

VIP

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The Kansas 4-H Youth Development Program depends on more than 10,000 adult volunteers to help youth gain the five life skills of a positive self concept, an inquiring mind, a concern for the community, healthy interpersonal relationships and sound decision making. Staff and parents trust these volunteers to have the best interests of young people at heart.

Pat McNally, Assistant Director for 4-H Youth Development, said, “We must be dedicated to providing a safe, positive, caring and nurturing environment for youth to develop life skills.”

Unfortunately, there are some adults we should not trust based on their past behavior. We can no longer ignore our changing society. Child safety is a major concern in Kansas and the United States. Child abuse is widespread: it is not limited geographically, socioeconomically, racially, ethnically or by age. This is both a rural and an urban problem.

Safety of young people is a shared responsibility between volunteers, extension staff, K-State Research and Extension, and the state. We need to do our best to protect young people through the implementation of a youth protection system. In Kansas, the youth protection system is the Kansas 4-H Volunteer Information Profile (VIP) process.

H. Felix Kloman, a former board member of the Nonprofit Risk Management Center and highly regarded visionary in the field of risk management, offers the following advice: “Risk management is reaching a peak in organizational attention. 2005 is therefore an opportunity to redefine the process of risk management within organizations, a time to adopt new ideas, try new approaches and generate results. The goal of risk management is to enhance the flexibility and resilience of an organization so that it can build and maintain the confidence of stakeholders in an uncertain future.” (Community Risk Management & Insurance, Vol. 14, No. 1, Jan./Feb. 2005)

Essential Elements of Youth Development

Youth development, the process of growing up and developing one’s capacities, happens no matter what we do. The challenge is to promote positive youth development and plan quality experiences with young people.

In 1999, a team of evaluators from the National 4-H Impact Design Implementation Team was given the charge of determining the “critical elements in a 4-H experience.”

The eight elements include:

1. A positive relationship with a caring adult — adviser, guide, coach, helper, mentor.
2. A safe environment — emotional and physical.
3. An inclusive environment — sense of belonging, having a connection.
4. Engagement in learning — do, reflect, apply.
5. Opportunity for mastery — building on knowledge, skills and competencies.
6. Opportunity to see oneself as an active participant in the future — setting, planning and implementing goals.
7. Opportunity for self-determination — becoming self-directing individuals.
8. Opportunity to value and practice service for others — civic engagement, community needs.

We all strive to create a positive 4-H learning environment for all youth to feel connected, to have an opportunity for choice, to experience skill building and to be surrounded by healthy norms.



Historical Perspective of VIP

In the fall of 1995, the Extension Administrative Team approved the pilot of a document that has come to be called the VIP. On Sept. 26, 1996, administration approved the final draft of the VIP document and Youth Protection Policy. Since then Extension boards throughout Kansas have adopted the use of the VIP and the Youth Protection Policy to protect everyone involved with 4-H Youth Development programming. The VIP application and policies were reviewed in 2000 and again in 2005.

VIP Development Team

1995 Design Team: Conall Addison, SW Area; Betty LaToush, Scott County; Jo Ellen Arnold, Chair, Franklin County; Jim Lindquist, NE Area, Extension Director; Glenn Newdigger, Barber County; Walter Barker, NW Area; Eric Otte, Sedgwick County; Jodi Besthorn, Smith County; Karen Streeter, Riley County, volunteer; Charles Call, Brown County; Pam Van Horn, Saline County; Ann Domsch, SE Area; Martha White-Huling, NE Area; Lisa Eickholt, Geary County; Linda Everhart, Saline County, volunteer; Pat Fultz, Extension Specialist, Gary Gerhard, Assistant Director, Youth 4-H Programs; Gary Gold, Stevens County; and Beth Hinshaw, Ellis County.

2000 Review Team: Jodi Besthorn, Sedgwick County; Diane Mack, NE Area; Pat Fultz, Extension Specialist; and Pam Van Horn, Saline County.

2005 Review and Revision Team members: Rod Buchele, SW Area; Stephanie Einspahr, Kearny County; Byron Hale, Decatur County; Diane Mack, NE Area; Sarah Maass, Lyon County; Gwen Spade, Dickinson County; and Pam Van Horn, Central Kansas District.

Who Must Complete the VIP Process



1. A volunteer, adult or teen, with authority to independently plan and conduct educational experiences for youth with other adults present or in a public setting OR a volunteer whose position puts him or her in close, ongoing, one-to-one interaction with youth must complete the VIP process. Volunteer roles include, but are not limited to, judging team coach, community leader, organizational leader, project leader, camp counselor, camp assistant, Discovery Days or other event chaperone, exchange trip chaperone, chauffeur for any 4-H activities, and county-wide project leader.
2. New volunteers will complete and submit the VIP Application at the beginning of their first year of volunteer service.
3. Thereafter, continuing or ongoing volunteers will complete and submit the VIP Renewal on an annual basis.
4. The following definitions will determine the procedure utilized for the respective volunteer:

Volunteer: A volunteer is a non-paid representative of the Extension Unit for which they provide services.

Registered Volunteer: A volunteer, adult or teen, who has completed the full Volunteer Information Profile process including: application, screening and orientation and has been appointed by the appropriate Extension Unit Board.

A volunteer, adult or teen, with authority to independently plan and conduct educational experiences for youth with other adults present or in a public setting OR a volunteer whose position puts them in close, ongoing, one-to-one interaction with youth. (Examples: judging team coach, community/organizational leader, project leader, camp assistant or counselor, Discovery Days or other event chaperone, exchange trip chaperone, project leader, chauffeur for any 4-H activities, county-wide project leader, etc.)

Episodic Volunteer: A volunteer helping with a single “episode” or activity. This person is not required to complete the VIP process. Volunteers who are considered episodic volunteers serve as workshop presenters, judges, assistant fair superintendents, guest speakers, etc.

Confidentiality

Keeping the confidentiality of all profiles and supporting documents is the cornerstone of keeping trust in your Extension Unit volunteer base. Each applicant is entitled to privacy and to fair treatment under the law. It is the intent of this program to treat them fairly and with respect.

1. All persons involved in the VIP process and with access to personnel files will be informed on the importance of confidentiality. Each person should read this page and sign the Confidentiality Statement (Forms No. 1 and No. 2, pages 16-17) agreeing to protect the privacy of individuals.
2. VIP application, notes of references and interviews and/or reference forms and letters must be kept in a confidential file which can be accessed by only the local VIP Review

Committee (VIPRC), and the Extension staff members responsible for youth programs. Once the VIPRC has recommended approval of the VIP applicant and they have been appointed by the Extension Unit Board, then reference information should be destroyed by shredding. Reference information includes: notes of references, interviews, references forms or letters. Because the Extension Unit will retain the applicant's VIP application, the names and contact information of references will remain available to the VIPRC or Extension staff members in the event they are needed; however destroying the information is best to safeguard information and prevent any unintentional or forced disclosure.

If the VIP applicant was not approved by the VIPRC all information in the file should be kept for two years following the receipt of the profile.

3. Local Extension office professionals who have been assigned the responsibility to maintain "checklists" and handle correspondence will also be required to read the Confidentiality section and sign the Confidentiality Statement agreeing to protect the privacy of individuals.
4. All information about applicants and why they are accepted or rejected as a 4-H volunteer must be kept confidential. Only the VIPRC and Extension Unit Board should be involved in discussing applicants. Discretion and privacy must be used when reviewing and discussing applicants.
5. VIP files are to be kept for two years following the receipt of the profile or two years following the resignation of the individual's involvement, whichever is longest. Dispose of records by shredding so that the information in the files cannot be reconstructed.

If the volunteer is terminated due to allegations of any type of abuse upon a child the records should be retained indefinitely so that if the child decides to pursue an action after reaching the age of majority, defending the action would remain possible.

Retain all records relating to any ongoing situations.

6. VIP files are **personnel files**. The applicant may have access to review the contents of their own personnel file at the local Extension office. They cannot remove contents nor the file from the office. An applicant may obtain copies of the file contents by **written** request. Since VIP files are personnel files, only VIPRC members, Extension Unit Board members and Extension staff may review the files. No member of the public may review any VIP files.

If reference information is still included in the file, that information **must** be removed from the file, before allowing the applicant to review the file.

7. Kansas does have an Open Records Act. Subject to certain exceptions, it requires that records kept by public agencies be open for public inspection. It applies to records kept by the local Extension office as well as any state or area Extension office.

If your local office receives an open records request, contact your Area Director for assistance in complying.

Volunteer Information Profile Review Committee



General Information

1. The purpose of the Volunteer Information Profile Review Committee (hereafter identified as the VIPRC) is to identify a volunteer work force that will provide a safe, caring, and positive environment for youth (see Job Description, page 9, for more information).
2. This committee shall consist of three to five individuals who represent a broad knowledge base of human resources, law enforcement and child protection, as well as have an understanding of the nature of Extension programs.

