODUCTION LETTER

VOLUNTEER SCREENING PACKET

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 positive youth development. We are pleased you desire to join nearly 14,000 talented 4-H volunteers across the state.

There are **3 steps** to complete to become a Minnesota 4-H Volunteer:

A = **Application**

B = **Background Check**

C = **“See” the Orientation (and complete the survey)**

The application should be completed first, but the background check and orientation can be completed in any order. All 3 steps must be completed to become a screened 4-H volunteer.

STEP A: APPLICATION

The application is part of this packet. Or, you can download it at:

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/youth/mn4-h/volunteer/>. Click the “Becoming a Volunteer” tab.

An original ink signature is required on the application. We cannot accept scanned or faxed signatures. If you fill out the application online, print and sign the signature page before submitting it to your local 4-H staff.

STEP B: BACKGROUND CHECK

All volunteers are required to complete a 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 also protects the volunteers and the University of Minnesota. Youth remain our top priority and we desire to promote an environment which encourages positive youth development.

The University of Minnesota Extension conducts background checks in cooperation with The McDowell Agency, Inc. All information gathered in the screening process is considered private and confidential.

You may complete the Background Check **EITHER** online **OR** via mail or fax. **Please use only ONE method** so the 4-H Program does not incur duplicate costs. Instructions for completing the background check online are included in this packet. The fax number and address of The McDowell Agency is on the Background Check Release for those who choose the mail or fax option.

STEP C: “See” the ORIENTATION (and complete the survey)

The 4-H Volunteer Orientation provides volunteers with an overview of the 4-H Youth Development Program and the key factors that will make your volunteer experience more meaningful for youth and adults. It also highlights the volunteer role in promptly reporting suspected abuse/neglect of minors to ensure the safety of all young people.

There are 6 units to watch. **It takes about 40 minutes to view all 6 units.**

Here are the steps to locate and view the orientation *online*:

- 1) Open the webpage <http://www.extension.umn.edu/youth/mn4-h/volunteer/>.
- 2) Find the “Become a Volunteer” tab.
- 3) Under the “Application Process” section, click the link for orientation.
- 4) Click the play button to start watching unit 1.
- 5) Continue watching units 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.
- 6) **When you have finished watching all 6 units, scroll down to “Last Step: Notify Staff” to take a survey which notifies staff that you have completed the orientation.**

Other formats: Units 1-6 are also available on DVD. If you prefer a printed format, units 1-5 are available in a PDF document, but unit 6 is NOT available in print format. Talk with your county or regional staff about options for helping you access these units.

Completing the survey is key! It notifies staff that you have completed orientation. It also allows you to provide feedback about the orientation that will help future volunteers.

WHAT’S NEXT?

You will be notified of your acceptance as a volunteer after all 3 screening steps have been completed. **All 3 steps must be completed BEFORE you begin serving as a 4-H volunteer.**

Staff will work with you to match your skills and interests to roles within the 4-H program. Training will be provided periodically. You will be entered into our 4HOnline database so that you will receive notifications about 4-H news and events.

If you have any questions about the screening process, you may contact your county or regional Extension office. To find office locations, visit <http://www3.extension.umn.edu/county/>.

We look forward to your involvement with the 4-H Youth Development Program!

This packet includes:

- Application
- Background Check Instructions (online method)
- Background Check Release (fax or mail method)
- Orientation Survey (tailored by region)