

# **Core Competencies for 4-H Volunteer Leaders Differentiated by Occupation, Level of Education, and College Major: Implications for Leadership Education**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to demographically describe 4-H volunteer leaders' competencies for effective delivery of 4-H youth development programs. As a subset of the data, occupation, level of education, college major of the volunteer leaders, staff and faculty were gathered as the primary focus the article. The study was descriptive and correlational in nature. The study found that 4-H volunteer leaders are more highly educated than those from earlier studies; educational majors are more diverse; 10 of the 32 competencies were found to be significant by level of education; and level of education has no impact upon the ten fundamental competencies needed to effectively deliver 4-H programs.

## **Introduction and Review of Literature**

Volunteer leaders assume a wide range of responsibilities in 4-H, community, and civic organizations. Working with volunteer leaders is an Extension tradition (Patton, 1990). Since its beginning, volunteer leaders have been central to the success of the 4-H program (Wessel & Wessel, 1982). Extension professionals make extensive use of volunteer leaders by asking them to serve in a variety of roles and delegating to them responsibilities, activities, and roles in leadership and

leadership education. Volunteer leaders provide direct services to clients by performing both clerical and administrative tasks, contributing their public relations skills, fund-raising and grant writing talents, and often serving as policy makers, board members, and advisors (Murk & Stephan, 1990). Volunteer leaders are an essential component of the Cooperative Extension Service in the United States. Nearly 625,000 volunteer leaders deliver 4-H Youth Development programs to youth annually (National 4-H Headquarters, 2002) thereby making them the single largest group of volunteer leadership educators in the United States.

Denmark (1971) found the average 4-H volunteer leaders in Texas completed 12.7 years of formal education, had an annual income of \$5,000 to \$14,999, and are affiliated with one to three organizations other than 4-H. Likewise, Culp (1996) determined that the current 4-H volunteer leaders in Indiana completed high school with 13.93 years of formal education and had a combined household income in the \$30,000 to \$50,000 range. The adult job experiences during the volunteer leaders experience include careers as a professional (clergy, lawyer, medicine, education, finance, or the arts), a service worker (clerical, support staff, etc.), or a homemaker. Culp's study confirmed an earlier study by Clark and Skelton (1950) which was conducted in 12 counties in New York. The study indicated that the leaders were farm homemakers or public school teachers with 12 or more years of formal education and above average family incomes. Additional research conducted by Parrott (1977) in Oklahoma identified the volunteer leaders' educational level as high school graduates or above, with 37% of the volunteer leaders being college graduates.

This national study focused on competencies needed by volunteer leaders for effective delivery of 4-H youth development programs into the next decade. The primary focus of this article is the identification of the differences in the levels of education, occupation, and college major of the volunteer leaders, field staff and state staff, or faculty, along with the implications for leadership education that these differences will have for the volunteer leaders.

### **Problem Statements**

1. There is no current national baseline data demographically describing 4-H volunteer leaders in the United States.
2. The need exists to prioritize, at a national level, the identification and development of volunteer leaders' characteristics which 4-H Youth Development Professionals can utilize in supporting, developing and delivering 4-H Youth Development and volunteer leadership education programs.
3. Studies from Ohio and Kentucky found that half of the 4-H Youth Development professionals in the Cooperative Extension Service have five years experience or less as both 4-H Youth Development and volunteer leadership development professionals (Deppe, 1998; Kohlhagen, 1999).

4. There has been no national comparison of the level of education, occupation, or college major of volunteer leaders, staff, and faculty. Consequently, there has been no national comparison or identification of the components of volunteer leadership education for 4-H volunteer leaders.

## **Objectives**

The first objective of the study was to demographically describe 4-H Youth Development volunteer leaders in terms of the following characteristics: age, gender, level of education, marital status, number of children, occupational status, number of years as a 4-H volunteer leaders, number of volunteer leaders roles in which they are currently serving outside of 4-H, number of adult or youth volunteer leaders with whom they work directly, number of adult or youth volunteer leaders which they coordinate, number of years as a 4-H member or 4-H youth participant and the state in which they participated. The second objective was to determine how the demographic differences impacted the core competencies for volunteer leaders which these three populations identified.

