



**Ohio 4-H**  
*Community  
Service Officer's  
Resource Guide*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Year \_\_\_\_\_ Age (as of January 1) \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

Club Name \_\_\_\_\_

4-H Advisor \_\_\_\_\_



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



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# References

*My Hands to Larger Service: Teen Leaders Building Our Communities*. Ohio State University Extension, 2014.

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# Community Service

## You Are the Strongest Link

Your new position as community service officer enables you to connect with your friends, fellow members, advisors, parents, and your community. By creating a fun, meaningful community service project where everyone plays an active role, you will help others build stronger skills while helping your community.

Follow these steps as you guide your 4-H club through a worthwhile community service project:

- Choose the community service project
- Plan the community service project
- Do the community service project
- Evaluate the community service project
- Publicize and report the community service project

Not only should you follow these five steps for success, but as the leader, you should try to involve everyone in all the steps. Often adults are the major contributors to the idea, decision making, and planning. You, as the community service officer, can delegate jobs to the other club members and adults so all are actively involved.

Let's take a closer look at the five steps and how to make them work for your club. Be sure to keep a notebook with all the details of your community service project so you can share easily with your club, parents, and community members.

## Choose the Perfect Community Service Project

### *Ideas*

- Ask every member to share a new idea that would benefit the community.
- Invite community members who work with local organizations to speak with your club or ask them for ideas about your community's needs, such as: Hospice, Children's Services, Family and Children First Council, PTOs, Rotary Club, Lions Club, hospitals, community action, Health Department, City Council, nursing homes, and others).
- Conduct a survey at your school, church, or neighborhood store or mall asking about the issues and needs of the community.
- Contact the local media for ideas—newspaper, radio, television.
- Look for ideas on web sites such as Youth Service America at [ysa.org](http://ysa.org) and Points of Light at [pointsoflight.org](http://pointsoflight.org).
- Look at your club's interests and how their talents can be best used.
- Don't forget to look at resources available to your club—money, time, tools, etc.
- Consider the amount of time required to complete the project.

### *Deciding on the Project*

- List projects on large paper or poster board.
- Have members vote on the projects by giving them five colored, sticky dots to put on their favorite ideas. Members can use all five dots to vote on one project or vote on five different ideas. Narrow it down to the top two or three most popular ideas, then decide which will work for your club.
- List the projects' benefits and challenges. Decide from your list which would fit your club's needs best. Time, resources, dates, money, or equipment needed may factor into the club's decision.
- Remember a good project meets the needs of the community.

# Plan the Club's Project

## *Duties of the Community Service Project Committee*

- Meet separately from the regular club meeting. The committee can meet before or after the club meeting or on another day.
- The committee members should include a few members and one advisor.
- The committee should bring an outline of work to be done on a calendar for the club.
- Have space on the worksheets/calendar for club members to sign up for various duties.
- At the 4-H club meeting, the committee should give the members the calendar and ask for volunteers for the various work assignments. Make sure everyone is involved. Many assignments will take more than one person.

## *Planning Considerations*

- How many volunteers will you need for the project?
- Who is available to help on the day of the project? Remember to include adults.
- Assign groups with a leader for the various jobs—gathering supplies, money, transportation to the event, refreshments, publicity on the radio, newspaper, television, and contacting any agencies involved (including safety personnel—police, nurses, etc.).
- Do you need an added insurance policy on members involved in your project?
- Do you need permission forms or medical histories of participants in case of an emergency?
- Have first-aid kits on site.
- Do 4-H members have permission to ride with an adult or another teen member?

## *Organization—Managing the Volunteers*

- Does every volunteer know what they are responsible for?
- Do the volunteers know what time to arrive?
- Do the volunteers know who is in charge?
- Do the volunteers know who to ask for information or where to find things?
- Do the volunteers know where they are going?
- Do they know when they will finish? This is important for youth who may need a ride from a parent.
- Did you write a task list including those responsible to share with each participant?
- Do you have a list of phone numbers—members, adults, emergency, organization, etc.?