In addition to these three to five individuals, Extension staff members who have responsibility for youth programs shall serve on this committee.

3. Suggested resource people in the county to consider include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Law enforcement official
 - Social and Rehabilitative Services professional
 - Attorney
 - Medical professional
 - Human Resources professional
 - 4-H volunteer
 - School/education professional
 - Business and/or corporate personnel
 - Extension Unit Board member
 - Church official
4. It is recommended that the Extension Unit Board or 4-H Program Development Committee generate a list of individuals who represent the previously mentioned entities. Those individuals should then be contacted to determine their interest and availability to serve in this capacity.
5. The review and selection of the VIPRC members should be conducted by the Board/ PDC Chair (or named representative) and the Extension Agent(s).
6. Candidates selected for the VIPRC will be submitted to the Extension Unit Board for appointment. Those appointed to the committee will be required to sign the confidentiality statement.
7. It is recommended that Agent orientate new VIPRC members in a face-to-face meeting. After that, VIPRC members can meet to review VIP applications as a group or individually and vote to recommend approval or non-approval on an as-needed basis.
8. If a VIPRC is not in place, these duties fall to a sub-committee of the Extension Unit Board to continually keep the VIP process moving.

VIP Job Description — VIPRC Member

- Title:** Volunteer Information Profile Review Committee Member
- Purpose:** To identify a volunteer workforce which will provide a safe, caring and positive learning environment for youth.
- Responsibilities:**
1. Complete and sign the confidentiality statement.
 2. Objectively review all profiles submitted for volunteer positions for the 4-H Youth Development program.
 3. Conduct reference checks, interviews and other record checks (Child Abuse Hotline, Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) Registered Offender List, driving records) as deemed necessary and relevant for each respective application.
 4. Recommend approval or rejection of the VIP applicant based upon **facts** provided.
 5. Recommend to Extension Unit Board on at least a quarterly basis the names of individuals approved for appointment as Registered Volunteers.
- Qualifications:** (one or more of the following)
1. Experience in working with volunteers.
 2. Experience in working with youth programs.
 3. Understanding of Extension programs.
 4. Value the need for a safe and positive environment for youth and volunteers.
 5. Expertise in one or more of the following areas: law enforcement, medical profession, social work, human resources, youth, volunteerism, education, employment or others as relevant to the nature of the position.
 6. Knowledge and/or experience with risk management.
- Time:** Two-year term, renewable.
- Resources:** Extension Agent K-State Research and Extension
- To Whom Responsible:** Extension Unit Board, K-State Research and Extension

Extension Agent's Responsibilities



Establishment of the Volunteer Information Profile Review Committee

1. Working with the Extension Unit Board or 4-H PDC, facilitate the creation of a pool of potential candidates for the VIPRC. Contact those potential candidates, asking them to serve on the VIPRC .
2. Provide an orientation for the newly appointed VIPRC members, including information pertaining to confidentiality, job responsibilities, an overview of the 4-H Youth Development programs, and other items pertinent to the task at hand.

Relationship With the Volunteer Information Profile Review Committee

1. The VIPRC is to meet on an as needed basis to review all VIP applications submitted to the local Extension office. Keep the chairperson informed as to numbers of applications received to determine the frequency and timing of those meetings.
2. On a quarterly basis (minimum) obtain and review the Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) Registered Offender List. Any individual who has been convicted of a sexually violent crime has to register with the sheriff within 10 days of coming into any county. This information is available on the KBI Web site: www.accesskansas.org/kbi/ro.shtml.
3. Extension staff serve as the initial reviewer to determine if each respective profile form is complete with signatures, code of ethics, and references. Use the suggested checklist (Form No. 4, page 20) or spreadsheet file (available on the Web) as a guide. **Create a personnel file for each application**, which will be kept in a confidential file cabinet in the Extension office. Maintain a log (Form No. 5, page 21) of the contents for each respective file. If an office professional has been assigned the responsibility to maintain checklists and handle correspondence, the agent is responsible for assuring that confidentiality guidelines are followed.

Communications

1. Responsible for all written or verbal communications (samples provided) pertaining to the VIP Process, including:
 - a. “Interested in Volunteering” Letter (Sample Letter No. 1, page 24).
 - b. Episodic Volunteer Becoming Registered Volunteer (Sample Letter No. 2, page 25).
 - c. Reference Form (Sample Form No. 3, page 18).
 - d. Acknowledgment Letter (Sample Letter No. 3, page 26).
 - e. Rejection Letters (Sample Letter No. 4, page 27).
 - f. Placement Letter (Sample Letter No. 5, page 28).
 - g. Kansas 4-H VIP Renewal Form (Sample Form No. 6, page 22).
 - h. List of Extension Unit Board Appointed Volunteers to share with club leaders.
2. Responsible for submitting information as required to the State 4-H Office (ES-237).



Orientation for 4-H Volunteers

Establish the dates and schedule for the “Orientation for 4-H Volunteers,” which is to be conducted several times during the year. This orientation can be held on a local or area-wide level and can be conducted by trained volunteers. Follow the established lesson plan to conduct this orientation. PowerPoint and lesson plans can be found on the State 4-H Web site.

The orientation can be completed at a face-to-face meeting or through online options. In the individual method, knowledge testing will occur to assure that the individuals have a basic understanding of their roles as K-State Research and Extension volunteer leaders working with youth.

Annual Volunteer Information Profile Renewal Form

1. Administer the “Kansas 4-H VIP Renewal Form.”
2. Distribute the sample form (Form No. 6, page 22) to all current registered 4-H volunteers and collect them by a designated date. Local units may include additional information to fit their needs.
3. Update the list of registered volunteers.

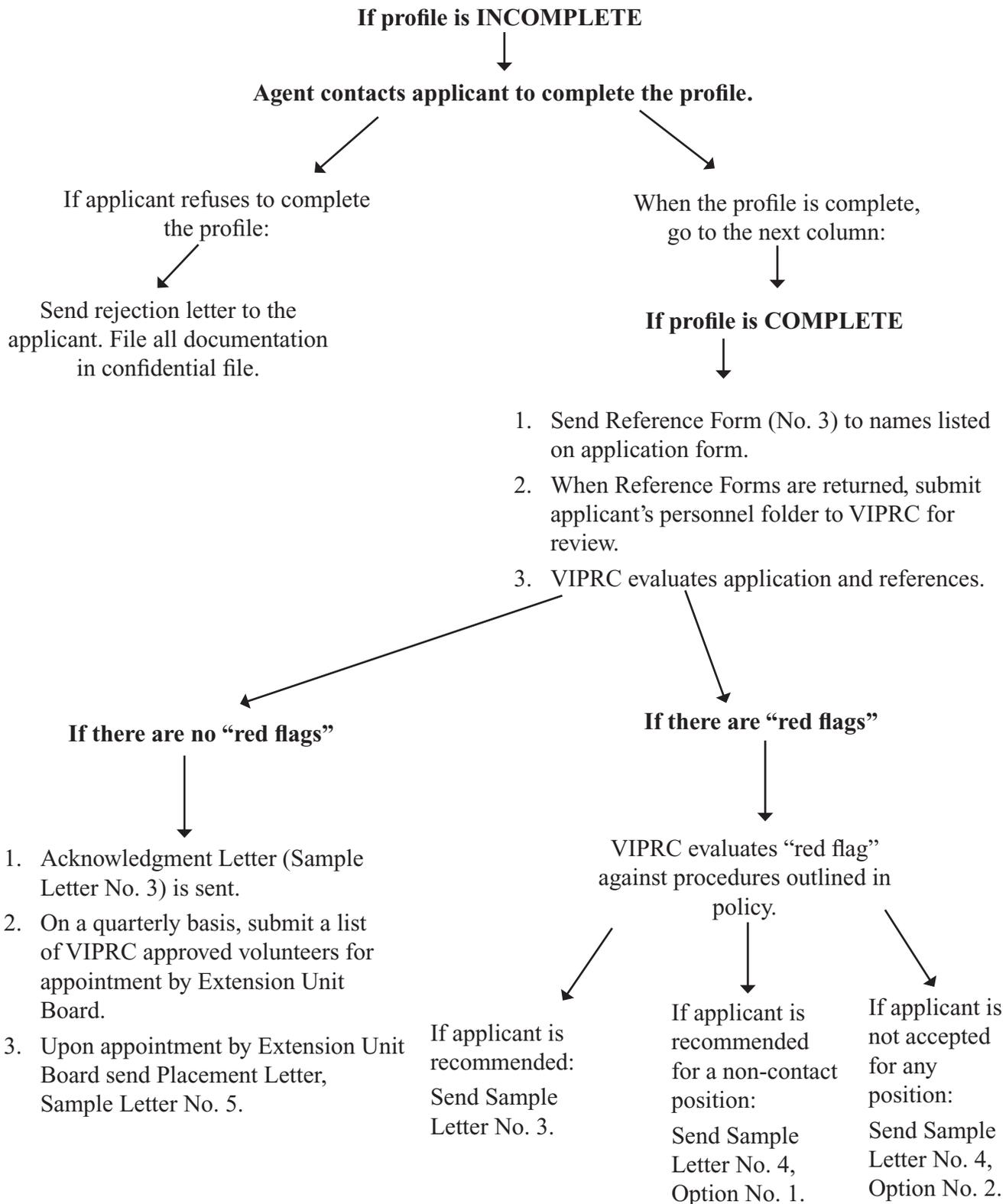
Transferring VIP

A registered 4-H volunteer who moves to a new location and wishes to be a volunteer for the new Extension Unit, must complete a new VIP application and complete the process.