## **Procedures**

### **Research Design**

This exploratory survey research was descriptive and correlational in nature and was conducted utilizing mail questionnaires as outlined by Dillman (2000). The target populations for this census were identified as adult volunteer leaders who interact directly with youth in the 4-H Youth Development program, 4-H Youth Development agents, and State Volunteer Leadership Specialists in the United States. A random sample of 100 adult volunteer leaders who served in direct-contact roles with youth were identified by the Extension Volunteer Leadership Specialist in the 12 participating states. All 4-H agents in their state who had been employed six months or more were included in the study; a census survey was employed for the state volunteer leadership specialists.

Three states were purposefully selected from each of the four Extension Regions (North East, South, North Central and West) with an additional state selected from the South and North Central, to more accurately represent the 4-H member and adult volunteer leaders' population distribution in the United States. Twelve of 14 states originally selected to participate in the study.

In order to satisfy sampling requirements, a minimum of 100 adult volunteer leaders were randomly selected to participate in the study (with a goal of 50 volunteer leaders' responses from each state). Additionally, 50 Extension Agents and Educators who had worked six months or longer were randomly selected. All state volunteerism specialists based at 1862 land-grant universities (N = 50) were census surveyed.

## **Instrumentation**

The samples were sent a mailed questionnaire as outlined by Dillman (2000). The questionnaire contained one qualitative and two quantitative components. The qualitative component (Part I) asked respondents to identify current or future competencies which they perceived will be needed by 4-H Youth Development volunteer leaders who work directly with youth in order to effectively deliver 4-H programs in the next decade. Part II focused on the characteristics of the respondent's volunteer leader program, including number of 4-H members, number of youth and adult volunteer leaders, middle managers, and the number of agents working with 4-H. Part III contained demographic characteristics of the respondents.

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

Questionnaires were distributed electronically to the population of specialists and sample of agents. Specialists and agents received an e-mail message which explained the research project and invited their participation. Both groups were directed to access the appropriate version of the questionnaire via the University of Kentucky 4-H Youth Development website. The questionnaire automatically transferred responses into a data set located at Purdue University.

Questionnaires disseminated to the volunteer leaders' samples in each state were distributed via US Mail, along with a cover letter and a self-addressed, stamped return envelope. Reminder postcards were mailed to non-respondents three weeks after the initial mailing, asking for a response within two weeks. Because the data which were submitted to the Purdue database were anonymous, no attempt at non-respondent follow-up was made.

**Table 1.**  
**Regional responses in the volunteer leadership education competency study with return rate**

Region	Volunteer Leaders		Agents		Specialists	
	Sample	Return	Sample	Return	Sample	Return
N. East	206	99	52	38	8	8
N Cntrl	368	176	339	136	13	13
South	310	79	240	63	11	11
West	471	166	118	71	11	11
Totals	1355	520	749	308	43	43
Return Rate	38.38%		41.12%		84.00%	

### Limitations

1. Due to the qualitative, exploratory nature of this study, results cannot be generalized.
2. In the southern region, nearly twice as many of the responses were from Kentucky as were from Georgia and Texas (92 versus 50) with none from Mississippi. Therefore, the results in the southern region may not be representative of the entire region

### Findings

The first objective was to demographically describe and compare the three populations (volunteer leaders, agents, and volunteerism specialists) who participated in the study. While the mean age for all three groups was “40-something,” agents were significantly younger (41.76 years) than both volunteer leaders and specialists (46.33 and 48.05 years, respectively.). Agents also reported serving significantly fewer years in a volunteer role (4.30 years) as compared to both volunteer leaders and specialists (11.40 and 12.36 years, respectively). Both agents and specialists had served a similar number of years as a county-based Extension Agent and Educator (10.81 and 11.39 years, respectively) and also reported being employed a similar number of years in volunteer leaders administration (9.42 and 10.74 years, respectively). Volunteer leaders, agents, and specialists all reported working with significantly different numbers of adult volunteer leaders (10.06, 97.37 and 151.98, respectively) with volunteer leaders working with fewer youth volunteer leaders (21.53) as compared to agents and specialists (75.52 and 61.82, respectively). Volunteer leaders reported serving more volunteer organizations (2.18) than either agents or specialists (1.31 and

