



ARIZONA 4-H PROFESSIONALS ONBOARDING PROGRAM GUIDE



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
Cooperative Extension



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This document is adapted from
Hunnings, J. (2019). Mentoring Program Handbook.
Virginia Cooperative Extension.
Washington 4-H Youth Development (2018).
4-H Orientation & Training Guide.
Washington State University Extension.



Cooperative Extension

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Onboarding

As new UACE 4-H youth development professionals you enter the organization with diverse preparation experiences¹, thus many professionals are unclear what the skills, competencies, and expectations are to be successful in the organization². Onboarding is an opportunity for the organization to help you maximize your contributions while also learning our organizational culture³.

4-H youth development professionals are at a high-risk of burnout⁴. Contributing factors leading to departure include organizational factors, such as a lack of professional development opportunities and adequate training⁵. Extension professionals experience many challenges, such as stress, long hours, and turnover. To prevent burnout and turnover we recognize training is important especially at the beginning of a career.

A systematic review of 4-H onboarding curriculum across the country was conducted to inform the development of a 4-H Extension professional onboarding process for county-based 4-H youth development professionals. As a result of this systematic review a blended approach⁶ to onboarding was adopted to facilitate technical knowledge, relationship building, and enhance understanding of organizational culture.

[1] Elliott-Engel, J., Westfall-Rudd, D., Seibel, M., Kaufman, E., & Radhakrishna, R. (2021). Extension Administrators' Perspectives on Employee Competencies and Characteristics. *The Journal of Extension*, 59(3), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.34068/joe.59.03.03>

[2] Harder, A., Gouldthrope, J., & Goodwin, J. (2015). Exploring Organizational Factors Related to Extension Employee Burnout. *The Journal of Extension*, 53(2), Article 21. <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/joe/vol53/iss2/21>

[3] Kutilek, L. M., Gunderson, G. J., & Conklin, N. L. (2002). A systems approach: Maximizing individual career potential and organizational success. *Journal of Extension* 40(2) Article 2FEA1.

[4] Harder, A., Zelaya, P., & Roberts, T. G. (2016). Extension Agents' Perceptions of a Blended Approach to Onboarding. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 57(4), 44-53. 10.5032/jae.2016.04044

Onboarding

The onboarding process is being emphasized to ensure county-based 4-H Extension professionals in Arizona Cooperative Extension are effectively supported as they become important contributors to the organization. University of Arizona Cooperative Extension is only as effective as its people. You are responsible for delivering knowledge and skills to our clientele and the better you are prepared the more effective you will be. UACE and 4-H Leadership are committed to ensuring high-quality Extension professionals do not leave the Extension system.

This guide is provided to give an overview to the onboarding experience and take away the surprises out of this experience. Use the guide to advocate for the right information at the right time. When you have questions that are not answered here, know your County Extension Director, Associate Director-4-H Youth Development, and your 4-H colleagues are here to support you through the process.

Onboarding

The onboarding experience is designed to give you the professional support to become a successful county-based 4-H youth development professional with University of Arizona Cooperative Extension. There are three distinct components.

ARIZONA 4-H PROFESSIONALS ONBOARDING EXPERIENCE

Component	Objective	When does it Happen
Workbook	The workbook is a self-guided engagement with community assets and pertinent resources	First 3 months of employment
Mentor	The mentor is an opportunity to be supported by a current employee to share real-world experience.	First 12 months of employment
Inservice Training	The Inservice training is an opportunity for new employees to learn technical knowledge of program management and philosophy; and, to support relationship development with on-campus resources and each other.	Rolling Date

This guide is for County Extension Directors as much as it is for a new employee. Throughout this onboarding guide there is guidance for you. Follow the instructions under *Current Staff Responsibilities*.

Workbook Goals

Workbook Instructions

Your goal is to complete The New 4-H Professionals Workbook within 3 months of your appointment. The workbook is designed to be self-guided work to help you start your community assessment and for you to gain a greater understanding of the philosophy and research of 4-H. As you will soon experience, 4-H youth development work is always fast paced however make doing this initial work a priority.

The goals of The New 4-H Professionals Onboarding Workbook are:

1. Orient you to your community
2. Orient you to your professional expectations.
3. Help you connect to the resources at the University of Arizona.

Mentor

The UACE 4-H Mentoring Program is designed to provide a professional, educational and personal support system for the new employee. When the mentoring program goals are met the new employee should experience an easier transition into their position with UACE and earlier productivity.