If the applicant, under Section II Personal Information, answered yes that they had been asked to resign a 4-H volunteer position, contact the prior Extension office for more information. It is important to avoid passing a problem on from unit to unit within the Extension system.

Volunteer Information Profile Procedures Flow Chart

Volunteer completes profile and submits to local Extension Office.



Volunteer Information Profile Procedures

I. Volunteer Information Profile Review Committee

- A. Check for any applicant's name on the Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) Registered Offender List.
- B. Review the Volunteer Information Profile application in a confidential setting. Handle all applicant related material in a confidential manner. Confirm that it has been completed and signed and that the reference information is complete.
- C. If the form is COMPLETE with all required signatures, information, and positive references and no automatic flags (refer to Definitions, page 39), then follow steps below:
 1. Send letter of acknowledgment (Sample Letter No. 3, page 26) to the applicant. Inform individual of the orientation, which is REQUIRED to become a registered volunteer and eligible for liability coverage. Orientation can be completed by one of the following (refer to Orientation Section for more details):
 - a. Complete VIP Orientation Session (1.5 to 2 hrs), OR,
 - b. Complete online orientation, including evaluation.
 2. Once the VIPRC has recommended **approval** of the VIP applicant and the applicant has been **appointed** by the Extension Unit Board, then reference information should be destroyed by shredding. Reference information includes: notes of references, interviews, reference forms or letters. Because the Extension Unit will retain the applicant's VIP application, the names and contact information of references will remain available to the VIPRC or Extension staff members in the event they are needed; however destroying the information is best to safeguard information and prevent any unintentional or forced disclosure.

If the VIP applicant was **not approved** by the VIPRC, all information in the file should be kept for two years following the receipt of the profile.

VIP files are to be kept for two years following the receipt of the profile or two years following the resignation of the individual's involvement, whichever is longest. Dispose of records by shredding so that the information in the files cannot be reconstructed.

If the volunteer is terminated due to allegations of any type of abuse upon a child, the records should be retained indefinitely so that if the child decides to pursue an action after reaching the age of majority, defending the action would remain possible.
 3. When the orientation session is completed, submit the list of volunteers to the Extension Unit Board for appointment.
- D. Update "Volunteer Information Profile Log" (Form No. 5, page 21) as appropriate during the process.
- E. If the VIP is INCOMPLETE or lacking the applicant's signature, contact the applicant and ask for the missing information. Be sure the individual understands that the completed, signed profile must be on file for them to become a "registered" volunteer and entitled to liability coverage — if available in the local office. Refusal to sign the profile or provide all required information is grounds for non-acceptance. Refuse the applicant (Sample Letter No. 4, option 2, page 27).

- F. If the VIP includes AUTOMATIC FLAGS (refer to Definitions, page 39), refer to section on Red Flags for additional guidelines. The agent may need to consult the Area Extension Director for additional guidance and counsel.

Based on the committee's decision, do one of the following:

1. Approve VIP. Refer to C (1–3) on page 13 to continue the process.
 2. Accept VIP on a conditional basis. Refer to C (1–3) on page 13 to continue the process. Conditions may include limiting the kinds of roles the volunteer may hold, settings in which he/she may serve, required supervision, and/or limits on length of service. This information is put into writing and kept in the volunteer's file (Sample Letter No. 4, Option 1, page 27). Letter sent to appropriate groups or persons.
 3. Reject VIP. The applicant will be notified by letter of this rejection (Sample Letter No. 4, Option 2, page 27).
- G. Establish a file on each applicant. It should contain:
1. Information Profile Application — signed and dated.
 2. References Information. Once the VIPRC has recommended **approval** of the VIP applicant and the applicant has been **appointed** by the Extension Unit Board, then reference information should be destroyed by shredding. Reference information includes: notes of references, interviews, reference forms or letters. Because the Extension Unit will retain the applicant's VIP application, the names and contact information of references will remain available to the VIPRC or Extension staff members in the event they are needed; however destroying the information is best to safeguard information and prevent any unintentional or forced disclosure.
If the VIP applicant was **not approved** by the VIPRC, all information in the file should be kept for two years following the receipt of the profile.
 3. Other relevant information pertaining to application process. (See suggested filing system, page 15.)
- H. Reminder: Handle all applicant related material in a confidential manner.
- I. Handle VIP grievances as outlined by the suggested review procedure.

II. “Red Flags” or Special Concerns

If the answer is “yes” to any of the Section II Personal Information questions, or special concern is raised through applicants' background/screening, the VIPRC will:

- A. Gather additional information from one or more of the following sources:
 1. Profile review.
 2. Personal interview with applicant, with third party present.
 3. References.
 4. Child Abuse Registry (cannot be obtained without applicant signature on appropriate form).
 5. KBI (cannot be obtained without applicant signature on appropriate form).
- B. Agent consults with Area Extension Director for assistance in determining outcome of application.
- C. Using the information gathered, the VIPRC will recommend one of the following actions:
 1. Recommend approval of VIP to Extension Unit Board.
 2. Place applicant in a volunteer assignment not involving direct work with youth (Sample Letter No. 4, Option 1, page 27).

3. Refuse the applicant (Sample Letter No. 4, Option 2, page 27).
- D. Suggested “red flags” under which the VIPRC members should strongly consider an automatic disqualification of the applicant are:
 1. Use of an illegal substance not prescribed by a doctor.
 2. Conviction of any crime against another person adult or child; murder; possession of illegal substance with intent to sell; manslaughter or bodily injury while driving intoxicated.
 3. Conviction of child abuse or neglect. (Kansas law prohibits any person listed in the child abuse registry from working, residing, or volunteering in a child care home or facility.)
 4. A conviction of a specific vehicular crime which would make them ineligible for automobile insurance through common providers. Check with local vehicle insurance providers for specific disqualifiers.

III. Suggested Filing System

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| A. Confidentiality Statements | Signed forms for VIP Review Committee members |
| B. Approved VIP | Information Profile Application
Renewal Form
Other Relevant Information
Reference Forms |

Once the VIPRC has recommended **approval** of the VIP applicant and the applicant has been **appointed** by the Extension Unit Board, then reference information should be destroyed by shredding. Reference information includes: notes of references, interviews, reference forms or letters. Because the Extension Unit will retain the applicant’s VIP application, the names and contact information of references will remain available to the VIPRC or Extension staff members in the event they are needed; however destroying the information is best to safeguard information and prevent any unintentional or forced disclosure.

If the VIP applicant was **not approved** by the VIPRC, all information in the file should be kept for two years following the receipt of the profile.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| C. Rejected VIP | Information Profile Application
Reference Forms
Other relevant information
If the VIP applicant was not approved by the VIPRC, all information in the file should be kept for two years following the receipt of the profile. |
| D. Inactive Files | When a volunteer leaves the program, place their folder in the INACTIVE FILE for that particular year. Destroy file contents after two years. |
| E. Applications in progress | Use a tracking system to easily designate where the files are in the process. Suggest using colored dots to represent references added to the file along with a colored dot to represent when orientation has been completed. |
| F. Terminated VIP | Keep indefinitely. If the volunteer is terminated due to allegations of any type of abuse upon a child, the records should be retained indefinitely so that if the child decides to pursue an action after reaching the age of majority, defending the action would remain possible. |

Volunteer Services Confidentiality Statement

I, the undersigned, do hereby acknowledge that in my volunteer service for K-State Research and Extension and the _____ Extension Unit Board, I will have access to confidential information contained in the records of volunteers serving the organization.

I agree that I shall not disclose any such confidential information maintained by the K-State Research and Extension and the _____ County Extension Council/District Governing Body to any unauthorized person, and I will adhere to established confidentiality guidelines.

I acknowledge that a proven breach of confidence could be cause for termination from my volunteer position.