1.19, respectively). Surprisingly, agents and specialists reported drastically different numbers when asked to identify the number of state Extension specialists working in volunteer administration. While agents reported a mean of 3.50, state specialists reported 1.05. This could be attributed to state volunteerism specialists reporting only those individuals whose Extension appointment includes volunteerism. Agents, conversely, may mistakenly believe that any state specialists who work with volunteer leaders in a programmatic role also have an appointment in volunteer administration (see Table 2).

Table 2.  
Demographic Mean Values for Volunteer Leaders, Agents and Volunteer Leadership Specialists

Variable	Volunteer Leaders Mean	Agents Mean	Volunteer Specialist Mean	Grand Mean
Age	46.33 <sup>a</sup>	41.76 <sup>b</sup>	48.05 <sup>a,c</sup>	44.89
Years served as a volunteer leaders	11.40 <sup>a</sup>	4.30 <sup>b</sup>	12.36 <sup>a</sup>	8.88
Years served as an agent/educator	0.38 <sup>a</sup>	10.81 <sup>b</sup>	11.39 <sup>b</sup>	4.31
Years served as a specialist	0.008 <sup>a</sup>	0.17 <sup>a</sup>	8.58 <sup>b</sup>	0.44
Years served as an administrator	0.16 <sup>a</sup>	0.18 <sup>a</sup>	1.41 <sup>b</sup>	0.23
Years employed as a volntr. administrator	3.17 <sup>a</sup>	9.42 <sup>b</sup>	10.74 <sup>b</sup>	5.85
No. of adult volunteer leaders worked with	10.06 <sup>a</sup>	97.37 <sup>b</sup>	151.98 <sup>c</sup>	49.47
No of youth volunteer leaders worked with	21.53 <sup>a</sup>	75.52 <sup>b</sup>	61.82 <sup>b</sup>	45.83
No. of organizations volunteered for	2.18 <sup>a</sup>	1.31 <sup>b</sup>	1.19 <sup>b</sup>	1.81
No. of 4-H members	30.51 <sup>a</sup>	1262.26 <sup>a,b</sup>	122,810.4 <sup>b</sup>	7157.6
No. of adult volunteer leaders	6.46 <sup>a</sup>	165.66 <sup>a</sup>	9,548.88 <sup>b</sup>	574.78
No. of 4-H agents in county	1.80 <sup>a</sup>	1.52 <sup>a</sup>	54.27 <sup>b</sup>	4.54
No. of state specialists in volunteer leaders admin.		3.50 <sup>a</sup>	1.05 <sup>b</sup>	3.11
No. of key leaders/volunteer leaders supervised	10.47 <sup>a</sup>	95.62 <sup>b</sup>	40.95 <sup>a</sup>	44.00

The highest educational level achieved was significantly different ( $p = .0001$ ) for the three groups (see Table 3). The volunteer leaders (30.43%) reported that a high school diploma was their highest educational achievement (as compared to 0.36% of agents and 0.00% of specialists) followed closely by 30.04% of volunteer leaders who had earned a bachelor's degree. This compared with 21.15% of agents and 4.88% of specialists who reported the same academic achievement.

Conversely, 75.63% of agents reported holding a master's degree, as compared with 13.76% of volunteer leaders and 58.54% of specialists. While the majority of specialists reported a master's degree as their highest educational achievement, 36.59% reported that they had earned a doctorate, which compared to 0.72% of agents and 1.55% of volunteer leaders. In general, level of education tends to increase by occupational category with specialists reporting the highest educational level, followed by agents and volunteer leaders.

