Understands Organizational and Camp Environment Competency
Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies

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Camp counselors contribute to a quality camping experience and therefore it is important to understand factors that influence their successful performance. Because counselors work directly with campers, they have a great impact on the learning environment. Across the country, 4-H is known for its use of teens as camp counselors. 4-H camp counselors need to know how to perform their multi-faceted role, and the 4-H professionals who train them need to be able to evaluate their competencies. A competency model was developed to support 4-H camp counselor selection, training, and evaluation.

This list of Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies was developed by using a variety of internal and external sources. Ohio 4-H professionals were involved in a mixed-method research design including a review of literature, interviews, modified nominal group technique, focus groups, and a survey. The process included data gathering, analysis, integration, and peer debriefing in four phases: (a) review of literature, document review, and idea generation; (b) new model development; (c) model validation; and (d) final refinement and confirmation.

Core competencies are the demonstrated capacities that form a foundation for high-quality performance in the workplace. For the purpose of this information, this workplace may include campsites or camping programs in Ohio. Definitions are also presented, which is a term and associated description of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and observable behaviors that represent the competency identified. Key actions, or general descriptions of behaviors that illustrate a competency, are given for each competency on subsequent fact sheets in this series.

These competencies are what 4-H camp professionals should focus on when selecting, training, and evaluating camp counselors. For related resources on these and other topics, refer to the Ohio 4-H Camping Curriculum. The additional fourteen competencies and their key actions may be found on subsequent fact sheets in this series.

Competency: Understands Organizational and Camp Environment

Definition: Understands the 4-H organization and philosophy; has a sense of community and citizenship within the camping program; is knowledgeable about whatever content area (nature, technology, horse, etc.) that is the focus of the camp; lives within the camp routine.

Key actions

• Identifies needs of self and campers and learns what is expected of them.
• Understands that camp is a special place and can make a difference in a child’s life.
• Is focused on the job as a counselor.
• Understands the philosophy, purpose, and desired outcomes of the 4-H camp experience.
• Has a basic understanding of the rules and what is acceptable and is willing to follow the rules, even if they do not agree with them (e.g., withdrawing from cell phones or other technologies).
References