

Ohio 4-H State Volunteer Survey

Introduction

Ohio 4-H conducted a statewide survey in December, 2016 to understand how stakeholders perceive volunteers' abilities to effectively deliver 4-H programming. Three important 4-H stakeholder groups were surveyed: 4-H volunteers, county 4-H professionals, and parents/guardians/family members of 4-H members.

Respondents rated the importance of and 4-H volunteers' performance across six competency categories encompassing a range of knowledge, skills, and abilities. These categories comprise the Volunteer Research Knowledge and Competency Taxonomy (VRKC) adopted by the National 4-H Council. The VRKC is a recommended outline for developing the capacity of 4-H volunteers to facilitate positive youth development. Results from the survey will inform future volunteer training and orientation agendas, including which competency categories should be prioritized.

Results

4-H families (5,905, 18% participation), volunteers (4,753, 37% participation) and professionals (113, 78% participation) participated in the online survey. Means were calculated for the importance and performance ratings by stakeholder group and competency category. A Mean Weighted Discrepancy Score (MWDS) was calculated from the mean ratings. MWDS compares importance and performance means in order to identify competencies that may or may not need to be targeted through programmatic interventions. A higher score tends to indicate an item that should be a training priority—it is deemed important for a volunteer to know or possess, but one which they do not adequately have or can do. MWDS results are presented in the table below. Additional results are presented on the back.

VRKC Category	Families' score	Volunteers' score	Professionals' score
Organization	2.50	1.53	3.30
Positive Youth Development	2.39	1.19	3.58
Communication	1.96	0.86	4.51
Interpersonal Characteristics	1.89	0.42	3.91
Education Design & Delivery	1.71	0.97	2.90
Program Management	1.51	1.25	5.18

The table showcases scores by each category of participant.

Takeaways

- High importance rankings of competencies across stakeholder groups indicate that the VRKC should be used more purposively to train and evaluate volunteers
- VRKC competency categories of **Organization**, **PYD**, and **Communication** should be prioritized based on the MWDS
- Families and volunteers were more 'optimistic' about volunteers' performance than professionals
- Quantitative and qualitative results tended to emphasize a volunteer's interpersonal characteristics—these characteristics should be used as a 'measuring stick' when initially screening volunteers



Word cloud of categorized, open-ended responses to, "What other characteristics not listed do volunteers need?" Text size correlates to the number of responses received in each category. The larger the text, the more responses received.

Volunteer Research Knowledge and Competency Taxonomy

Communication

- Abilities to create, deliver, and understand information
- Good speaking, listening, and writing skills; positively presenting 4-H to the public; using appropriate technology to communicate

Organization

- Abilities to engage others in planning and delivering program
- Planning and organizing successful programs, recruiting and involving parents in 4-H activities, identifying and serving community needs

Program Management

- Abilities to understand and follow appropriate policies, procedures, and safety guidelines
- Anticipating and managing risks, keeping accurate and complete records and finances, providing an organized and supervised club environment

Positive Youth Development

- Abilities to create an environment that results in positive development of youth
- Caring for and ability to motivate youth, helping youth develop life and leadership skills, appreciating diversity

Education Design & Delivery

- Abilities to plan, conduct, and evaluate learning opportunities for youth
- Presenting activities and programs appropriate for different ages, using a variety of activities for different learning styles, having knowledge of the topics/subject matter covered

Interpersonal Characteristics

- Abilities to work effectively with and understand others
- Volunteer is honest, ethical, and moral; volunteer has patience and is flexible, having compassion for others

References: Culp, McKee, and Nestor (2007) and National 4-H Council (n.d.)