Table 3.  
Highest Educational Level for Volunteer Leaders, Agents and Specialists

Highest Educational Level Completed	Volunteer leaders <sup>a</sup>	Agents <sup>b</sup>	Specialists <sup>c</sup>
Some High School	1.36	0.00	0.00
High School Graduate	30.43	0.36	0.00
Certification	22.87	2.15	0.00
Bachelor's degree	30.04	21.15	4.88
Master's degree	13.76	75.63	58.54
Doctorate	1.55	0.72	36.59
	n=516	n=279	n=41

Values are expressed in percentages of volunteer leaders, agents, and specialists reporting highest educational level.

<sup>a, b, c</sup> Columns with different superscripts are significantly different at the .0001 value when subjected to the Chi-square test

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked to identify the area of study for their highest degree. Responses were categorically grouped into 14 subject matter areas. Educational majors were significantly different ( $p = .0001$ ) for agents and specialists when compared to volunteer leaders with agents and specialists being statistically different from each other ( $p = .0005$ ) (see Table 4). While all three groups reported education as their most frequent educational major, the percentage of respondents in each occupational category was significantly different. The volunteer leaders (19.62%) majored in Education, as compared with 29.78% of agents, and 51.22% of specialists. These percentages

do, however, tend to equalize somewhat when the majors of Education and “subject-Education” are combined. The volunteer leaders (30.64%), 34.93% of agents and 58.54% of specialists reported a major in an Education-related field (with the exception of Agriculture and Extension Education). Volunteer leaders were much more likely to major in a vocational, technical, computer or secretarial field (15.05%) than were either agents (0.74%) or specialists (0.00%).

While the majority of agents reported an Education major, they were also more likely to have earned their highest degree in Agriculture (19.12% as compared with 13.44% and 4.88% for volunteer leaders and specialists, respectively). Additionally, agents were the most likely to have earned their highest degree in Agriculture or Extension Education (15.81% as compared with 0.54% and 9.76% for volunteer leaders and specialists, respectively).

While the majority (51.22%) of specialists had earned their highest degree in Education, those who did not identify Education as their major area of study were more likely than either volunteer leaders or agents to hold a degree in Family and Consumer Sciences (19.51% versus 5.65% and 12.50%, respectively). Finally, volunteer leaders posted the most diverse listing of educational majors (14 areas of study) as compared with 10 for agents and eight for specialists.

Table 4.  
Educational Major by Occupational Category for Volunteer Leaders, Agents, and Specialists

<b>Educational Major</b>	<b>Volunteer leaders<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Agents<sup>b, d</sup></b>	<b>Specialists<sup>c, d</sup></b>
Agriculture	13.44	19.12	4.88
Agriculture/Extension Education	0.54	15.81	9.76
Education (Adult, El. MS, EDFA, CI)	19.62	29.78	51.22
English, Math, Art, Health, History Ed	11.02	5.15	7.32
Family & Consumer Sciences	5.65	12.50	19.51
Home Economics Education	0.81	4.04	0.00

Social Work	2.42	8.46	0.00
Communications	1.08	3.68	2.44
Voc./Tech/Computer/Secretary/ Trade	15.05	0.74	0.00
Public Administration	0.27	0.74	2.44
Professional (Account, Finance, Engineer, Clergy)	9.68	0.00	0.00
Business & MBA	10.75	0.00	2.44
General	1.08	0.00	0.00
Nursing & Medical	8.60	0.00	0.00
	n=372	n=272	n=41

Values are expressed in percentages of people in each educational category reporting each competency.

<sup>a, b, c</sup> Columns with different superscripts are significantly different at the .0001 value when subjected to the Chi-square test.

<sup>d</sup> Columns with the same superscript are significantly different at the .0005 value when subjected to the Chi-square test.

