

2017 National 4-H Volunteer e-Forum



What do I need to know about the National 4-H Volunteer e-Forum?

Frequently Asked Questions

What is an e-Forum?

An e-Forum is a method that can be used to provide professional development to volunteers and staff. Typically an e-Forum has a virtual component, with a speaker or speakers presenting content via the Internet. An e-Forum also has a local face-to-face component, with 4-H Staff and/or Volunteers hosting Adult and Youth Volunteers at a community location. Opportunities to interact with each other at the host sites are provided. Participants can also interact with volunteers at other sites who are viewing the program via chat pods and poll questions.

What is the National 4-H Volunteer e-Forum?

2017 will be the first time that an e-Forum has been held on the national level. Several regions have held e-Forums over the past few years. The national concept is designed to capitalize on the strengths, resources, and experiences from 4-H programs across the nation and to allow 4-H volunteers and staff to have a richer experience.

Who is the target audience?

The primary audience for the e-Forum is 4-H Volunteers who serve in a variety of roles such as club organizational leaders, project/subject leaders, committee members, and advisory boards. Youth volunteers are also welcome to attend the e-Forum programs. A secondary audience is 4-H Extension Professionals.

How can an e-Forum be used?

Our experience has shown that 4-H volunteers and staff assembling at a central geographic location in the community provides the best experience for the participants. They are able to receive the benefit of face-to-face interaction with others in the 4-H program and also learn new information that they can implement with their 4-H members.

While it is possible for individuals to view the live e-Forum program from home, they will not receive the opportunity to have the face-to-face interaction. The activities built into the e-Forum sessions will be less meaningful with no one else to participate.

What are the logistics of an e-Forum?

When are the e-Forums held?

In 2017, three e-Forum sessions will be held on October 5, November 2, and December 7. Each session will begin at 7:00 p.m. (Eastern time) and will conclude by 8:30 p.m. It is recommended that each site invite participants to come to the community location approximately 30 minutes prior to the start of the session. This will allow all participants to get settled in, enjoy any refreshments that may be provided (optional), and participate in some welcoming activities (optional).

Is there an optimum recommended number of participants?

A group of at least 5 participants will allow for good interaction during the time allocated for on-site activities. Fewer participants just means that your site will likely finish before time is up. The maximum number of participants depends upon the size of your facility. You want to be sure that everyone is able to see and hear the information shared by the virtual presenters.

What supplies and equipment might I need to host?

A reliable, hard-wired (not wireless) internet connection is a must. A method to project the presentation onto a screen or wall will allow the group to see the presentation. Speakers that will enable the presenters to be easily heard are highly recommended.

Each session will have a list of other supplies that are recommended to help facilitate the activities on site. The supply list will be provided in each of the e-Forum session lesson plans provided to all sites prior to the program.

Is registration encouraged?

Registration of the host sites is strongly encouraged to enable the host sites to test out the technology/equipment ahead of time. Also, by registering, the sites will receive all communication about the e-Forum, including any last-minute changes to the program.

What resources are provided?

Each e-Forum session will have a detailed Lesson Plan and set of PowerPoint slides with presentation notes. The Host Site Facilitator's Logistics Guide is also available for help with overall logistics related to the e-Forum. Additional resources will be provided for each session to supplement the presentation. These can be shared with participants as handouts.

Marketing materials are also available to help promote the e-Forum series to volunteers and staff. These are located at the 4-h.org website at: <http://4-h.org/professionals/professional-development/volunteer-development/#!/4h-volunteer-e-forum>.

Does an e-Forum session have to be hosted?

We strongly encourage the e-Forum sessions to be hosted at a community location for participants to attend. By coming together, participants will receive the benefits of face-to-face interaction with others as well as learning from virtual presenters and volunteers and staff across the nation. Each session will be recorded. If individuals are unable to attend the live program, they can be directed to the link of the recording to view on their own.

How do I host an e-Forum session?

Contact your local 4-H Extension Professional to let them know you are interested in hosting. Register your site according to the instructions provided in the Host Site Facilitator's Guide. Attend a

Host Site Facilitator's Webinar to be held in the Fall, 2017, prior to the first e-Forum session. This webinar will provide some additional details and tips to help your e-Forum hosting experience be successful!

Does it make sense for my volunteers?

Content has been developed to be of practical use for 4-H Volunteers, youth and adult, in a variety of roles. We hope that the volunteers who attend will receive additional tools that they can in turn use with the 4-H members in their program.

What is the content for each date?