Mentoring Program Overview⁷

- CED and Associate Director-4-H Youth Development select the mentors
- Mentors are successful employees who are supportive of the organization
- Mentors initiate contact early
- Face-to-face meetings, initiated by the mentor, occur within the first month of the new employee's tenure
- Regular structured interaction takes place
- Mentors and new employees have similar program responsibilities
- Mentors are willing to share both organizational and program knowledge
- Mentor and new employees have regular communication
- Confidentiality is maintained
- Mentor has no supervisory role with the new agent
- Mentor or new employees can request re-assignment without blame being assigned
- Goals and expectations for the relationship are mutually set
- Mentoring is a formal part of the organization's operating structure
- Mentor and new employees clearly understand their roles and responsibilities
- The relationship is not overly burdened by distance or time
- Mentors and new agents establish a friendship
- Extension administration is supportive of the program

Mentee Instructions (New Employee)

You will find that having a supportive mentoring relationship will benefit you as you learn the ins and outs of your new position. Your mentor is a support, but not your supervisor.

[7] Adapted from Hunnings, J. (2019). Mentoring Program Handbook. Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Be receptive to what the mentor has to say and be clear in asking for assistance when you need it. New employees responsibilities within the mentoring context include:

- Assume personal responsibility for your professional growth.
- Listen and consider alternatives
- Maintain confidentiality
- Accept constructive feedback willingly
- Be willing to take risks, be open to new ideas
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Demonstrate initiative
- Respect your mentor's time
- Notify your mentor of problems, concerns or questions
- Remember, there is more than one way to reach a goal

Avoid these pitfalls:

- Don't rely on your mentor as your only source of information.
- Don't expect your mentor to give you all of the answers - think of your mentor as suggesting alternatives.
- Don't ask your mentor to do your work for you.
- Don't cancel meetings at the last minute.

Mentor Instructions (Experienced employee)

Mentors must be willing to accept the commitment of time and energy to provide support for a new employee during their first year. A clear understanding of the mentoring process will go a long way toward assuring success. You will need to maintain support and open communication. You will also:

- Initiate contact with the new employee
- Be a good listener
- Maintain confidentiality
- Give constructive feedback
- Promote new agent creativity and skill development
- Meet at scheduled times
- Share the organization's mission, vision, values and culture
- Help the new agent to develop goals, access resources and build a professional network
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Encourage independence; not dependence
- Remember there is most often more than one way to reach a goal. Support the new agent to the best of your ability. Remember the program success or failure of the new agent is their responsibility.

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Qualifications:

- Recommended by the County Extension Director as an experienced and effective employee in your similar role and program area
- Good written and oral communication skills
- Respected by peers for strong program delivery, management, and people skills
- Positive attitude
- Trustworthy and able to maintain a confidential relationship
- Willingness and commitment to work with new agents to be successful

Expectations:

- Share best program practices and information for success
- Understand the agent professional development competencies and on-boarding expectations
- Familiar with the new agent professional development framework
- Willing to travel to meet with the new agent
- Return phone calls and e-mails in a timely manner
- Help identify and connect the new agent with program resources
- Encourage the new agent to shadow you, other agents, and specialists
- Advocate for UACE
- Befriend the agent and help them learn the ropes
- Keep a log of time spent with the mentor and information shared
- Introduce the agent to local and state peers
- Follow through on promises to the new employee in a timely manner
- Active in and/or familiar with professional associations

Commitment:

- Be frank and open about the mentoring relationship. Changes in Mentor assignments can be made if warranted and approved by the CED
- Touch base with the agent at least weekly for first three months and as needed there after
- Monitor and provide feedback as needed
- Mentors are expected to provide feedback to the mentees CED as appropriate without breaching confidentiality

Avoid these pitfalls:

- Don't give advice unless asked
- Don't take responsibility for your mentee's program or duties
- Don't allow the new employee to be dependent on you.
- Don't do your mentee's work for them.
- Don't complain about your own problems.