Findings from this study support the concept that volunteer leaders are busy people. Almost two-thirds (61.70%) of all 4-H volunteer leaders were employed full-time, with just over one-fifth (21.08%) being employed part-time. Employment status was not found to be significantly different among Extension regions. One-sixth of 4-H volunteer leaders (16.44%) reported being unemployed. However, it is important to note that many respondents indicated on their questionnaire that they were unemployed due to retirement (see Table 5). The question then arises, how much time do volunteer leaders have to devote to their professional development as volunteer leadership educators?

Table 5.  
Employment Status by Extension Region for Volunteer Leaders

	North Central	North East	South	West	Total	n
<b>Full-Time Paid</b>	58.86	63.27	65.38	62.05	61.70	319
<b>Part-Time Paid</b>	23.43	16.33	16.67	23.49	21.08	109

<b>Not Employed</b>	17.14	19.39	16.67	13.86	16.44	85
<b>Disabled</b>	0.57	1.02	1.28	0.60	0.77	4
	175	98	78	166		517

Values are expressed in percentages of people reporting marital status in each region for each. Values in row are not significantly different (.8588) when subjected to the Chi-square test.

4-H volunteer leaders were employed in a variety of occupations (see Table 6). The most frequently identified occupational category (29.90%) was Professional Specialty, which was listed twice as frequently as the second and third categories, Administrative Support (14.02%) and Executive/Administrator/Manager (13.81%). The fourth, fifth, and sixth most frequently identified occupational categories included Private Household (8.87%), Farming, Forestry, and Fishing (7.84%), and part-time farming (6.80%).

Table 6.  
Occupations of Volunteer Leaders

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
Professional Specialty	29.90	145
Administrative Support (including clerical)	14.02	68
Executive/Administrator/Manager	13.81	67
Private Household	8.87	43
Farming / Forestry / Fishing	7.84	38
Part-time Farmer (off-farm employment)	6.80	33
Technician & Related Support	4.54	22
Sales	3.51	17
Service (excluding protective & household)	2.27	11
Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers, Laborers	2.06	10
Farm Wife (listed farming & private household)	1.86	9
Machine Operating, Assembly & Inspection	1.24	6

Part-time Secretary	0.82	4
Protective Service	0.82	4
Transportation & Material Moving	0.82	4
Precision Production Craft & Repair	0.62	3
Student	0.21	1
		485

Values are expressed in percentages of volunteer leaders reporting employment in each occupational category.

The second objective focused on identifying the differences in the competencies identified by the three populations as stratified by occupation (specialist, agent, and volunteer leader). The competencies listed include: communication, organization and planning skills and records, subject matter skills, interpersonal skills, leadership, ages and stages of youth development, technology and computer, youth and adult partnerships, patience, time management and availability, organizational structure, group facilitation skills, teaching skills and program delivery, caring, diversity, behavior and conflict management, ethics and honesty and morals, risk management, recruitment, motivate, financial resources, community capacity building, experiential learning, empowerment and delegation, willing to learn, learning styles, assessment and evaluation, problem solving, marketing, club management, needs assessment, and recognition. Ten of the 32 competencies identifies in the study were significantly different when compared by the highest educational level (without regard to occupational category) of respondents. Seven of the 12 competencies exhibited a linear relationship with five of the 12 relationships increasing with level of education (see Table 7).

Table 7.  
Statistically Significant Competencies Which Volunteer Leaders Need to Effectively Deliver 4-H Youth Development Programs by Highest Level of Education

Competency	Some High School	High School	Certificate	B.S.	M.S.	Ph.D	Chi-square
Ages & Stages	0.00	6.96	12.10	15.28	35.29	48.00	<.0001
Club Management	0.00	0.63	3.23	1.39	3.92	12.00	.0155
Experiential Learning	0.00	1.90	5.65	3.24	6.54	16.00	.0216

Learning Styles	0.00	0.00	2.42	3.70	5.56	8.00	.0428
Behavior/Conflict Mngmnt.	0.00	5.70	6.45	12.50	16.34	28.00	.0005
Diversity	0.00	6.96	8.06	12.96	17.65	8.00	.0084
Risk Management/Liability	14.29	5.06	8.87	9.26	12.09	32.00	.0017
Empowerment and Delegation	0.00	1.27	1.61	4.63	7.52	12.00	.0093
Care, Compassion, Love	14.29	19.62	12.10	17.13	8.82	8.00	.0151
Patience	42.86	20.89	20.97	21.76	11.44	4.00	.0018

Values are expressed in percentages of people at educational levels reporting each competency. Values in rows are significantly different when subjected to the Chi-square test.