Date Volunteer Signature

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that I have discussed the guidelines for confidentiality with the volunteer named above.

Date K-State Research and Extension Representative Signature

Form No. 2
Paid Staff Confidentiality Statement

I, the undersigned, do hereby acknowledge that in my service to K-State Research and Extension and the _____ Extension Unit Board, I will have access to confidential information contained in the records of volunteers serving the organization.

I agree that I shall not disclose any such confidential information maintained by K-State Research and Extension and the _____ Extension Unit Board, to any unauthorized person, and I will adhere to established confidentiality guidelines.

I acknowledge that a proven breach of confidence could be cause for termination from my position.

Date

Staff Member Signature

Form No. 3 Reference Form



(Form may be used by mail or e-mail)

_____ is applying to work with 4-H youth as a volunteer with K-State Research and Extension and the _____ 4-H Youth Development Program and has given your name as a reference.

Individuals in volunteer positions help youth have fun while learning new skills, increasing their ability to work together, managing their own activities, and developing into productive adults. The 4-H program seeks your assistance in selecting the most qualified people to serve in volunteer roles and will appreciate your prompt completion of this reference form. All comments will be treated in a confidential manner.

Please share your impression and knowledge of the individual's qualification for the position by using specific examples where possible.

1. How long and in what capacity or position have you known the applicant?

2. Please mark how you would evaluate the applicant's qualities, using this scale:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Cannot rate
Understanding of children				
Communication skills				
Ability to organize				
Respect for others				
Dependability				
Sense of humor				
Sense of fairness				
Enthusiasm				
Flexibility				
Patience				
Initiative				
Resourcefulness				



3. How would you rate the applicant's general ability to work in a volunteer role with youth?

- Excellent Good Fair Poor

Comments:

4. What additional skills, abilities, and attributes does this applicant have that would be helpful in this role?

5. How would you describe the applicant's ability to handle records and/or money?

- Very good. I would trust this person with my organization's records and money.
 Fair. The person will do okay, but will need some help handling records and money.
 Poor. Handling records and money is a problem for this applicant.
 Not able to evaluate.

6. Would you be willing to place your son or daughter or any other child for whom you are responsible under his/her leadership? Yes No

Comments:

7. Do you know of any reason why this person should NOT be considered for this volunteer position? Yes No If yes, please explain:

Date

Reference Signature

(If you submit this reference by e-mail, your e-mail address is considered your signature.)

Thank you! I appreciate your assistance in helping K-State Research and Extension and the 4-H Youth Development Program select the best qualified people to serve in volunteer roles.

Form No. 4
VIP Checklist
Volunteer Information Profile



Name: _____

- All information blanks completed in Section I.
- Interests indicated in Section I.
- Answered all questions in Section II "Personal Information."
- Date of birth complete.
- Driver's license information complete.
- Vehicle insurance information complete.
- Three references listed.
- VIP application form signed and dated.
- Checked against "Registered Offenders List"
- Orientation session attended Date: _____
- Reference letters sent Date: _____
- Reference form 1, date received: _____
- Reference form 2, date received: _____
- Reference form 3, date received: _____
- VIPRC Recommend Approval Date: _____
Rejected Date: _____
- Name submitted to Extension Unit Board for Appointment Date: _____
- Appointment Date: _____
- Placement Letter sent Date: _____

Form No. 6
Kansas 4-H VIP Renewal Form



Please complete in ink, fold and tape, put in club return envelope or return directly to the Extension office.

Name _____
(FIRST) (MIDDLE INITIAL) (LAST)

Mailing Address _____
(STREET, BOX, ROUTE, APT No.) (CITY) (STATE) (ZIP)

Physical Address _____
(If different than mailing address) (STREET, BOX, ROUTE, APT No.) (CITY) (STATE) (ZIP)

Phone: Home _____ Work _____ Cell _____

E-mail: _____ FAX: _____

Check here if your mailing address, phone, e-mail or fax have changed in the past year.

This year I plan to serve in the following roles (fill in all that apply):

- Community/Organizational Leader for _____ 4-H Club
- Project Leader for project(s) and Club(s) _____
- Activity/Event Leader for (activity and club) _____
- Parent Committee member for (4-H Club name) _____
- Parent helper (help with club activities, transport youth etc.) 4-H Club name _____
- Unit (County/District) wide Leader for _____
- Other leadership role(s) for other 4-H groups (include role and group name) _____

Check here if the above is changed from the past year.

Have there been any changes in the past year to any of the following?

- a. substance abuse, alcohol, tobacco or other drugs? No Yes If Yes, Charged Convicted
- b. criminal behavior? Felony or Misdemeanor? No Yes If Yes, Charged Convicted
- c. child abuse or neglect? No Yes If Yes, Charged Convicted

If yes to any of the above, please elaborate: _____

Please describe and state what steps you have taken to correct the problem: _____

Please add additional pages as necessary.

Is your driver's license current and valid? No Yes

Do you currently have vehicle insurance coverage as required by the State of Kansas? No Yes

Date of Birth: _____ Driver's License Number: _____

I understand that it is my responsibility to notify the Extension Unit (County/District) Office 4-H Program, if there are any changes that need to be made to my personnel file.

Signature required on back.

Volunteer Code of Ethics

Youth Protection Policy

The mission of Kansas 4-H Youth Development is “Kansas 4-H Youth Development uses unique strategies and opportunities to engage youth in reaching their full potential through partnerships with caring adults.” Volunteers are key to fulfilling this mission. This policy outlines expectations of all those who work with children and youth. These statements represent a code of ethics which all volunteers and paid staff are expected to observe.

As a Kansas 4-H Volunteer, I will:

1. Treat youth with respect, caring and acceptance. I know that all young people have skills and talents which can be used to help others and improve their community.
2. Honor my volunteer commitment. I will strive to live up to my volunteer time commitment by working the hours needed to fulfill the role I have accepted.
3. Keep records, distribute materials and support the 4-H system. I will distribute 4-H materials to youth and adults, keep the required records and turn them in on time.
4. Follow established guidelines for keeping financial records and handling 4-H funds.
5. Seek training for my volunteer role. I will participate in meetings, self study, or other training programs which will help me work more effectively with young people and adults.
6. Make all reasonable efforts to assure equal access to participation for all youth and adults, regardless of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, age, or disability.
7. Provide a safe environment. I will not harm youth or adults in any way, whether through sexual harassment, physical force, verbal or mental abuse, neglect, or other harmful experiences.
8. Not use alcohol or any illegal substances (or be under its influences) while working with or being responsible for youth, or allow youth to do so while under my supervision.
9. Operate machinery, vehicles, and other equipment in a safe and responsible manner. When operating a motor vehicle, I will have a valid driver’s license and the legally required insurance coverage.
10. Role-model the character traits of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Model the core values of K-State Research and Extension: INTEGRITY, to develop and deliver credible information; COMMUNICATION, to provide common understanding; SCHOLARSHIP, to foster life long learning; LEADERSHIP, to serve as an agent of change; INCLUSION, to foster active participation by all.
11. Promote and practice the responsible and ethical stewardship of livestock and/or companion animal projects.
12. Obey the laws of the locality, state and nation.
13. Work as a “team player” for the good of the 4-H Program. I will work cooperatively with youth, other volunteers and extension staff and treat them with respect.
14. Work within the 4-H program. As a 4-H volunteer, I am accountable to the local club, the appropriate Extension Unit, the Kansas 4-H Youth Development Program, K-State Research and Extension, and Kansas State University for my actions.

I understand that:

- a. The information that I have provided may be verified, if necessary, by contacting persons or organizations named in this application, or by contacting any person or organization that may have information concerning my qualifications. I further waive the right to ever view, inquire into or learn the substance and/or content of any reference given by any individual with regard to any aspect of this application. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides information. I also agree to hold harmless the 4-H Club, local Extension Unit, Kansas State University, and the officers, employees, and volunteers thereof with respect to such information.
- b. I agree to renew my VIP status. I affirm that the information I have given on this form is true and correct. I agree to comply with the policies, rules and regulations of the 4-H Youth Development Program and local Extension Unit. I have read and agree to abide by the Kansas 4-H Volunteer Code of Ethics.
- c. As a 4-H Volunteer I serve at the request of the local Extension Unit and may be removed from service at its discretion. I may resign my volunteer role at any time at my discretion.

Signature _____ Date _____

Parental Signature (if under age 18) _____ Date _____

Sample Letter No. 1
“Interested in Volunteering” Form Letter



(Localize on official stationery)

WELCOME!

The _____ County/District Extension staff is pleased that you have indicated an interest in learning more about the 4-H Youth Development Program of K-State Research and Extension. We understand you are considering a volunteer role in the youth development program.

