



UF/IFAS Extension Florida 4-H Youth Protection Policy

Revised September 1, 2020

Reporting Child Abuse, Neglect or Abandonment

Florida state law mandates that anyone who has knowledge or suspicion of child abuse, neglect or abandonment (including physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse) to report such to the Department for Children and Families (DCF). See the OYCS website for more information regarding this topic. The website is located at <https://oycs.ufsa.ufl.edu/reporting/>.

Register Youth Programs in 4-H Online 2.0 Enrollment System in Lieu of UF Office of Youth Conference Services Database

Keeping up-to-date information about 4-H participants and their interactions with other persons is required. In accordance with Youth Protection Requirements for UF-affiliated youth activities, all youth supervised by IFAS entities must be reported individually in [4-H Online 2.0](#), regardless of program hours.

- Volunteers associated with youth activity must have current profiles in 4-H Online 2.0.
- Youth and adult profiles must be connected to the specific program in 4-H Online 2.0.
- A roster may be added to 4-H Online 2.0 when it is difficult or impossible to enroll youth individually. A youth roster must include name, birthdate, mailing address, parent/guardian names and contact information. Also, include names of employees and volunteers serving with youth. Employee/Volunteer roster needs to include name, phone number, date of most recent Youth Protection Training completed, and date of most recent screening (if required).

Youth Protection Training

All University of Florida-affiliated youth programs are responsible for ensuring that any program employees, volunteers, and other individuals directly in contact with minors under the age of 18 successfully complete an annual Youth Protection Training. This training should be completed before interacting with 4-H youth.

Volunteers must access the training at:

1. 4-H Online 2.0 as a part of the enrollment process.

UF Faculty & Staff access the training at:

1. UF's myTraining at <http://mytraining.hr.ufl.edu/>
2. If you have Gatorlink account you may use that credential to login.
3. Start the training by choosing: YCS800

Visit <https://oycs.ufsa.ufl.edu/compliance/training> for more information about the Youth Protection Training.

Background Screening Requirements

Level 2 Department of Children and Families (DCF) Clearinghouse background screening is required by state law before supervising youth or working/serving 10 hours or more in a month during a Florida 4-H program.

Non-Summer Member Programs

Individuals who will be working/serving in 4-H non-summer member programs (e.g. leading a community 4-H club) will be screened through the DCF Background Clearinghouse Results Portal, using the OCA (Controlling Agency Identifier): 03010876Z and the ORI (Originating Agency Identifier): EDCFGN10Z. These codes are specific to non-summer after school programs.

Out of state checks will be required by DCF for individuals who have lived outside of Florida in the past 5 years.

Summer Camps

Individuals who will be working/serving in summer camps will be screened through the DCF Background Clearinghouse Results Portal, using the OCA (Controlling Agency Identifier): 03010753Z and the ORI (Originating Agency Identifier): EDCFSC30Z. These codes are specific to summer camps.

Additional Screening Information

- Volunteers requiring DCF Clearinghouse screening will also need to complete the Attestation of Good Moral Character and Privacy Policy forms located in 4-H Online 2.0 for volunteers.
- A break in service of over 90 days will require rescreening and clearance prior to beginning service with youth. For episodic volunteers (who serve specific functions throughout the year), it is not considered a break in service as long as they remain an enrolled 4-H volunteer and their service remains in good standing with the IFAS faculty/staff who has appointed them.
- Individuals who have been background screened through the DCF Clearinghouse must be rescreened every five years.
- Volunteer screening information must be kept updated in 4-H Online 2.0 and in the DCF Clearinghouse by the person facilitating screenings.

Screening Exceptions & Special Circumstances

Public School Board Employees

Public school board employees in the state of Florida who have been screened in accordance with Chapter 1012 of the Florida Statutes within the past 5 years are exempt from DCF Clearinghouse background screening for only 4-H summer camps. Verification on school letterhead or sent via official email is required, stating the person has been screened under the Chapter 1012 standards within the past 5 years and they are a current employee. Please Note: Signed and notarized Attestation of Good Moral Character forms are required prior to serving with minor participants.