Benefits:

- Recognized for service to the university and UACE
- Building a friendship/partnership for a stronger UACE
- Assist with training future mentors
- Satisfaction that new employees are successful due to your guidance

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CED Instructions (Director Supervisor)

Direct supervisors must be willing to accept the commitment of time and energy to provide support for a new employee during their first year⁸. To support the new 4-H professional you will support an employee to establish a mentoring process. This will go a long way toward assuring success. You will need to maintain support and open communication. You will also:

- Implement the checklist with the new employee.
- Initiate contact between the new employee and their mentor(s)
- Check in to establish the mentor is providing requisite support (i.e. it is a good fit).
- Promote new employee creativity and skill development
- Give constructive feedback
- Meet at scheduled times
- Share the organization's mission, vision, values and culture
- Help the new agent to develop goals, access resources and build a professional network
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[8] Harder, Gouldthorpe, & Goodwin (2015). Exploring Organizational Factors Related to Extension Employee Burnout. *Journal of Extension*, 53(2), Article v53-2a2. Available at <https://joe.org/joe/2015april/a2.php>

Calendar

The first year is an important year for a new 4-H professional⁹. This calendar helps establish benchmarks you and your supervisor can work on together to ensure you are getting the support you need.

Pre First Day Prep for the Supervisor¹⁰

- Make sure the new employee is aware of what time to arrive to work on the first day.
- What they should wear to work? Business casual or office attire?
- The supervisor should contact the state 4-H office to send a proper welcome to the 4-H Listserv (4h@list.cals.arizona.edu) to welcome the new employee that includes their email address.
- Work to find an appropriate 4-H mentor for the new employee.
- Other important information.

FIRST DAY

Schedule, Job Duties, and Expectations

- Clarify the first week's schedule and confirm required and recommended training.
- Provide an overview of the functional area – its purpose, organizational structure, and goals.
 - University of Arizona Extension and Outreach Mission Statement.
 - Organizational Chart for USDA to local level of 4-H Youth Development Program.
 - UAccess (Net-id login required).
 - Review job description, outline of duties, and expectations.
 - Obtain The University of Arizona Cooperative Extension 4-H Policy & Procedure Manual.
 - Find 4-H New Employee Handbook.
- Review hours of work. Explain policies and procedures for overtime, use of vacation and sick time, holidays, etc. Explain any flexible work policies or procedures and basic office schedule.
- Draft Bio/Introduction announcement (i.e. press release) and disseminate to 4-H volunteers in your county using enrollment management system.
- Draft press release and include photo for the local newspaper to introduce yourself to the community.
- Add regularly scheduled meetings (e.g. staff and department) to employee's calendar.
- Visit The University of Arizona's Extension and Human Resources for additional assistance.

[9]

[10] Adapted from Washington 4-H Youth Development (2018). 4-H Orientation & Training Guide. Washington State University Extension.

Current Staff Responsibilities:

- Be available to greet the new employee on the first day.
- Introduce new employee to others in the workplace.
- Describe how a new employee's job fits into Cooperative Extension and how the position contributes to the greater work of the University of Arizona.
- Provide office and/or department tour (place to hang coat, restrooms, water fountain, vending machine, kitchen, refrigerator, emergency kit, parking).
- Provide department or building-specific safety and emergency information.
- Provide new employee computer orientation at her/his desk (computer sign-in, shared network drives, Outlook/Collaboration tools, listserv subscriptions and websites).

FIRST WEEK

Schedule, Job Duties, and Expectations

- Debrief with new employee after he/she attends initial meetings and training. Also touch base quickly each day.
- Schedule and conduct regularly occurring one-on-one meetings.
- Reach out to state 4-H Office, Program Coordinator to be sure to be included in the 4Hlistserv.
- Become familiar with Confluence, UA website and other online portals where information is stored and disseminated such as enrollment management system.
- Work with your 4-H administrative support person responsible for volunteer screening systems to become familiar with processes (Ask about DCC status, DPS Cards, university trainings).
- Provide additional contextual information about the department and organization to increase understanding of the purpose, value added to UACE, goals, and initiatives.
- 4-H Programs Aligned with University:
 - 4-H Policy & Procedure Manual
 - 4-H Leaders Certification Manual
 - Volunteer Management Policy
 - Extension Policies, etc
- Review and complete the first portion of the 4-H Employee Handbook.
- Become familiar/introduce yourself to key volunteers, boards, councils.
- Contact your mentor, which you can find out from your CED about and introduce yourself.

Current Staff Responsibilities:

- Continue introducing new employee to key people in Extension and Outreach and bring her/him to relevant events.
- Meet with new employee and mentor to review first weeks and answer questions (e.g. what's going well, what questions do you have, what resources do you need).
- Review and explain any program specific technology resources and email distribution lists.