Highly significant differences ( $p < .0001$ ) were found between volunteer leaders, agents, and specialists on the number of organizations for which they volunteered (see Table 8). While the majority of volunteer leaders (52.40%) volunteer as leaders for one or two organizations in addition to 4-H, only about one-half that many agents and specialists (27.12% and 28.57%, respectively) did so. Moreover, 51.19% of agents and 50.00% of specialists reported no outside volunteer activity.

The variable “Ages and Stages of Youth Development” was the most significantly different competency, ranging from 0.00% for respondents with less than a High School diploma to 48% to those with a Doctorate. In general, as level of education increased, so did the frequency by which the following competencies were identified: (a) Ages and Stages, (b) Club Management, (c) Experiential Learning, (d) Learning Styles, (e) Behavior Management and Conflict Resolution, and (f) Empowerment and Delegation. Additionally, “Diversity” closely followed this pattern and was linear with all respondents except those with a Doctorate. Similarly, “Risk Management/Liability” also displayed a similar linear relationship, with the exception that those respondents without a High School diploma identified it at a level similar to that of agents (14.29 versus 12.09%).

A negative linear relationship was observed for two variables. As level of education declined, the greater the frequency with which the following competencies were identified: (a) Care, Compassion, and Love and (b) Patience. These competencies were the least frequently identified by those respondents with a doctorate and increased in frequency of response as level of education declined.

Table 8.  
Number of Organizations Volunteered for by Occupational Code for  
Volunteer Leaders, Agents, and Specialists

	<b>Volunteer leaders</b>	<b>Agents</b>	<b>Specialists</b>	<b>Total</b>
0	13.15	51.19	50.00	28.80
1	27.35	12.20	19.05	21.45
2	25.05	14.92	9.52	20.68
3	15.87	8.81	4.76	12.75
4	10.86	10.51	16.67	11.03
5 – 15	7.73	2.38	0.00	5.39
	n = 479	n = 295	n = 42	

Values are expressed in percentages of people in each occupational category reporting the number of organizations for which they are volunteering.

Values in rows are significantly different ( $p < .0001$ ) when subjected to the Chi-square test.

Although the three groups differed on the percent of the sample who volunteered for different organizations, volunteer leaders, agents, and specialists generally volunteered for the same types of organizations.

### **Implications and Conclusions**

First, 4-H volunteer leaders are more highly educated than those from earlier studies (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965; Parrott, 1977) with 68.22% having earned a degree or post-high school certification. Agents should take advantage of this professionalization of the 4-H volunteer leader cadre by identifying and developing higher level volunteer leadership roles which utilize the expertise, talents and skills of a more highly educated cadre of volunteer leaders. Of those 4-H volunteer leaders who have earned a college degree or certification, just over 30% hold a degree in education. Staff could draw upon this expertise and engage volunteer leaders in teaching or leadership roles, either with youth or adults.

Nest, the higher educational level of volunteer leaders exerts an impact on both the content and delivery methods used for leadership education. Volunteer leaders are better able to learn about leadership education than they were 40 years ago due to their higher education levels. Additionally, today's volunteer cadre is more highly skilled than previously and is better equipped to deliver and teach leadership education to 4-H youth.

Because the educational majors for volunteer leaders are more diverse than those for agents or specialists, agents should take advantage of this broad range of backgrounds and experiences to involve current volunteer leaders as resource persons. This would afford the identification of educational resources that may be missing from existing volunteer leadership rosters. Additionally, selected volunteer leaders could also be qualified to teach leadership education to other volunteers.