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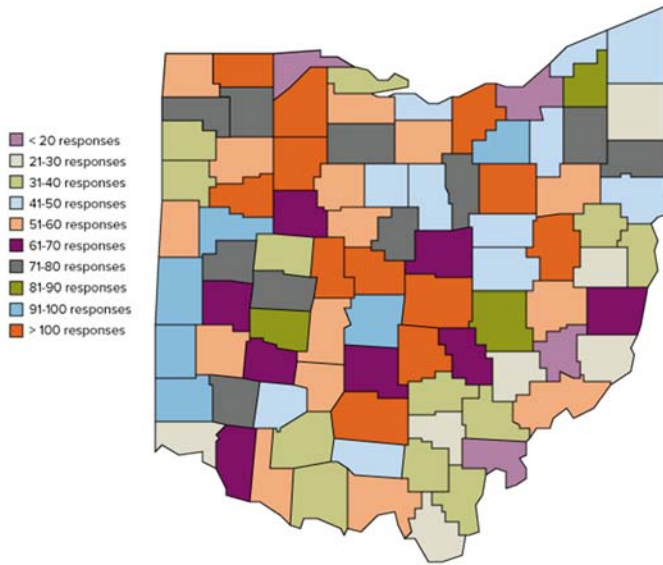
ohio4h.org/volunteers



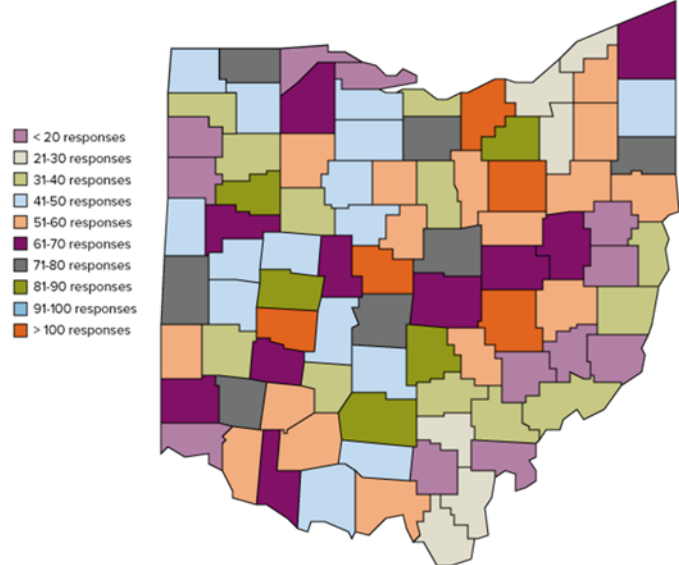
Ohio 4-H Volunteer Survey – *Statewide Results*

Responses

Family responses by county



Volunteer responses by county



Responses by role

Role	Population with emails	Bounced emails & opted-out	Responses	Response rate
Families	33,795	2,469 (7%)	5,905	19%
Volunteers	13,307	621 (5%)	4,753	37%
Professionals	144	0	113	78%
Total	47,246	3,090	10,771	24%

~93% of Ohio 4-H families and volunteers have an email

Responses by demographics

Role	Gender		4-H as a youth	
	Male	Female	Yes	No
Families	15%	85%	58%	42%
Volunteers	77%	23%	71%	29%

Responses by years in 4-H and age

Role	Years in 4-H	Mean age
Families	5.9	42
Volunteers	11.6	46.2

Ratings

		Importance	Performance	MWDS
Communication	Families	4.6	4.1	1.96
	Volunteers	4.6	4.4	0.86
	Professionals	4.6	3.7	4.51
Organization	Families	4.5	4.0	2.50
	Volunteers	4.5	4.2	1.53
	Professionals	4.3	3.6	3.30
4-H Program Management	Families	4.6	4.3	1.51
	Volunteers	4.6	4.4	1.25
	Professionals	4.8	3.7	5.18
Positive Youth Development	Families	4.7	4.2	2.39
	Volunteers	4.8	4.5	1.19
	Professionals	4.8	4.0	3.58
Education Design & Delivery	Families	4.4	4.0	1.71
	Volunteers	4.4	4.2	0.97
	Professionals	4.1	3.4	2.90
Interpersonal Characteristics	Families	4.7	4.3	1.89
	Volunteers	4.8	4.7	0.42
	Professionals	4.8	4.0	3.91

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 National 4-H Council. (n.d.). Volunteer research knowledge and competency taxonomy for 4-H youth development. Chevy Chase, MD: National 4-H Council.

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