- Quick links for supplies to include:
 - Business cards | Name badge order form
 - Letterheads
 - IT/County website help
 - University Templates (Powerpoints, brochures, etc)
 - National 4-H Council for marketing resources such as brochures, etc.
- Ensure new employee has fully functioning computer and systems access and understands how to use them.
- Review Employee Benefits - New employees wishing to acquire insurance must enroll within 30 days of their hire date.
- Cyber Security, Youth Safety, HOV Training, Cash Handling and other UAccess based trainings required.

FIRST MONTH

Schedule, Job Duties, and Expectations

- Continue to provide timely, on-going, meaningful “everyday feedback.” (e.g. what’s going well, what questions do you have, what resources do you need)
- Discuss performance and professional development goals.
- Learn about your 4-H program funding sources.
- Attend the monthly Zoom 4-H update meetings online.
- Complete the 4-H Employee Workbook.
- By the first month, you should have had a face to face meeting with the state office and staff as well as your mentor.
- Complete a logic model of a county 4-H program.
- Become familiar with the 4-H Enrollment Management System
- Review Civil Rights reporting and responsibilities as well as AAP5 forms.
- Review Youth Protection Guidelines/video.
- Become aware of the volunteer certification process.

Current Staff Responsibilities

- Continue introducing new employee to key people in Extension and bring them to relevant events.
- Elicit feedback from the new employee and be available to answer questions.
- Meet with new employee and mentor to review first weeks and answer questions.
- Explain the annual performance review, goal-setting process and the UA Vitae format.
- Ensure new employee is signed up for any additional, necessary training.
- Secure Professional Development Opportunities for the new employee.
- Office Forms: Travel/Mileage Reports, Monthly Reports, Sign In sheets, Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Forms, County Plan of Work
- Review office policies, norms and expectations

FIRST THREE MONTH

Schedule, Job Duties, and Expectations

- Continue having regularly occurring one-on-one meetings.
- Meet for informal three-month performance check-in. (e.g. what's going well, what questions do you have, what resources do you need). By this time, there SHOULD be a face to face orientation with other 4-H Employees
- Begin thinking about evaluation. Visit the CRED website to explore evaluation tools. Agents should have a face to face meeting with state evaluation specialist
- Create written performance goals and professional development goals using the Professional Development Plan
- Schedule a time to meet with experienced staff in the 4-H program area and visit another county 4-H program
- Visit Board of Supervisors, Council Members and Key Leaders in your county
- Attend Extension Advisory Committee Meeting

Current Staff Responsibility

- Have employee "shadow" you or other appropriate staff to get exposure to others and learn more about the department and organization
- Have a check-in with the employee and mentor.

FIRST SIX MONTHS

Schedule, Job Duties, and Expectations

- Ask about the National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals and their annual Conference.
- Review progress on performance goals and professional development goals.
- Ensure employee is registered for or has attended Cooperative Extension Annual Conference and the 4-H New Employee Orientation/CoHort.
- Using your 4-H Workbook, reach out to other youth serving organizations and community collaborators.
- Initiate a conversation with CED or other colleagues about grants and other funding sources for 4-H programming.
- Continue becoming familiar with the 4-H Policy & Procedure Manual.
- Initiate a formal needs assessment within your county utilizing the state evaluation specialist.

Current Staff Responsibility

- Conduct six-month performance review.
- In order to generate a more comprehensive understanding of the organization, create an opportunity for employee to attend or be involved in a University of Arizona activity outside of her/his work area (field day, Master Gardener Class, etc.).
- Check in and see how the mentor relationship is going. Discuss how things went and what else would be helpful for the employee.

FIRST YEAR

Schedule, Job Duties, and Expectations

- Celebrate successes and recognition of contributions.
- Continue providing regular informal feedback; provide formal feedback during the annual review process.
- Begin researching grants and other funding opportunities to support programming efforts.
- Seek out a state level committee or team to serve on.
- Have a conversation about your experience with 4-H to date:
 - Extent to which expectations of role and Extension and Outreach align.
 - Extent to which your skills and knowledge are being utilized and ways to better utilize them; what's working, what they need more of, etc.
 - Begin discussing the year ahead.
- Continue meeting with mentor; assess expectations of professionalism.
- After one year in the position, consider some of the programmatic changes you would want to make.