Similar to volunteer leaders, “education” was most often identified by agents and specialists as their most frequently earned college major. Two important differences, however, should be noted. Ninety-five percent of specialists and 75.63% of agents have earned a master’s degree, whereas only 13.76% of volunteer leaders have a master’s. Additionally, 19.62% of volunteer leaders reported an education major compared with 29.78% for agents and 51.22% for specialists. Volunteer leaders, therefore, have greater diversity in educational degrees than do either agents or specialists. This wider variety of educational background should be used to advantage by agents when recruiting individuals to share learning experiences or delivery leadership education. Leadership education can, of course, be taught as a component of nearly every 4-H learning experience, project, or activity.

In addition, staff should be cognizant of the educational background of volunteer leaders and should provide volunteer leaders development opportunities (for those with the desire and the education) that focus on providing technical, subject-matter focused information, rather than on teaching and learning styles. Volunteer leaders without an educational background are likely to need development opportunities involving ages and stages of youth development, teaching methods and strategies, and learning styles.

Ten of the 32 competencies were found to be significant when stratified by level of education. Of these 10, eight were linear or nearly linear and increased in importance in direct relation to educational level. These eight competencies included ages and stages of youth development, club management, experiential learning, learning styles, behavior and conflict management, diversity, risk management-liability and empowerment-delegation. It could be argued that most, if not all, of these competencies are more academic in nature. Agents and specialists should plan to integrate these competencies into volunteer leaders’ development activities and focus their attention on volunteer leaders with less education in order to ensure that they develop competence in these topics.

This study reveals that level of education has no impact upon 10 of the fundamental skills or competencies needed to effectively deliver 4-H programs and activities. People from all levels of education had consensus on many fundamental competencies needed to deliver 4-H programs. These included (a) communication, (b) organization and planning, (c) subject matter, (d) leadership, (e) technology, (f) youth and adult partnerships, (g) time management, (h)

organizational structure of 4-H and CES, (i) group facilitation skills, and (j) teaching skills. These “fundamental core competencies” upon which all three populations readily concur, could be offered as the foundation for leadership education for volunteer leaders. This leadership education program could consist of educational volunteer development workshops and should be supported by both volunteer leadership educators and extension professionals alike.

The belief that volunteer leaders are busy people was upheld by this study as 61.70% were employed full-time with an additional 21.08% being employed part-time. The percentage of full- and part-time employees was not significantly different among regions. Therefore, 4-H professionals should not hesitate to recruit prospective volunteer leaders who are employed outside of the home. However, highly significant differences ( $p < .0001$ ) were found between volunteer leaders, agents, and specialists on the number of organizations for which they volunteered outside of 4-H. The majority of volunteer leaders (52.49 %) volunteered for one or two organizations, only about one-half that many agents and specialist (27.12% and 28.57% respectfully) did so. More over, 51.19% of the agents and 50.00% of the specialists reported no outside volunteer activity.

Finally, nearly 30% of employed volunteer leaders worked in a professional specialty field. An additional 14.02% worked in administrative support and 13.81% were employed as an executive, administrator, or a manager. This supports the concept that volunteer leaders bring tremendous skills and expertise to their volunteer leaders’ role. Many of those employed in a professional specialty field can utilize these skills in their volunteer leaders’ role. Agents should not hesitate to recruit volunteer leaders outside of the traditional club-oriented, direct contact roles. Given the current research base on episodic volunteer leaders’ roles, agents should design short-term volunteer leaders’ roles and recruit episodic volunteer leaders to serve those positions. In order to expand the volunteer leadership base of county programs, agents and volunteer leaders should recruit for specific skills

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Ken Culp, III, Ph.D., is the Volunteerism Specialist for 4-H Youth Development at the University of Kentucky. He has served as the past-president, president, vice-president and secretary of ALE and is also a member of NAE4-HA, ARNOVA, ALE, and was a member of AVA. He has authored or co-authored 22 journal articles.