



## ADULT MENTOR INFORMATION

Thank you for expressing an interest in becoming an adult mentor to a 4-H Science of Ag Challenge team. We hope that the following information will answer many of the questions about this role. The Kansas 4-H Science of Ag Challenge is an opportunity for Kansas 4-H to provide an educational environment for positive development of diverse youth, to enable them to reach their full potential. Youth will explore and develop science-based solutions to agriculture-related issues they have identified in their communities

Kansas 4-H recognizes that small groups that come together around an issue, such as the 4-H Science of Ag Challenge, will maximize the learning environment if they are supported by a subject matter mentor who guides and directs their learning. Procedures are in place to guide mentors to ensure that there is a quality learning experience for the young person in the 4-H Science of Ag Challenge.

Similar to community club meetings, adult mentors play a critical role in providing leadership for creating positive youth development experiences for all youth. This role, as a mentor to a 4-H Science of Ag Challenge team, is critical to the success of those youth choosing to further their learning around the identified issue.



## ABOUT MENTORING

Mentoring as it applies to the 4-H Science of Ag Challenge program, is a committed relationship between an adult focused on developing the character and capabilities of the young person through intentional, positive youth development experiences. Mentoring is a wonderful way for caring adults to make a positive difference in a young person's life. Mentors may assist the team in goal setting, planning, completing and reflecting on their experience and in fulfilling the annual guidelines for the 4-H Science of Ag Challenge program.

4-H Science of Ag Challenge team members and coaches are responsible for finding an adult mentor. If the mentor will work in close, ongoing interaction with youth, or will independently plan and conduct 4-H educational experiences for youth with other adults present or in a public setting, they must become a registered Kansas 4-H Volunteer. Mentors who do not fit into one of the above criteria would be considered *episodic* and do not need to complete the screening. Adult mentors may be teachers, parents/relatives, skilled people in the area of expertise related to the identified issues.

## WHAT MENTORS DO

- Set high expectations of project work
- Offer challenging ideas
- Help build self-confidence
- Offer friendship
- Listens to problems and offers encouragement and support
- Guide, rather than lead
- Meet others more than half-way
- Offer frequent encouragement
- Teach & inspire by example
- Provide growth experiences
- Encourage positive behavior
- Help member become aware of his/her skills
- Share critical knowledge
- Identify possible learning opportunities and resources

## CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL MENTORS

- Caring nature
- Respectful
- Good communicator
- Outgoing/at ease
- Sense of humor
- Broad range of interests
- Supportive manner
- Patient, yet motivating
- Well organized, yet flexible
- Honest, candid
- Continuously learning
- Encourages independence
- Creative
- Encourages skill transfer

## EXPECTATIONS OF 4-H SCIENCE OF AG CHALLENGE 4-H MENTORS

While the 4-H club provides a wonderful small group learning environment for the positive development of young people, it is not the only way to become a 4-H member. Being a 4-H Science of Ag Challenge team member is another option. Their work is self-directed with the guidance and support of parents and mentors. Self-study, home study, mentoring or shadowing with an “expert,” and whole families learning together are examples of 4-H Science of Ag Challenge membership. Just as the four essential elements: Belonging, Mastery, Independence and Generosity provide the foundation for a quality 4-H club experience, they are central to 4-H Science of Ag Challenge teams as well.

## EXPECTATION OF 4-H SCIENCE OF AG CHALLENGE TEAMS, COACHES & MENTORS

To ensure that young people choosing to participate in the 4-H Science of Ag Challenge have a 4-H experience of the highest quality, teams agree to:

1. Ensure participating members are enrolled for the current 4-H year prior to joining the team
2. Meet deadlines set by the state.
3. Meet with throughout the project do discuss progress toward their issue and celebrate achievements.
4. Issue work will fit under one of the 6 Pillars of Agricultural Literacy and be founded in the 8 Principles of Engineering.
5. Reflect on their learning experiences with their mentor.
6. Publicly demonstrate their learning by giving a presentation before a group prior to state competition.
7. Abide by all 4-H policies and recognize the authority of University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development staff.
8. Design an educational display for the State 4-H Science of Ag Challenge.
9. Understand that participation in regional and state 4-H Science of Ag Challenge events is required.
10. Understand participation in non-4-H Science of Ag Challenge county, regional or state events is encouraged and supported.
11. Contribute to the larger 4-H program by reading and responding to Extension office correspondence and remaining informed on current 4-H opportunities, procedures and guidelines.

Kansas State University is committed to making its services, activities and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to a physical, vision, or hearing disability, contact the Kansas State 4-H Office, 785-532-5800.

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