Kansas 4-H has a volunteer management system that includes a Volunteer Information Profile (VIP) application, reference check and orientation. This process is necessary for providing protection of youth and volunteers associated with the Extension Program. Pat McNally, Assistant Director for 4-H Youth Development, said, “We must be dedicated to providing a safe, positive, caring and nurturing environment for youth to develop life skills.”

The purpose of this process is to help you learn more about our youth program and to help us learn more about you.

After your VIP application arrives in the Extension office, your references will be contacted. You are invited to complete the orientation. Completion of the orientation is required for VIP registration.

Following successful completion of these steps, you will receive a letter of appointment for your 4-H volunteer role.

Competent, caring adults are an important part of the youth development process. Volunteers are role models for youth who participate in K-State Research and Extension 4-H Youth Development programs.

Working with youth can bring you immense satisfaction as you help them grow and develop. Plus, you can gain new skills and new friends through youth programs as you participate in county/district, state and regional leader training workshops.

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

(Name)

(Title)

Enclosure: Volunteer Information Profile Application



Sample Letter No. 2

“Episodic Volunteers Becoming Registered Volunteers” Form Letter

(Localize on official stationery)

Dear (name):

The _____ County/District Extension staff is pleased that you have indicated an interest in expanding your involvement with the 4-H Youth Development Program of K-State Research and Extension.

Kansas 4-H has a volunteer management system that includes a Volunteer Information Profile (VIP) application, reference check and orientation. This process is necessary for providing protection of youth and volunteers associated with the Extension program. Pat McNally, Assistant Director for 4-H Youth Development, said, “We must be dedicated to providing a safe, positive, caring and nurturing environment for youth to develop life skills.”

The purpose of this process is to help you learn more about our youth program and to help us learn more about you.

After your VIP application arrives in the Extension office, your references will be contacted. You are invited to complete the orientation. Completion of the orientation is required for VIP registration.

Following successful completion of these steps, you will receive a letter of appointment for your 4-H volunteer role.

Competent, caring adults are an important part of the youth development process. Volunteers are role models for youth who participate in Extension 4-H Youth Development programs.

Working with youth can bring you immense satisfaction as you help them grow and develop. Plus, you can gain new skills and new friends through youth programs as you participate in county/district, state and regional leader training workshops.

We look forward to continue working with you.

Sincerely,

(Name)

(Title)

Enclosure: Volunteer Information Profile Application

Sample Letter No. 3
Volunteer Acknowledgement Form Letter



(Localize on official stationery)

Dear (name):

Congratulations! You have just completed the first step toward becoming a registered 4-H volunteer — your Volunteer Information Profile (VIP) application has been reviewed by the VIP Review Committee.

Your next step is to participate in the 4-H VIP orientation session. This session is designed to help you understand your role and to provide you with the knowledge and skills necessary to do a good job. Attached is a schedule of the orientation sessions; you will want to attend one of them as soon as it is convenient for your schedule. (The local unit will determine how it wants the applicant to complete orientation. The letter may say “You may complete this requirement by attending one of these sessions or by using the online course.”)

Once you have completed the orientation session, your name will be submitted to the Extension Unit Board for official approval as a registered volunteer. The final step involves matching your interests with the needs of the program.

Please call if you have questions.

Sincerely,

(Name)

(Title)

**Sample Letter No. 4
Rejection Form Letters**

(Localize on official stationery)

OPTION 1 (“Can use you in certain roles”)

Dear (name):

After reviewing your 4-H Volunteer Information Profile (VIP) application and the additional requested information, the _____ County/District 4-H VIP Review Committee has decided not to assign you a role working directly with youth.

If you would like to support 4-H in another way, we would be available to discuss options with you. Possible opportunities might include: newsletter preparation, event planning, program organization, fund-raising, and award selection.

Please contact me if you are interested in supporting 4-H in another role.

Sincerely,
(Name)
(Title)

OPTION 2 (“Can’t use you at all”)

Dear (name):

After reviewing your 4-H Volunteer Information Profile (VIP) application and the additional requested information, the _____ County/District 4-H VIP Review Committee has decided not to accept your request to become a registered volunteer. If you want additional information on this decision, please contact the Extension Office.

Sincerely,
(Name)
(Title)

*NOTE: Rejection letters should be brief and to the point. They do not need to include reasons for rejection. Further information can be requested **by the** applicant if he or she so desires. A decision to reject an applicant **MUST** be based on factual information obtained through the review process related to child protection and risk management. If the person rejected persists in requesting reasons, then it is recommended that you get legal advice through the University before responding with specific reasons.*

Sample Letter No. 5
Placement Letter



(Localize on official stationery)

Dear (name):

Congratulations! We are most excited that you have chosen to work as a volunteer with the 4-H Youth Development Program and are pleased to inform you that you have been placed to serve in the following position for the program:

Job Title, Club/County

Enclosed is a job description for this position. If you have any questions, please give our office a call (or you may contact a member of your club's Parents Committee or the organizational leader).

Again, we thank you for your interest in serving in a most valuable role in our community — that of helping children develop the necessary life skills in a safe and positive environment so that they can become a contributing member of our society.

Sincerely,
(name)
(title)

After submitting a VIP application and being approved by the VIP Review Committee, the next step to become a Registered 4-H Volunteer requires the individual to attend and/or participate in a volunteer orientation session.

I. Orientation Process for Volunteers

- A. Orientation sessions can be offered on a county, district, multi-county or area basis. The agent(s), area specialist(s) or county/district trained volunteer(s) may conduct the session.
- B. Volunteers should be encouraged to attend the 1½- to 2-hour session to gain the most benefit from the context and discussions. However, training is flexible with an online option available. Participants will complete and submit an evaluation.

II. Volunteer Orientation Session (1½ to 2 hours)

See the State 4-H Web site for PowerPoint slides and a teaching outline.

III. On-Line Option

I. Inappropriate Behavior

The Kansas 4-H Volunteer Code of Ethics specifies the appropriate behavior, attitudes and actions of the volunteer. The following are examples of behavior considered reasons for dismissal.

- A. Providing alcohol or drugs to youth.
- B. Sexual advances toward a youth.
- C. Abuse of persons or animals.
- D. Denying opportunity to participate when the reason relates to race, creed, color, sex, national origin, age or disability.
- E. Violation or abuse of Kansas 4-H Volunteer Code of Ethics.

II. Graduated System of Due Process

Volunteers are appointed by Extension Unit Board. The ultimate authority for dismissal rests with the Extension Unit Board. The following procedures will be followed:

- A. The Extension Unit Board will notify the volunteer (or the parent(s) if volunteer is under age 18), in writing, specifying inappropriate behavior and policies in question and intended or possible outcomes, including removal from the volunteer role.
 1. The Extension Unit Board will provide an opportunity for the volunteer to present additional or contradictory information pertinent to the situation. Review the signed Volunteer Code of Ethics with the volunteer.
 2. When meeting with a volunteer in a face-to-face meeting, the meeting should always include the volunteer, a local Extension agent and a representative from the Extension Unit Board.
 3. A counseling appointment will be arranged. Counseling allows the volunteer to continue current responsibilities and contacts. During the counseling appointment:
 - Directly address the concern/issue by focusing on the individual's behavior, not on the individual.
 - Keep the discussion focused on the issue and avoid being drawn in other directions.
 - Recommend behavior change that needs to be observed.
 - Recommend appropriate developmental training opportunities.
- B. Depending on the nature, severity, or frequency of the offense(s), one of the following will be administered:
 1. **Probation** is defined as the volunteer continues current responsibilities for a defined period of time.
 - Directly address the concern/issue by focusing on the individuals' behavior not the individual. This is usually accomplished through a face-to-face meeting and is followed by written correspondence.
 - Agree to follow-up date(s) for further evaluation(s)/meeting(s).
 - Recommend or require appropriate developmental training opportunities.

2. **Suspension** is defined when a volunteer discontinues all or selected responsibilities/contacts for a defined period of time.
 - Used while gathering additional information or during a third-party investigation or disciplinary process.
 - There is immediate concern over safety of youth or others associated with the program.
 - Length of time is clearly communicated to the individual with written communication.
3. **Termination** or dismissal is defined when the volunteer discontinues all or selected responsibilities/contacts permanently.
 - Used only when other techniques have been unsuccessful or when the behavior is severe.
 - Use the Volunteer Code of Ethics to articulate a reason or reasons why the individual is being dismissed.
4. Steps to Consider:
 - Face-to-face meeting with volunteer to discuss the situation.
 - Follow up dismissal with a **certified** (receipt required) letter that specifically releases the individual of all or selected responsibilities.
 - Written communication should be specific and to the point.
- C. The final decision will be sent in writing to the volunteer after consultation with Area Extension Director.
- D. Allow volunteer to use grievance procedure, if they so desire.
- E. Provide for follow-up notification to staff, clients, and others who need to be informed that the volunteer is no longer serving in the designated volunteer role connected with the 4-H program.

