Teen Leadership Ideas – This is not your limit; be creative!

** Mentor younger members of your 4-H club**

If a youth member is interested in working with Explorers, he or she should plan behaviors and actions which will help the younger members of the club.

* Discuss strategies for encouraging younger members to persevere through challenges they face.
* Help other older members of the club learn how to work with younger youth in an encouraging way.
* Help younger members understand the purpose of 4-H and how to get more involved.
* Lead projects in which he or she would lead to encourage positive self-esteem in younger members.
* Lead community service projects he or she is interested in doing to help young people.
* Imagine how working with younger people or leading projects can align with future goals.
* Discuss the importance of role modeling at all ages to young people.

** Lead a project meeting**   
Youth members can assess the needs of the group. If a youth member is interested in working with club members to teach life skills through projects, he or she should plan an agenda with the club’s officers. The meeting should balance business, education and recreation.

* Implement a hands-on science activity for the club.
* Budget for the project. Ask the club leader and/or treasurer for available club funding, collect money from participants or apply for a county grant to cover the cost of materials.
* Help members locate sources of information for subject matter and leadership.
* Organize a club field trip or tour.
* Recruit a guest speaker for the club’s meeting.

** Serve as a Club Officer**

* Recruit other members to become involved in club leadership.
* Find ways to encourage participation from all members so no one feels left out.
* Submit required financial and other club paperwork to MSU county 4-H staff person.
* Assist club leader in the training of new officers.
* Evaluate the needs of the club and plan project meetings to address the needs.
* Inform members of project expectations, club plans, and 4-H opportunities.

** Serve as a 4-H representative**

* Serve as a volunteer at 4-H programs or activities to recruit new members to the 4-H program.
* Represent 4-H at promotions such as the Paper Clover Campaign at Tractor Supply Company.
* Encourage other members to represent Kent County 4-H.

 **Arrange and coach a quiz bowl team with your 4-H leader**

** Arrange a service project for your 4-H Club or County that will benefit the community**

** Teach a skill at a local or state workshop** (contact your project’s 4-H Developmental Committee)

**How do I complete a Kent County 4-H Teen Leadership Project?**

* Discuss your interest in completing the 4-H Teen Leader Project with a parent or guardian. Complete the *Teen Leader Commitment Form* found in the project packet and submit to the MSU Extension Office before August 1 of the current year.
* Meet with your 4-H club leader(s) to discuss your interest in completing the teen leader project, and agree on your role and responsibilities in the 4-H club. Complete the *Teen Leadership Planning Template* with your club leader(s).
* As you complete your teen leadership project, save any photos, flyers, or other information that will help create a well-rounded project presentation.
* Complete the *Teen* *Leadership Project Reflection* and *Self-Evaluation* forms when your project is complete. If you complete multiple tasks in one year, one set of forms for each project you complete in a year should be submitted. The deadline to submit is August 30 of the current year.
* Ask an adult leader to complete the *Adult Leader Evaluation* when project is complete. The deadline to submit is August 30 of the current year.
* Once your project has been completed and all of the paperwork in your teen leadership packet is complete, submit your packet of information to the Kent County 4-H staff.
* After successful completion of the Teen Leader Project packet, you will be designated as a “teen leader” with Kent County 4-H and recognized as such at the annual Kent County 4-H recognition event. This is an excellent addition to any resume or application.

**As your gain skills or perform tasks, keep records & encourage others to do the same!**

Use a chart in your favorite format to record the leadership trainings, conferences and workshops that you attend in which you learn about leadership or acquire other information that prepares you to be a teen leader. This is just an example, feel free to add rows or columns to the chart as needed.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of training, conference or workshop you attended** | **Date of the activity (day, month, year)** | **Name of session(s) you attended** | **Number of hours of training** | **Briefly describe what you learned.** |
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**Tips for developing your 4-H leadership plan**

In order to make your leadership experience a worthwhile one, we encourage careful planning. The time you invest in the teen leadership experience has the potential of benefiting you greatly in the future. To help get you off to a good start, consider the following:

1. Start your project by **determining needs** – look within your club, at the community, and yourself. Decide what needs, concerns, or interest could be fulfilled.
2. **Explore resources** – list all the help available from people, organizations, printed materials and personal experiences. Don’t hesitate to approach your club leader or county 4-H Program Coordinator. Many adults in your life would be thrilled to assist you!
3. **Choose resources and plan** – determine which of the listed resources you will use and develop a plan of action that will enable you to meet your goal.
4. **Set goal(s)** – define exactly what you would like to achieve in your teen leadership project.
5. **Pursue learning opportunities** – to help you accomplish your goals. Discuss opportunities with your family, club leaders, and peers.
6. **Share your experiences as you go through the leadership project year**  – this is your opportunity to gain from the experience of others by telling them what you have done and what you plan to do. To be most effective, be open to feedback. You may learn tips from others that will cause you to make changes in plans.
7. **Listen to advice** – from your family, club leaders, other members, 4-H Program Coordinators, developmental committees. Ask questions if you don’t understand.
8. **Evaluate** – measure the progress you made toward meeting your goal.
9. **Reassess needs** – look again at the club, the community, and yourself after completion of a project. What did you gain? Was it worthwhile?
10. **Have fun while learning and congratulate yourself on a job well done**!

**4-H Teen Leadership Project – Life Skills Introduction   
  
Successful 4-H Teen Leaders will focus their goals for achievement within their 4-H club, county or statewide program.** 4-H Teen Leaders work with their 4-H leader or 4-H staff to choose their project focus. Your goals should pertain to 4-H club meetings, trainings, events, programs, and projects that will help you serve the 4-H community. As a 4-H Teen Leader, you must also identify life skills you wish to teach other members through the project(s) you choose.

**What are life skills?**

Life skills are a basic foundation that prepare youth for success in life. The goal of Michigan 4-H Youth Development is that every youth possess the necessary life skills to be successful. Through the motto of, learn by doing and the experiential learning model, youth involved in Michigan 4-H programs are gaining life skills through projects, experiences and opportunities that 4-H offers.  
   
**4-H Teen Leaders may help focus on life skills by:**

Figure 1. Hendricks, P.A. (1996).*Targeting Life Skills Model: Incorporating Developmentally Appropriate Learning Opportunities to Assess Impact of Life Skill Development*. Ames: Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

* + Helping members set goals for their projects.
  + Using resources wisely.
  + Helping young people develop problem solving when issues arise during a project.
  + Encouraging global thinking by viewing the project through a diverse perspective.
  + Using materials properly to personal safety among the group.
  + Encouraging member’s personal-responsibility for their own workspaces or projects.
  + Focusing on record keeping for 4-H project work and record books.
  + Concentrating on a life skill relevant to the project the 4-H Teen Leader chooses.