



Volunteer Position Description

4-H Project Judge

4-H volunteers are committed in working in partnership with SDSU Extension to ensure a positive youth development environment and successful 4-H Program. All volunteers will support the positive growth and development of all youth in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the Educational Amendments, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Volunteers will follow all civil rights policies set forth by the South Dakota Board of Regents, South Dakota State University, and SDSU Extension. 4-H volunteers will follow all guidelines and policies of SDSU Extension, South Dakota 4-H, and county 4-H programs.

Purpose:

- To assist youth in evaluating, reflecting, and applying what they have learned from completing a 4-H project.

Time Required:

- 1-6 hours depending on number of projects.
- Brief orientation at the beginning of the judging role, including facility logistics, positive youth development and risk management considerations, event schedule, and other state specific requirements.
- Review of state ribbon system and recognition model for the specific event.

Qualifications:

- Understand the project judging role before beginning. Communicate with 4-H professionals before serving in the role if you are not comfortable with the project areas assigned, have a conflict of interest, or have other reasons.
- Willingness to work with youth and volunteers.
- Hold a basic understanding of ages and stages of youth development and create positive youth development environments.
- Ability to communicate effectively with youth and adults.
- Be familiar with the respective 4-H project area(s) you judge. Consider researching project manuals or other resources related to the project before judging. Previous experience in the project area (as a professional, volunteer or youth) may be helpful.

Responsibilities:

- Create and maintain a safe, welcoming environment that fosters positive youth development.
- Communicate in a way that is suitable for the individual's developmental stage. This means using language, tone, and examples that resonate with their age and understanding, fostering effective engagement and promoting positive interactions.
- Follow standards of 4-H project outlined by state 4-H guidelines, criteria, or standards.
- Assist youth in evaluating and defining what they learned from the project area.

- Assist youth in reflecting on what they learned during the project and applying this knowledge to other project areas and their own future.
- Encourage and inform youth on ways to expand project learning to a higher level.
- Share knowledge and skills in mutual areas of interest with youth such as: animal science, outdoor skills, woodworking, welding, family consumer science, the arts, shooting sports, etc.
- Assist youth to be beyond ready to be their full, authentic selves now and in the future. Help equip youth with skills for the future while meeting them where they are today.

Benefits:

- Opportunity to directly work with youth to observe them succeeding and encourage their learning.
- Chance to engage with youth in areas of shared interests or sparks.
- Opportunity to build new relationships and strengthen community ties.
- Satisfaction with contributing to the positive development of youth, families, and community.

SDSU Extension and South Dakota 4-H Agree to:

- Provide training opportunities and resources to help volunteer meet their needs.
- Brief volunteer event orientation, including logistics, positive youth development and risk management considerations, event schedule, and other state specific requirements.
- Provide appropriate manuals, pamphlets, audio-visual aids, newsletters, and other resource materials.
- Have professionals available to listen to leaders' ideas to help improve the 4-H program.
- Provide appropriate recognition and awards to leaders.

Printed Name

Signature

Date

*First Adopted June 1, 2025**

**Based on the North Central Region 4-H Volunteer Impact Study conducted by the NCR Volunteer Extension Specialists and Evaluation specialists from MN and WI in January of 2024.*

SDSU Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer in accordance with the nondiscrimination policies of South Dakota State University, the South Dakota Board of Regents and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Learn more at extension.sdstate.edu.

© 2025, South Dakota Board of Regents

S-0054-06