October 5, 2017 – 7:00-8:30 PM (ET) - Cultivating an Environment for Growing True Leaders

Creating an environment where 4-H members feel safe as they grow and develop leadership skills means having volunteers who understand the basics of positive youth development. This session will feature ideas and activities that help foster life skill development by focusing on strategies for more effective club interactions. Participants will learn about the Essential Elements of 4-H and the 5 C's of positive youth development, so join us to set the stage for more successful club meetings!

November 2, 2017 – 7:00-8:30 PM (ET) - "STEM"ming into Animal Science, Growing True Leaders

Build on the roots of 4-H as we STEM our way into agriculture and animal science for experienced and new 4-H'ers. Gain resources to incorporate Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) leaders through traditional animal sciences project areas in communities. Volunteers will gain ideas for planning and organizing fun, educational sessions for youth.

December 7, 2017 – 7:00-8:30 PM (ET) - Helping 4-H'ers Grow in Life & Work

In 4-H, all youth can explore their future. Club meetings, events, camps, and after-school programs are places to develop life skills and expand their interests through 4-H. During this session volunteers will share ideas, receive resources, and see a variety of successful programs that help youth focus on life-long learning, workforce readiness, and career exploration. Caring adults can help all young people make decisions and create their own positive future.

Are there printed materials which can be made available to participants?

Yes. Each session will have printed materials available. The lesson plan for each session will direct host site facilitators to each resource.

Is there a website for the e-Forum?

Yes. National 4-H Council is hosting our e-Forum websites at the 4-h.org site. The specific url for the e-Forum materials is: <http://4-h.org/professionals/professional-development/volunteer-development/#!4h-volunteer-e-forum>.

Note: the first time you visit this site, you will need to create a user profile. Then, you'll be able to login with your username and password each time to access the materials of interest to you.

What is the impact of previous e-Forums?

Previous e-Forums held at the regional levels have shown that participants enjoy the opportunity to interact with their peers in a face-to-face session, and that they also appreciate the chance to learn from others from other states.

Demographics show that the participants represent a wide range of generations as well as a wide range of experience levels, a much different, and more diverse, audience than experienced through previous face-to-face Volunteer Forums.

An example of an evaluation completed in 2015 for one of the North Central e-Forum sessions is shown below.

North Central Region 4-H Volunteer e-Forum

Encouraging the Heart of Leadership

December 3 and 8, 2015

Presenters: Becky Harrington (MN), Jill Jorgensen (WI), Kandi O'Neil (WI), Brenda Shafer (MN)

Featured speakers: Debbie Olson (WI – adult volunteer) and Kyle Gau (WI – 4-H member)

Session Description:

Young people do not magically become leaders at age 13. Leadership is nurtured from their first 4-H experience. Listen as young people share stories of how adults encouraged the heart of leadership in them. Volunteers in this session will receive tools to help inspire youth of all ages to discover and develop independence and mastery.

Evaluation Results

The objectives of the training were overwhelmingly met. Asked to rate agreement to statements on a four-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree), participants self-reported agree/strongly agree to three **learner objectives**. Data analysis reflected that as a result of the session,

- 97% can list different types of leadership roles and opportunities for young people (n=97),
- 97% can identify elements to develop supportive relationships with young people (n=93), and
- 95% can identify one or two strategies to use in the next one to three months to intentionally encourage the heart of leadership with one or more young persons (n=93).

When asked an open-ended question about **the most important idea or concept learned** in the session, responses could be grouped as follows:

- Leadership can be for all ages (includes using talents of youth, providing meaningful roles, build on youth strengths, etc.),
- How to build relationships with youth (includes regarding youth as equals, be part of their lives outside of 4-H, be an active listener, one-on-one interactions, etc.), and
- Importance of non-parent relationships to help youth find and develop their passion.

Tools that were noted included the interest interview questions, tips for building VIP relationships with youth, web of volunteers, and popsicle stick activity to build strong relationships.

Participants indicated they will **use** the following **ideas or concepts** in their **role(s) with the 4-H program**:

- Get more 4-H'ers involved, including roles beyond clubs,
- Mentoring youth by connecting with 4-H'ers , building a web of support, and offering verbal reinforcement, and
- Building community connections

Again, they referenced using these tools: interview questions and popsicle stick idea.

When asked about a **4-H-related topic** that they would like to learn more about in the future, engaging parents in support and/or leadership roles had the highest response. Other topics with multiple responses included project work (STEM, livestock), community service, and conducting meetings.