Grievance Procedures

Volunteers

The following is the suggested procedure if a volunteer chooses to dispute a decision made during the application process or at anytime during the volunteer's appointment with 4-H youth development programs.

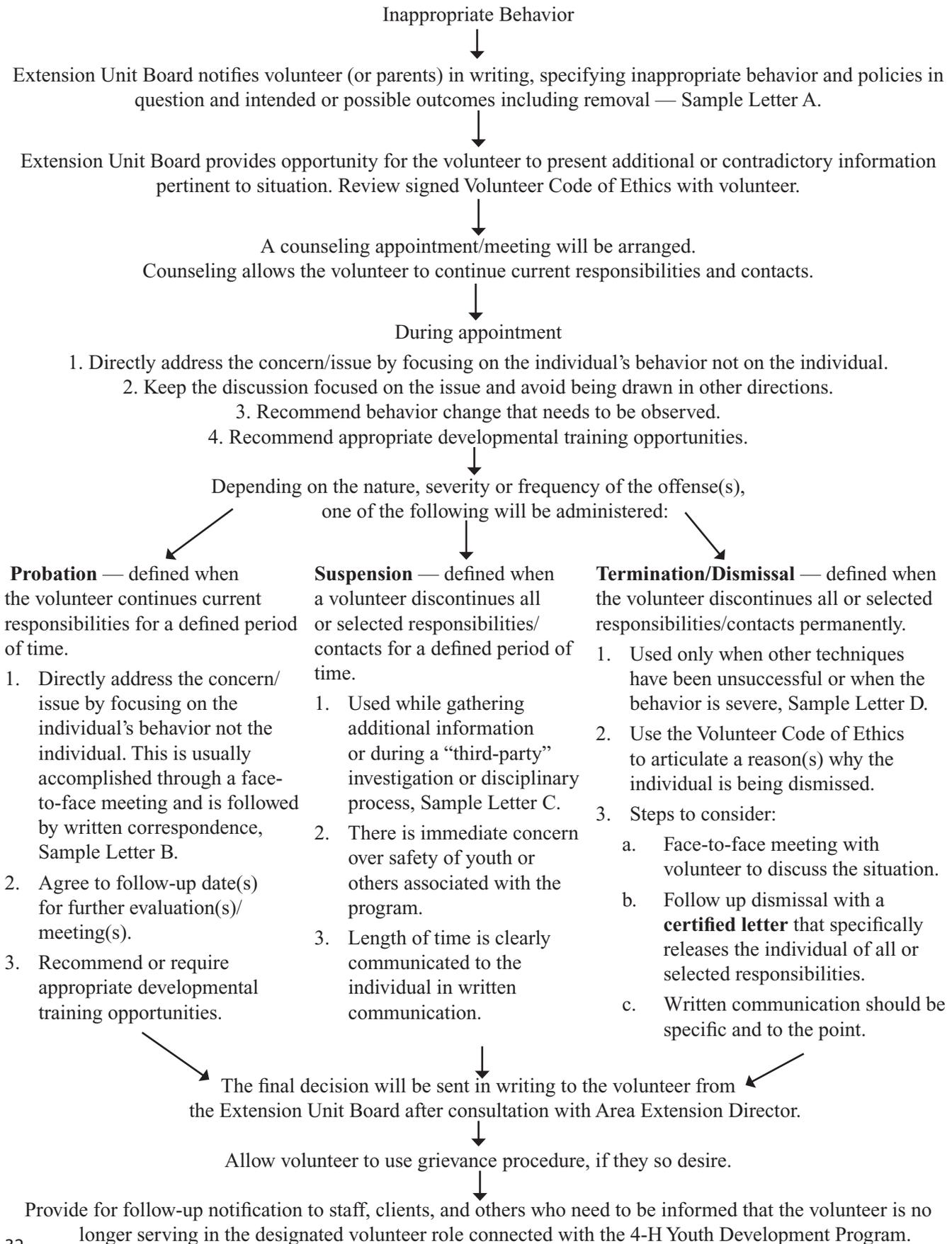
1. Volunteer challenges a decision made.
2. Volunteer submits concern in writing to Extension Unit Board with a copy to the county or district coordinator or director.
3. Within 30 days volunteer shall meet with Extension Unit Board and Extension staff member(s) to discuss concern(s) and possible solution(s).

Paid Staff

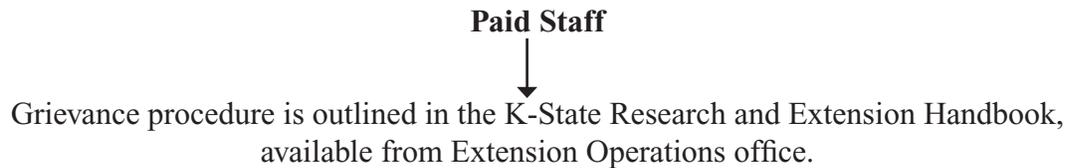
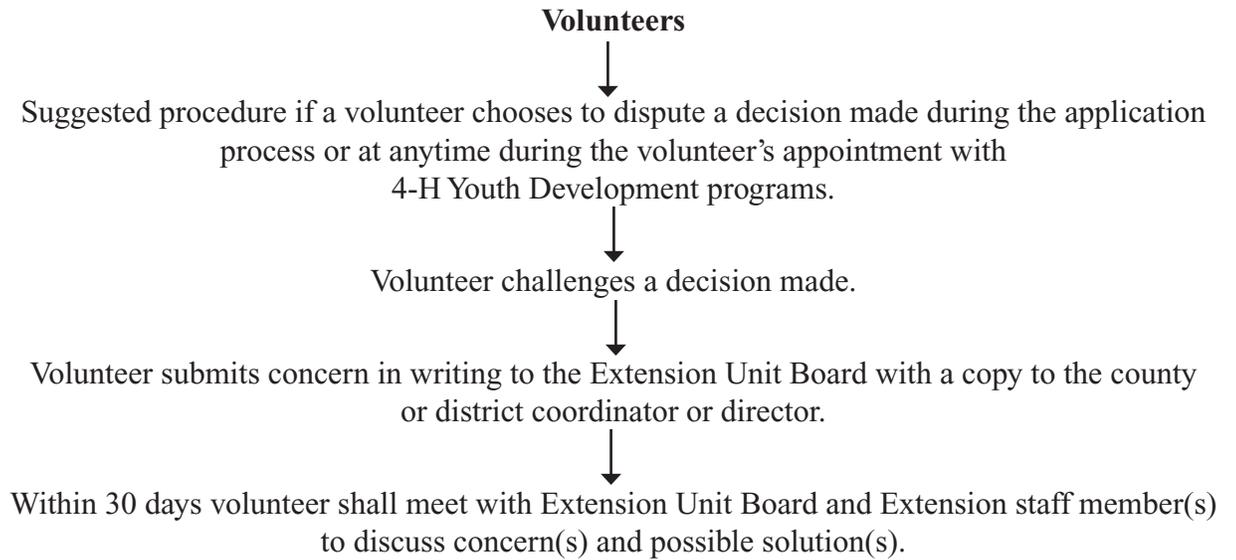
The procedure for paid staff to address grievances is outlined in the K-State Research and Extension Handbook, available from the Extension Operations office.

VIP Formal System to Dismiss a Volunteer — Due Process Flow Chart

Volunteers are appointed and the ultimate authority for dismissal rests with the Extension Unit Board.



VIP Formal System to Dismiss a Volunteer Grievance Procedures Flow Chart



Sample Letter A VIP Due Process Letter



(Localize on official stationery)

Dear (name):

Volunteers are critical to the success of the 4-H program. At the same time, inappropriate actions by volunteers can be detrimental to the 4-H program. Facts were provided to our board regarding (insert specific information). These actions appear to be in violation of the Volunteer Code of Ethics — a part of the Kansas 4-H Volunteer Information Profile. A copy is attached for your reference. (Insert numbers of the Volunteer Code of Ethics items which were violated; as an example: See No. 7: Provide a safe environment. I will not harm youth or adults in any way, whether through sexual harassment, physical force, verbal or mental abuse, neglect, or other harmful experiences and No. 13: Work as a “team player” for the good of all persons. I will work cooperatively and treat with respect other volunteers and staff for the good of all those involved in the program.)

Our job as the (insert specific name) Extension Unit Board is to ensure the growth and effectiveness of the overall 4-H program. Therefore, it is the unanimous decision of the (insert specific name) Extension Unit Board that your role as a volunteer within the (insert specific volunteer role) be suspended for (insert specific length of time) and at that time your volunteer status will be reevaluated.

