Kent County 4-H Youth Development
Developmental Committee Guidelines

DEFINITION
A 4-H developmental committee is a group of adults and teens that help plan, promote, implement, and evaluate a variety of educational experiences in a specific project area.

PURPOSE
A 4-H Developmental Committee works closely with county 4-H staff to:
1. Develop and present educational programs that will provide with new experiences for members and leaders.
2. Develop and strengthen leadership skills in members and leaders.
3. Expand programming to new audiences throughout the county.
4. Recruit adults and teens (non 4-H and 4-H) as resource people.
5. Promote their specific area and 4-H in general to the public.

STRUCTURE
The structure of a 4-H developmental committee shall be as follows:
1. Committee – The committee may include 4-H volunteers (new and experienced), 4-H teens, and non-4-H volunteers. The members should reflect the potential audience with regard to equal opportunity guidelines. *
2. Terms of Service – Chairpersons will have rotating terms of service, not to exceed 3 years in length. Individuals may return to the position for an additional term after 1 year off.
3. Yearly Goals – The Committee should set yearly goals for their specific area that are consistent with 4-H Guiding Principles and the “Purpose of a Developmental Committee”. (See above).
4. Role – Basic role descriptions, as suggested, should be available to all members.
5. Meetings – Committees must meet a minimum of 3 times a year. Meetings shall be held at times and locations which are convenient to the majority of the members. A varied schedule is strongly suggested. Meetings will be announces in the 4-H Express and are open to the public.
6. Minutes – Committees must submit meeting minutes (electronic preferred) and an annual financial summary. The 4-H secretary will distribute meeting minutes to everyone in the corresponding project area.
7. Staff – A 4-H staff person will be assigned to work with each Developmental Committee. Because the county staff has ultimate responsibility for the county 4-H program, final authority rests with the county staff.
8. Funding – The Kent County 4-H Council provides $100.00 per year for each developmental committee for educational purposes. Funding is dependent on availability and is subject to approval by the Kent County 4-H Council and a 4-H Extension Educator.

DIRECTION
Project developmental committees are based on the idea that 4-H leaders and members should have opportunities for the planning, conducting, and evaluation of local programs.

*MSU is an affirmative action, equal-opportunity institution. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, or family status.
ROLES
There are a number of roles which a developmental committee and its individual members should play if it is to be effective in providing the best possible programs for youth:
1. Maintain a close working relationship with the 4-H staff.
2. Identify new volunteer leaders and expand the program.
3. Attend regional and state-wide training events.
4. Be responsible for planning and conducting county training programs for members and leaders.
5. Be responsible for planning and conducting activities for the county in the project area.
6. Evaluate events, activities and leader trainings.
7. Set goals for the county in the specific project area.
8. Advise other leaders in the project and/or serve as resource persons.
9. Initiate new ideas in the program.
10. Clarify roles and the purpose of the committee periodically; a committee can be more effective if members know their task.
11. Keep the emphasis on youth development, not just the project area.
12. Coordinate with other organizations and agencies.
13. Link with the state 4-H developmental committee in your project area.

ORGANIZATION OF A DEVELOPMENTAL COMMITTEE
1. The 4-H staff should provide guidance in establishing or revising such a committee.
2. Involve teens in leadership roles.
3. The size of the group should be large enough to be a workable committee.
4. Provide for the rotation of committee members.
5. Select a chairperson; try to avoid designating a chairperson who is also an acting superintendent in an effort to involve multiple people in leadership roles.
6. Meet as needed, but set dates well in advance. Do not meet if there is not a real need to meet.
7. Record minutes for future reference and to inform other leaders and members. Forward these minutes to the 4-H secretary in a timely fashion.
9. Use special sub-committees as necessary. A small group can plan a specific task and report back to the committee.

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