

RESPONSES - Following are the types of responses that the questions are designed to elicit. (Include notes on punctuality, demeanor, attitude, etc.)

Volunteer Questionnaire (Required of All applicants)

*This questionnaire may be used in place of an interview for individuals who have an association with Extension or the Agent-including familiar community members or past program participants

- 1. *What experiences or volunteer activities will help you to be successful in this position?***
The purpose of this question is to discover if the applicant has any experience in a volunteer role. The follow-up (likes and dislikes) probes what the individual learned and how this experience could either benefit or detract from this role.
- 2. *What appeals to you about serving as a volunteer in this role?***
What the interviewer is listening for are the appropriate skills, qualifications, and interests required for this position. Be alert for a high interest level in one-on-one or unsupervised activities with youth, preference for a particular age and gender, and idealized statements about wanting to “save children.” Be cautious of someone who overly identifies with youth, is unduly excited about the possibility of children (particularly if he/she has no children), or emphasizes that working with children is much easier or desirable than working with adults.
- 3. *Tell us about a time when a young person did not follow the rules. How did you handle the situation?***
Red flags would include use of force, unrealistic expectations about a child’s needs, use of discipline techniques that would violate organizational policies, or anything that could be deemed as degrading to the child.
- 4. *Describe a situation in which you worked as a team member.***
This question is designed to reveal the recruit’s ability to interact with others in a warm and helpful manner, while simultaneously building credibility and rapport.
- 5. *How can the Agent best support and supervise you in your volunteer role?***
Be alert to an applicant’s preference to be “left alone” to do his or her “own thing.” This question presents a natural segue for the interviewer to expand upon the monitoring and supervisory techniques used to promote safety of the participants as well as human development. Each applicant should understand that there is no tolerance for any form of mistreatment (physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological) within your program.

Volunteer Questionnaire II (Required of NEW applicants)

*In-depth interview questions for new applicants (those with no previous contact with the program, are unfamiliar to the agent, or to one or more of the CPC). These questions should be asked face-to-face of all new applicants, in addition to the five questions on the Volunteer Questionnaire.

1. *What do you see as the objective of this Extension program?*

For 4-H, this question focuses on “youth development” or “four-fold youth development” or “holistic youth development.” Ultimately, the objective of 4-H is cognitive, emotional, social and physical development. These are represented by the four H’s: Head, Heart, Hands and Health. Beware of individuals that are overly concerned about competition, winning, or want to use the volunteer position for personal gain (a horse trainer who wants to be a 4-H Horse Club Leader and give riding lessons to her club members). Also be alert for individuals who might want to use the volunteer experience to gain access to a vulnerable population.

2. *How would you handle an individual (youth or adult) who is disrespectful of the organization’s expectations and code of conduct?*

Appropriate responses would include pulling them aside to talk with them privately about their behavior, then giving a verbal warning. Additional responses would include finding ways to engage them in an activity or refocusing their attention in a different direction. Look for ways to include the 4-H Agent/Extension professional – how would they follow and respect chain of command? Be careful of people who would talk about punishment, restraint, use of force, ridicule or embarrassment.

3. *How would you describe yourself?*

Be alert for someone who is withdrawn, passive or indecisive in responding.

4. *Describe a time when you were tasked with something that you had little knowledge of how to complete. How did you handle this?*

Seeking assistance from someone knowledgeable or experience or asking for advice or help are good choices. Asking to be reassigned to a different task is also acceptable. Simply trying to muddle through without understanding the task is inappropriate.

In-depth, Secondary Interview Questions (Yellow)

*In-depth interview questions for new applicants (those with no previous contact with the program, are unfamiliar to the agent or to one or more members of the CPC) with a **yellow** designation.

1. Why would you like to volunteer for Cooperative Extension?

Beware of over-identification with youth, statements that children are “so easy to work with,” or negative statements about adults or teens compared with younger children.

2. Give an example of a program that you’ve overseen organizing and planning.

Is the recruit able to organize or schedule people or tasks; develop realistic action plans while being sensitive to time constraints and resource availability?

3. **Ask this question if position requires teaching or public presentations:* Describe your experience in preparing and presenting information to a group. What did you do well and what did you learn?

For any volunteer who will be in a teaching role or make presentations, the response to this question should reveal the recruit’s ability to clearly present information through spoken word; influence or persuade others through oral presentation in positive or negative circumstances.

4. Describe your experience in serving on a committee or workgroup where you had to work to come to a common understanding or decision – how did you participate? What was your role?

Is the recruit able to interact with others in a collaborative manner, building consensus, moving the group toward a decision, while simultaneously building credibility and rapport.

5. If volunteering for a position where you might handle money, have you ever been required to be bonded, and the bond was either refused or revoked?

This could indicate financial problems for which a bonding company found reason or cause to believe that the individual should not have the responsibility for handling some else’s funds. This question should be asked of anyone serving as a treasurer or handling significant amounts of money.