[If volunteer is put on probation write the following: “Therefore, it is the unanimous decision of the (insert specific name) Extension Unit Board that you be put on probation for your role as a volunteer within the (insert specific volunteer role) for (insert specific length of time) and at that time your volunteer status will be reevaluated.”]

Due process allows you the opportunity to address this matter with a subcommittee of the Extension Unit Board if you so desire. You will have 10 minutes to address the subcommittee, and they may ask you questions. Upon the completion of this process, the subcommittee will take their recommendation to the entire Extension Unit Board. The subcommittee would like you to meet with them (insert specific date, time and place). Please contact me by (insert specific date) at (insert phone number or email) to participate in the process.

Sincerely,

(name)

Extension Unit Board Chair

cc: Board Members

Area Extension Director

**Sample Letter B
Probation Letter**

(Localize on official stationery)

Dear (name):

The 4-H Youth Development Program is administered by the (insert specific name) Extension Unit Board. Through the procedures of the Kansas 4-H Volunteer Information Profile, volunteers are accountable to the local Extension Unit Board. A due process meeting was held (date) where you met with a subcommittee of the board where information was made available and reviewed regarding (insert specific information).

Based on the meeting, it is the unanimous decision of the (insert specific name) Extension Unit Board that your role as a volunteer within the (insert specific name) club be put on probation for (insert length of time) and at the end of that time your volunteer status will be reevaluated.

There are conditions to your probation. (insert specific information) Any noncompliance with any of these conditions may also result in immediate termination.

Sincerely,

(name)

Extension Unit Board Chair

cc: Board Members

Area Extension Director

Sample Letter C
Suspension Letter



(Localize on official stationery)

Dear (name):

The 4-H Youth Development Program is administered by the (insert specific name) Extension Unit Board. Through the procedures of Kansas County Extension Council Law and the Kansas 4-H Volunteer Information Profile, volunteers are accountable to the board. A due process meeting was held (date) where you met with a subcommittee of the Extension Council Executive Board; information was made available and reviewed regarding (insert specific information).

Based on the meeting, it is the unanimous decision of the (insert specific name) Extension Unit Board that your role as a volunteer within the (insert specific name) club be suspended for (insert length of time) and at the end of that time your volunteer status will be reevaluated.

There are conditions to your suspension (insert specific information). Any noncompliance with any of these conditions may also result in immediate termination.

Sincerely,

(name)

Extension Unit Board Chair

cc: Board Members

Area Extension Director

**Sample Letter D
Termination Letter**

(Localize on official stationary)

Dear (name):

The (insert specific name) Extension Unit Board has found suitable justification to terminate your volunteer role as a (insert specific volunteer role). This termination is effective (insert specific date), that you are no longer to serve as a (insert specific volunteer role.)

Please return any items that belong to the club to the _____ Extension office by (insert date). These items include: (insert list):

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

(name)

Extension Unit Board Chair

cc: Board Members

Area Extension Director

Sample Letter E
Letter to Inform Others of Termination of Volunteer



(Localize on official stationery)

Dear Club Leader/s:

This letter is to inform you that the (insert specific name) Extension Unit Board has removed (insert name of volunteer and volunteer role). Effective (insert date), she/he will no longer be serving in this role.

Sincerely,

Agent name and title

Appendix: Definitions

Automatic Flags: These are areas of concern on the Volunteer Information Profile Application that cause a closer review of the credentials of the applicant. Automatic flags include: (1) incomplete information; (2) missing signatures; or (3) a “yes” answer to any of the questions in Section II, Personal Information.

Criminal Offense: A violation of a criminal law, including a felony or misdemeanor, other than a minor traffic violation.

Dismissal of Volunteers:

Probation is defined when the volunteer continues current responsibilities for a defined period of time.

Suspension is defined when a volunteer discontinues all or selected responsibilities/contacts for a defined period of time.

Termination or dismissal is defined when the volunteer discontinues all or selected responsibilities/contacts permanently.

Extension Unit: Local county or district Extension office.

Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) Registered Offender List: Search Web for most current KBI Registered Offender List: www.accesskansas.org/kbi/ro.shtml

Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry: Check Web site for most current information.

Personnel File: File maintained for all volunteers; it should include application, references and appointment or denial information.

Volunteer: A volunteer is a non-paid representative of the Extension Unit for which they provide services.

Registered Volunteer: A volunteer, adult or teen, who has completed the full Volunteer Information Profile process including: application, screening and orientation and has been appointed by the appropriate Extension Unit Board.

A volunteer, adult or teen, with authority to independently plan and conduct educational experiences for youth with other adults present or in a public setting OR a volunteer whose position puts them in close, ongoing, one-to-one interaction with youth. (Examples: judging team coach, community/organizational leader, project leader, camp assistant or counselor, Discovery Days or other event chaperone, exchange trip chaperone, project leader, chauffeur for any 4-H activities, county-wide project leader, etc.)

Episodic Volunteer: A volunteer helping with a single “episode” or activity. This person is not required to complete the VIP process. Volunteers who are considered episodic volunteers serve as workshop presenters, judges, assistant fair superintendents, guest speakers, etc.

VIP: Volunteer Information Profile process — application, screening and orientation for volunteers, who must be appointed by the appropriate Extension Unit Board.

Volunteer Information Profile Review Committee: Responsible for reviewing, verifying, and approving the Volunteer Information Profiles. This committee sends a list of approved volunteers to the Extension Unit Board for appointment.

Volunteer Information Profile Filing Procedures



- Each volunteer file will be dated with the date it was created; if necessary, it will be dated with the date that it went inactive or was terminated.

(Sample only—each office has the authority to create a system that fits their needs)

- All VIPs will be kept in a confidential filing cabinet in the Extension office.
- Only designated members of the VIP Review Committee, Extension Unit Board and Extension staff will have access to the confidential filing cabinet.
- The designated Extension office professional or other designated staff members responsible for youth programs, will be responsible for maintaining lists, creating files, and sending correspondence.
- Primary Divisions of the Filing System.

1. Confidentiality Statements
2. VIP Log
3. Approved VIPs

Once the VIPRC has recommended **approval** of the VIP applicant and they have been appointed by the Extension Unit Board, then reference information should be destroyed by shredding. Reference information includes: notes of references, interviews, references forms or letters. Because the Extension Unit will retain the applicant's VIP application, the names and contact information of references will remain available to the VIPRC or Extension staff members in the event they are needed; however destroying the information is best to safeguard information and prevent any unintentional or forced disclosure.

4. Rejected VIPs (to be destroyed two years after file is created)
If the VIP applicant was **not approved** by the VIPRC all information in the file should be kept for two years following the receipt of the profile.
5. Inactive or Terminated VIPs (to be destroyed two years after applicant becomes inactive or is terminated)
VIP files are to be kept for two years following the receipt of the profile or two years following the resignation of the individual's involvement, whichever is longest. Dispose of records by shredding so that the information in the files cannot be reconstructed. If the volunteer is terminated due to allegations of any type of abuse upon a child the records should be retained indefinitely so that if the child decides to pursue an action after reaching the age of majority, defending the action would remain possible.

ViP

*Addressing Inappropriate
Behaviors of Volunteers:
A Guide to Decision-Making*

D.E.C.I.D.E.



*A model that allows Extension professionals
to critically analyze situations
and make decisions based on factual information.*

Introduction

With the implementation of the Kansas 4-H Volunteer Information Profile process there has been a lot of attention given to the selection, orientation and recognition of our 4-H volunteer base.

The daily management of the volunteer program, which includes addressing personnel issues, is a very important, but often an overlooked, aspect of volunteer management. Many Extension professionals who work with volunteers are finding that they need additional guidance and support when addressing personnel issues with volunteers.

When we looked for a resource to help address these issues for Kansas Extension professionals, we found Ohio State University Extension's "Addressing Inappropriate Behaviors of Volunteers: A Guide to Decision-Making." We have adapted this document for your use.

This resource provides a step-by-step process that may be helpful when working through volunteer issues. The document is not written to replace existing organizational policies, but rather to serve as an additional resource.

For more information, please contact:

Diane Mack

4-H Youth Development Specialist, NE Area

dmack@ksu.edu

Rod Buchele

4-H Youth Development Specialist, SW Area

rbuchele@ksu.edu

Objectives

This document is intended for Extension professionals who are addressing issues associated with the behavior of volunteers. More specifically, the document:

1. Outlines an overview of one process to use when addressing volunteer behaviors;
2. Provides suggested questions and situations to consider when managers of volunteers are addressing volunteer behaviors;
3. Communicates appropriate actions to take by the manager of volunteers; and
4. Provides resources to assist with the documentation of volunteer behaviors.