# Complete the Community Project

## *Putting the Project in Motion*

- Take a copy of your plans to the event listing all the responsible parties and their phone numbers.
- Be prepared if something does not go as planned, such as a member got sick or hurt or someone needs to leave early.
- Have a cell phone at the event.
- Bring any permission forms and medical forms with you to the project. Arrange for a back-up person (adult) to be responsible for these papers. Leaders should appoint a person to take care of any medical emergencies (only calling 911, not providing treatment).
- If all the details with “who, what, when, where, and how” have been given to all the participants, then you are ready to let the fun begin.
- Ask someone to take pictures for news stories or future publicity. Pictures for your 4-H historian book and news reporter book will be treasured later.
- Begin on time. End on time.
- Remember to clean up any trash from the project area. Respect the area.
- At the end, praise everyone who participated. Thank your helpers.

## Evaluate Your Project

### *Include All Participants in the Evaluation*

Evaluation can be done by group discussion, by writing a journal or news article, or by taking a survey of the participants. Were you the strongest link?

### *Reflection*

- Did everyone have a role?
- Did everyone follow through with his or her assignment?
- Was the time frame adequate to complete the project?
- What changes would you recommend if your club plans to do a similar project?
- How were your supplies, money, resources, or refreshments?
- Who benefited from the project?
- Was it fun and creative?
- Did you enjoy doing it?
- Did club members and adults think others benefited from the overall project?
- Did the club publicize the success to the community?
- Did you consider applying for an award, like Make a Difference Day?
- Would you recommend the project for others?

# Publicize Your Project

## *Don't be Shy—Report Your Successes*

- Inform the local media of what your club accomplished, including who, what, where, when, and why. Send pictures of your members at the event.
- Assign several club members to tell community leaders about your project—4-H Extension office, Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, PTOs, city council, community boards, elected officials, etc. Include pictures of club members at your event.\* By sharing your ideas with others, your project may grow to other areas or more people will become involved in the future.
- Form a committee to send thank-you notes to anyone who helped make this project a success.

*\*Make sure you have photo releases for everyone in the photo.*

If you have been able to organize a meaningful community service project that your club members have had fun participating in, then...YOU are the strongest link to your community!

## *Required Documents for the Community Service Officer*

- List of club members with phone numbers, addresses, and email.
- List of club advisors with phone numbers, addresses, and email.
- List of community service ideas generated.
- Written report about your community service project including who was involved, who benefited, and why it was important to do this project. Use the five steps and add the task assignments of members and adults.
- Press releases or news articles about the community service project.
- Receipts (copies) of expenditures.
- Pictures of the club members in action performing the community service project.
- Copy of a thank-you letter or notes sent.
- Poster with photos of your club doing the project for the Junior Fair Building.

## *Optional Items*

- Publicity—radio transcripts, fliers, and any promotional information given to others.
- Documentation of visits to other 4-H clubs, organizations, civic organizations to promote the project.
- Examples of free items that were given to a group.
- Ideas on how to expand the project to other groups.
- Invite a community leader of a community agency to speak at your club meeting.
- Prepare a display about your project in a public place such as the library, school, grocery store, doctors' offices, etc.
- Do a radio or television spot about your community service project.
- List of websites for community service ideas to share with others.



I pledge  
My **head** to clearer thinking,  
My **heart** to greater loyalty,  
My **hands** to larger service, and  
My **health** to better living,  
For my club, my community,  
my country, and my world.

**ohio4h.org**

This publication and other officer resources can be found at **ohio4h.org/officerresources**. For other Ohio State University Extension, 4-H Youth Development publications, contact your local OSU Extension office or purchase online at **extensionpubs.osu.edu**. Ohio residents get the best price when they order and pick up their purchases through local Extension offices.