

VRKC

**VOLUNTEER
RESEARCH
KNOWLEDGE
COMPETENCY**

Taxonomy for 4-H Youth Development

VRKC

Communications

Volunteers demonstrate the ability to create, deliver and interpret information effectively through formal and non-formal means. This includes:

- Speaking Skills
- Listening Skills
- Writing Skills
- Non-Verbal Skills
- Information Delivery & Dissemination
- Marketing & Public Relations
- Use of Technology

Organization

Volunteers demonstrate the ability to engage others in planning, providing and delivering positive 4-H youth development programming in a community. This includes:

- Planning & Organizing
- Time Management
- Parent Recruitment & Involvement
- Delegating Tasks to Parents
- Service to the Community
- Marketing & Publicity

Using the VRKC Taxonomy

- VRKC provides county 4-H professionals with an outline for volunteer development.
- VRKC provides state specialists with a format for agent education in volunteer development.
- Staff may choose to focus on one domain each year for all 4-H volunteers in a county, district or state.
- Staff may choose to assess the needs of individual or groups of volunteers and tailor a volunteer development plan specifically for each one.



4-H Program Management

Volunteers must understand and follow appropriate policies, procedures and safety guidelines when acting on behalf of Extension. This includes:

- Organization & Structure of Extension
- Upholding the 4-H Mission
- Risk Management/Risk Reduction
- Liability Awareness and Reduction
- Club Management
- Behavior Management
- Record Keeping
- Financial Management
- Computer Skills

Educational Design & Delivery

Volunteers demonstrate the ability to plan, implement and evaluate research-based learning opportunities that effectively promote positive personal development. This includes:

- Use of Age-Appropriate Activities
- Utilization of Multiple Teaching Strategies
- Understanding of Differences in Learning Styles
- Knowledge of Subject Matter
- Team Building Skills
- Application of Experiential Learning
- Program Evaluation Methods

VOLUNTEER RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE COMPETENCY

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Positive Youth Development

Volunteers demonstrate the ability to intentionally and appropriately apply the principles and best practices that result in the positive development of youth.

This includes:

- Developing Life Skills
- Leadership Skills
- Understanding Ages & Stages of Youth Development
- Empowerment of Others
- Practicing Youth - Adult Partnerships
- Ability to Motivate & Encourage Youth
- Appreciating Diversity

Interpersonal Characteristics

Volunteers demonstrate the ability to develop effective relationships, work competently with individuals and groups, and express empathy and understanding for others. This includes:

- Care for Others
- A Compassionate Nature
- Acceptance of Others
- Honesty, Ethics, Morality
- Patience
- Ability to Develop & Strengthen Relationships
- Flexibility

Developing the VRKC Model

The study on which this taxonomy is based identified the competencies that volunteers will need in order to effectively deliver 4-H Youth Development programs and activities in the next decade. This taxonomy will provide 4-H professionals with a national focus and direction related to the levels of competency and the perceived needs of 4-H volunteers. While the study provided benchmark data for future comparisons, the VRKC taxonomy provides insights into priorities for volunteer development.

During 2003 and 2004, 4-H Agents and volunteers in 21 states in all four Extension regions and all State 4-H Volunteerism Specialists were surveyed to discover and identify the skills or core competencies that volunteers would need to effectively deliver 4-H Youth Development programs, activities and projects. Phase I was qualitative and exploratory, and identified 32 competencies. In the quantitative phase II, the original 32 competencies were separated and collapsed into 22 measurable skills and 6 personality characteristics. Their level of importance, level of competence and frequency of use were explored.

The VRKC Taxonomy is expressed in six domains; Communications, Organization, 4-H Program Management, Educational Design & Delivery, Positive Youth Development, and Interpersonal Skills. These six domains are listed in the cumulative order of importance, competence and use, as determined by the results of the study.

VRKRC Domains & Volunteer Competencies

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