

TEXAS 4-H VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTION

4-H Volunteer Chaperones of Youth

Revised October 2021



Title:

4-H Volunteer Chaperones of Youth

Purpose of the 4-H Chaperone:

Serve in a supervisory role for youth at a 4-H event that may or may not involve an overnight stay and in which County Extension Agents and/or 4-H volunteers assume full supervisory duties of the minor(s).

Benefits of serving:

- Be a significant part of the educational and developmental process for youth.
- Foster the development and growth of successful youth-adult partnerships.
- See the impact of the 4-H Youth Development Program.
- Experience personal growth from serving as a leader.

Responsibilities:

- Carry out responsibilities as outlined in the volunteer orientation conducted prior to the start of the event for which one is serving as a chaperone.
- At all times adhere to the volunteer code of conduct, as outlined in the Texas 4-H Rules and Guidelines.
- Ensure a safe and positive environment for youth by following the rules established for the event, as well as the 4-H rules and guidelines.
- Serve as a positive role model for youth including, but not limited to, appropriate dress, language and moral conduct, as well as timeliness and participation in all activities.
- Maintain direct supervision of 4-H members, as assigned, and not leave the delegation unsupervised unless approval was received from the event coordinator.
- Recognize that Texas law requires you to report suspected child abuse to local law enforcement or Child Protective Services.
- Safeguard and hold confidential any information gained through volunteer duties involving information identified by the program as being confidential.

Qualifications and Special Skills:

- Volunteers must enroll on an annual basis. The 4-H year is from September 1 through August 31.
- Be at least 18 years of age at the time of the 4-H event for which he/she will serve as a chaperone. Overnight chaperones must be at least 21 years of age.
- Register as a direct volunteer for the county 4-H program, by completing a Texas 4-H Volunteer Application for the current 4-H year.
- Pass a criminal background check through the Youth Protection Standards Program within the past three years.
- Complete the Child Protection Training within the past two years.
- Complete the Volunteer Orientation Training in 4HOnline.
- Participate in a volunteer orientation prior to, or at the start of, the event.
- Value the development of positive life skills in youth.
- Value diversity among youth and other adults involved in the 4-H program, creating and maintaining a 4-H project experience where all children feel welcome, and opportunities are made available.



For more information about this project, or about 4-H in general, contact your local County Extension Office or visit the Texas 4-H and Youth Development website at: <http://texas4-h.tamu.edu>

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

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Overnight Program Guidelines:

- Chaperones must adhere to all Programs for Minors policies of The Texas A&M University System, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, and Texas 4-H Youth Development Program.
 - There should be at least two adults aged 21 or older, with at least one adult representing the gender of the participants, if possible.
 - The adult to youth ratio should be at least 1 adult per 8 youth.
 - There should be no one-to-one contact of adults and youth, unless in full view of other youth or adult participants.
- Plan ahead.
 - Inform participants and parents/guardians regarding the type of lodging (hotel, dorm, etc.).
 - Make rooming assignments before leaving for event.
 - Share rooming assignments with every participant and parent/guardian before leaving.
 - Seek consensus and resolve any concerns about rooming assignments prior to departure.
 - No participant will be required to sleep on the floor.
 - For an adult to stay in the same room with a non-family member youth participant, there must be a minimum of three persons in the room.
 - No youth and adult may share a bed, unless there is a familial relationship.
 - Adult volunteers or chaperones must respect the privacy of youth members in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.
- Make a contingency plan. Pre-departure plans can change for many reasons including changes in previously reserved or provided amenities, or conflict between 4-H members. If the situation changes upon arrival at the lodging facility, encourage the youth participants to provide input on the new plan. Call, text, or attempt to notify parent/guardian of changes. Below are some possible solutions when rooming plans change:
 - *Ask 4-H members to voluntarily change room assignments.* [CAUTION: Be sure new rooming arrangements are not made or perceived to be made on a prohibited basis].
 - *Ask hotel for a rollaway bed.*
 - *Ask hotel for a suite with a pull-out couch.*
 - *Ask hotel for adjoining rooms.*
 - *Find a different hotel that can meet your needs.*
- It is the responsibility of the overnight chaperones to supervise all aspects of youth rooming assignments including discipline, curfew, clean-up and other guidelines established during the event.
- Room checks should be conducted each night. It is the responsibility of the overnight chaperone and the staff to ensure that all youth are in their assigned rooms.
- When transporting youth to and from planned 4-H sponsored events, individuals must meet at designated departure time(s) and location(s) as planned by the adult chaperone. If you cannot provide two adults for each vehicle, the minimum requirement is one adult and two or more youth members.
- When appropriate, maintain communication with parents.

The above guidelines are best practices and should be followed to the fullest extent possible.



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Resources and Support Available:

- TAMU System Programs for Minors Rule: <https://policies.tamus.edu/24-01-06.pdf>
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Programs for Minors Rule: <https://agrilifeas.tamu.edu/documents/240106x1.pdf/>
- Texas 4-H Youth Development Program for Minors: <https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/minors/>
- Youth Protection Standards: https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/management_youth_protection_standards_yps-2021.pdf
- Texas 4-H Rules and Guidelines: https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/management_rules_guidelines_21_22.pdf
- Volunteer Resources: <https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/volunteer/>
- 4HOnline Resources: <https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/4honline/>
- 4HOnline: <https://v2.4honline.com/#/user/sign-in>
- Child Protection Training (available in 4HOnline by logging into profile and going to “training” tab)



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