Step 1: Diagnose the problem or situation that involves the volunteer(s)

<p>Programmatic</p>	<p>Content of the services delivered</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> Educational component of the club meeting is problematic; leader focuses inappropriately on continual fund raising activities; volunteer is inappropriately completing the members’ project books for them; etc.</p>
<p>Organizational</p>	<p>How the services are being carried out</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> Group members are not provided opportunities to participate in decision making; finances are managed poorly; inadequate supervision occurs during recreational activities; organizational policy is not followed; etc.</p>
<p>Safety</p>	<p>Related to youth, volunteer, or paid staff</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> Youth participant is assaulted by another member or volunteer; volunteer threatens another volunteer or paid staff with physical assault; volunteer continually yells at youth; etc.</p>
<p>Personalities/Personal</p>	<p>Between youth/volunteer, volunteer/volunteer, or volunteer/paid staff</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> Volunteer holding a “grudge” against another volunteer because of the quality of animals they are able to purchase; “that” volunteer’s club always wins because they cheat; that youth was suspended from school because ... and should be suspended from 4-H; the agent just doesn’t like me; a group of volunteers “ganging” up on another volunteer because she doesn’t seem to do her fair share; “that” volunteer is always causing trouble; etc.</p>

Step 2: Evaluate the situation for potential causes

Is the potential situation ...	<p>Related to the volunteer’s effort, knowledge, or ability?</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> Volunteer does not understand how to involve youth in decision making; volunteer lacks an understanding of the developmental difference between a six-year-old and an eleven-year-old; committee volunteer is only interested in selecting the judge of the county fair; etc.</p>
	<p>Result of the task being too difficult?</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> Managing complex county fund raising projects without special training; explaining the overall purpose and philosophies of 4-H to the director of a local community center without public speaking training; assigning a volunteer to manage a group of twenty-five youth; etc.</p>
	<p>Result of personal obstacles?</p> <p>-----</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> Unable to attend evening trainings due to a lack of childcare or employment responsibilities; personal, physical or emotional health problems; lack of transportation; etc.</p>

Is the problem directly (e.g., not turning enrollment information in on time), indirectly (e.g., committee treasurer is charged with embezzling money from his/her place of employment), or not directly (e.g., convicted of food stamp fraud) related to the volunteer’s volunteer responsibility?

Step 3: Collect relevant information pertaining to the situation

<p>Types of documentation:</p>	<p>Written</p> <p>-----</p> <p>Recorded observations and conversations by yourself or others with the individual volunteer or “related parties”; meeting minutes; financial/bank records; court records; lesson plans and/or handouts; attendance records; etc.</p>
	<p>“Third” party observations</p> <p>-----</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask them to provide written documentation. ● Summarize comments made by the third party. ● Summarize comments made by the third party and ask them to sign.
	<p>Past volunteer performance review information</p> <p>-----</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Volunteer “due process.” ● Legally versus Realistically. ● Generally the volunteer should be given the opportunity to share his/her side of the story before a decision is made.
<p>Documentation Strategies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focus on the facts. ● Leave personal feelings, emotions and judgments out of documentation. ● Take initial notes and summarize. ● Include date and time. ● Names of individuals involved. ● Don’t write something you would not want read in court or in the newspaper. ● Have a third-party review.

Don’t write something that you are not willing to explain and/or defend!

Step 4: Investigate potential options to bring resolution to the situation

<p style="text-align: center;">Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct a one-on-one training of a specific task or responsibility with the volunteer. ● Incorporate the topic into on-going volunteer training opportunities. ● Include an educational segment in the monthly newsletter related to the topic/issue. ● Promote and encourage the volunteer to attend a training program conducted by another organization. ● Provide mentoring opportunity to pair volunteer with another volunteer who has the desired skills and/or abilities.
<p style="text-align: center;">Counsel (Volunteer continues current responsibilities/ contacts)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Directly address the concern/issue by focusing on the individuals' behavior not on the individual. ● Keep the discussion focused on the issue and avoid being drawn in other directions. ● Accomplished through verbal or written communications. ● Recommend appropriate developmental opportunities.
<p style="text-align: center;">Probation (Volunteer continues current responsibilities/ contacts with limitations and/or guidelines)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Directly address the concern/issue by focusing on the individuals' behavior not the individual. ● Mutually agree on a specific time for behavior/operation to change. ● Agree to follow-up date(s) for further evaluation(s)/ meeting(s). ● Usually accomplished through a face-to-face meeting and is followed by written correspondence. ● Recommend or require appropriate developmental opportunities.
<p style="text-align: center;">Suspension (volunteer discontinues all or selected responsibilities/contacts)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Utilized while gathering additional information or during a "third-party" investigation or disciplinary process. ● There is immediate concern over safety of youth or others associated with the program. ● Length of time is clearly communicated to the individual with written communication.

<p style="text-align: center;">Dismissal (Volunteer discontinues all or selected responsibilities/contacts)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Utilized only when other techniques have been unsuccessful or when the behavior is severe. ● Be able to articulate a reason or reason why the individual is being dismissed (utilize Volunteer Code of Ethics). <p>Steps to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Face-to-face meeting with volunteer to discuss the situation. ● Follow up dismissal with a letter that specifically releases the individual of all or selected responsibilities. ● Written communication should be specific and to the point.
<p style="text-align: center;">Consider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Impact on programs, organization, safety of clientele, and public relations. ● Seek assistance from supervisors and peers; consult direct supervisor(s).
<p style="text-align: center;">Note:</p>	<p>This is not to be considered a progressive disciplinary process. At times, it is necessary to take immediate action (such as probation or dismissal) without having implemented one of the other options first.</p>

*Decisions have short-term and long-term impact;
don't forget about the long-term.*

Step 5: Determine an appropriate course of action

<p>Considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● One of the following should be selected:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No action necessary;• Education for the volunteer(s);• Counsel the volunteer(s);• Probation for the volunteer(s);• Suspend the volunteer(s); or• Dismiss the volunteer(s).● Follow organizational policies and procedures.● Be consistent when dealing with inappropriate behaviors.● Move ahead at an appropriate pace.● Consider potentially libel situations and discuss with supervisor and legal counsel.● Anticipate how the volunteer will react.● Communicate with the volunteer and all appropriate people.● Dealing with others (media, other volunteers, parents, youth, etc.).● Seek assistance from supervisors and peers.
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Step 6: Evaluate and follow-up on the decision

Follow-Up	Once a decision has been made, communicated to the volunteer and implemented, it may occasionally be necessary to follow-up with the individual and/or evaluate the process and/or decision.
Grievance Procedures	See Grievance Procedures for volunteers in Volunteer Information Profile Policy Document.

Documenting Behaviors and Actions

Don't Write	Do Write
Volunteer was spaced out on something and acted weird.	Volunteer could not focus on questions and asked that they be repeated three or four times.
Volunteer lacks real commitment and just wants that 40-year certificate.	<p>Volunteer has not turned in club enrollment materials by the published deadline for the last two years</p> <p>Volunteer held only two club meetings last year when six are required.</p> <p>Volunteer did not distribute certificates to members for the last three years.</p>
The volunteer scheduled a 4-H Committee meeting (that the agent canceled) with blatant disregard for authority.	The volunteer rescheduled the meeting without consulting with the Extension professional.
The 4-H members are afraid of the volunteer.	<p>During the July club meeting the volunteer yelled at the 4-H members during a club meeting.</p> <p>The volunteer stated that if members did not help with the project they would not get their fair passes.</p>
The volunteer is an absolute liar.	<p>After a county committee meeting, at which the volunteer was present, he/she returned to the club meeting and reported inaccurate information.</p> <p>Volunteer stated that he/she did turn in the information by the deadline; however, three families stated the information was not collected until after the deadline.</p>

Don't Write	Do Write
<p>The volunteer is only interested in the fair.</p>	<p>Under the volunteer's leadership the secretary's book indicated that only two club meetings were held during the year. The books also indicated that five members did not attend any meetings.</p> <p>Volunteer did not have members purchase or complete any project or record book.</p>
<p>The volunteer stole money from the 4-H club account.</p>	<p>The volunteer collected the fund raising money from the members and was never deposited into the checking account. No receipts were available to document how the money was used.</p> <p>The elected 10-year-old treasurer was not given a treasurer's book to complete.</p> <p>The volunteer completed a treasurer's book and asked the treasurers' mother to sign the book to indicate that it had been audited.</p>
<p>In a letter dismissing a volunteer:</p> <p>"You were a valuable asset to the Kansas 4-H Youth Development program and provided a much needed service."</p> <p>In written or oral communication:</p> <p>"If you do not return the money, we are going to sue you."</p> <p>Announcement to the 4-H committee:</p> <p>"Our treasurer has been fired as we believe she took money from the organization and then lied about it."</p> <p>In written or oral communication:</p> <p>"The potential volunteer for XYZ 4-H club was not accepted because all the people we contacted said that we should not take him/her as a volunteer."</p>	

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