Private school teachers and employees are screened under the Volunteer and Employee Criminal History System (VECHS). Individuals screened through VECHS are not exempt from being screened through the DCF Clearinghouse.

Law Enforcement and Corrections Officers

Currently employed law enforcement and corrections officers in the state of Florida are exempt from DCF Clearinghouse background screening for only 4-H summer camps. Verification on law enforcement letterhead or sent via official email is required prior to

beginning service. Please Note: Signed and notarized Attestation of Good Moral Character forms are required prior to working/serving with minor participants.

Volunteers Serving in Schools

Volunteers serving during school hours or within a school's afterschool program are subject to whatever documentation and/or screening required by the school. The county extension office may require a Level 2 Department of Children and Families (DCF) Clearinghouse screening be completed for in school volunteers.

Parents/Guardians Attending Events with their Own Children Without Responsibility for other Minor Youth

A parent/guardian attending a 4-H program with their own children, without responsibility of other minor youth, is exempt from screening. The parent is not acting in a volunteer role during the event.

Teen Counselors

Youth age 18 and under who serve as "junior camp counselors, Counselors in Training, etc." are not required to have a background check because they are not supervising other minors. These youth are considered to be members of a leadership program.

Adults Helping with Programs Led By Screened Individuals

Background screening is not required for adults who are not responsible for supervising youth during programs and work/serve less than 10 hours in a month, as long as these adults are always in the presence of screened employees and/or volunteers when in contact with youth. These helpers are never left unsupervised around minors and do not serve in a supervisory capacity. Examples of adult helpers include event judges, guest educators/presenters, and parents serving snacks or helping with a craft at a club meeting.

Background Screening of Employees

Background screening is required of new University of Florida IFAS employees and is the responsibility of IFAS Human Resources and UF Human Resources Services. Employee supervisors are responsible for ensuring their existing UF and county employees in their departments are background screened in accordance with Florida law and UF policy.

Screening Costs

Although UF Human Resources Services pays for screening of UF employees, the costs of background screening for volunteers and county employees are the responsibility of the county Extension program or respective IFAS units.

Volunteer Files

All volunteer files must be maintained in 4-H Online 2.0. All screening documents and results, national sex offender search, references, and approval letters should be uploaded under the volunteer's profile.

Interactions with Youth (AKA: Two deep policy)

4-H faculty, staff and volunteers will avoid private one-on-one interactions with youth. Program coordinators will ensure they always have two authorized level two enrolled individuals present during any interactions with youth. In situations that require personal conferences the meeting is to be conducted in view of other adults. This policy includes the transportation and virtual learning of youth participants as part of a 4-H program. One of your two authorized adults should be 21 years of age or older.

Program coordinators should make certain that activities are coordinated in a way that will ensure that appropriate supervision ratios are in place at all times. For more information visit <https://oycs.ufsa.ufl.edu/compliance/supervision-of-minors/>.

Interactions with Youth Virtually

The University has an approved list of online platforms that can be used. While facilitating online programming it is imperative to engage in approved platforms with accounts linked to UF. University faculty and staff have access to additional platform features via the ufl system. This provides a higher level of security which is crucial to online youth protection. Approved platforms include but are not limited to Zoom, YouTube, Microsoft Teams, and Google Suite. For additional information related to virtual 4-H programming please refer to the 4-H Online Youth Protection Resource Guide.

Need Help

Leadership for 4-H Youth Development programs is provided at the following levels by these individuals:

County:
[County 4-H Agent](#)

Extension Administrative Districts:
[4-H Regional Specialized Agents](#)

Statewide/Campus:
[Florida 4-H Headquarters](#)

For any questions related to 4-H Youth Protection please contact the [State 4-H Volunteer and Youth Protection Coordinator](#).