Current Staff Responsibility

- Solicit new employee's feedback and suggestions on ways to improve the onboarding experience. Do this one-on-one or with a small group of new employees.
- Explore opportunities for participation on a state 4-H or Cooperative Extension committee or team to support the employee's continued growth and professional development.

New 4-H Professionals Orientation

A new 4-H professionals' orientation will be held on regular basis. The timing of this event will be subject to availability and number of new 4-H employees entering the organization. The objectives of the training are to ensure you have the requisite knowledge to ensure your are successful in your new role; support your connection to the University; and, to help you build positive relationships with your colleagues and campus-based resources.

COMPETENCIES NEW EXTENSION PROFESSIONALS NEED

Competency ¹¹	Topic
Organizational Knowledge	What is a 4-H Program: An Overview The Things You Need to Know to Keep Your Job Chartering and Name & Emblem Use
Leadership and Management	PIVOT Training The Money: Business Office, AZ4-HYF, Grants & Contract
Communication & Marketing	Marketing
Program Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation	State Level Opportunities Working with Extension Specialists Evaluation
Applied Research	The Magic of UAVitae: Reporting
Theories of Human Development and learning	4-H Thrive Model and Youth Development Theory
Volunteer Development	Volunteer Management, DCC System
Diversity and pluralism	
Risk Management	Youth Safety

[11] Elliott-Engel, J., Westfall-Rudd, D., Seibel, M., Kaufman, E., & Radhakrishna, R. (2021). Extension Administrators' Perspectives on Employee Competencies and Characteristics. *The Journal of Extension*, 59(3), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.34068/joe.59.03.03>

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION ACRONYMS

1862's	Land Grant Colleges Established by the Passage of the First Morrill Act
1890's	Land Grant Colleges Established by Second Morrill Act (historically black)
1994's	Land Grant Colleges Established by Third Morrill Act (Native American)
4-HECOP	4-H Extension Committee on Policy
4-HYD	4-H Youth Development
AAE4-HYDP	Arizona Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals
AAP	Affirmative Action Program
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ALVSCE	Agriculture, Life & Veterinary Sciences and Cooperative Extension
ANR	Agricultural and Natural Resources
APR	Annual Performance Review (faculty)
CALS	College of Agriculture & Life Sciences
CED	County Extension Director
CES	Cooperative Extension Service
CSREES	Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service
CRED	Community Resource, Evaluation and Development
CYFAR	Communities, Youth and Families at Risk
DCC	Designated Campus Colleague
ECE	Engaged Citizens Event
ECOP	Extension Committee on Organization and Policy
EFNEP	Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program
FRC	Family Resource Center
FCHS	Family, Consumer, & Health Sciences
FRTEP	Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HSI	Hispanic Serving Institution
IDB	Interdepartmental Billing
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
JCEP	Joint Council of Extension Professionals
JOE	Journal of Extension
JOLT	Journey: Opportunity for Leaders of Tomorrow
LGU	Land Grant University
MG	Master Gardener
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAE4-HYDP	National Association of Extension 4-H Youth Development Professionals
PO	Purchase Order
PLWG	Program Leaders Working Group
Project WET	Project Water Education for Teachers
PYD	Positive Youth Development
SNAP-Ed	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Education
TVF	Tucson Village Farm
UACE	University of Arizona Cooperative Extension
USDA-NIFA	U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Institute of Food and Agriculture
WELD	Western Extension Leadership Development

Who Do I Need to Call?

Throughout your first year working for UACE questions will arise. Here is a partial list of FAQs. With all questions, start with your local colleagues in your office, your business manager or County Extension Director and mentor. They should be able to help.

I want to learn more about evaluation resources.

Contact the Community Resource, Evaluation and Development Team.

<https://cals.arizona.edu/fcs/cred>

I need some help learning about statewide & national programs. I have kids interested in CWF, LWF, National 4-H Conference, and National 4-H Congress - who can answer those questions?

4-H State Office, <https://extension.arizona.edu/4h>

I want to apply for a grant - what do I do and who do I call? There are several ways to route a grant, depending on the sponsor. Check locally, but you'll be able to find good resources at UArizona Sponsored Projects. <https://rgw.arizona.edu/services/sponsored-projects-services>

I need a contract signed - can I sign it?

Never sign a contract! Plan on contacting the UArizona Procurement & Contracting Office

<https://pacs.arizona.edu/contracting>

Who do I turn 4-H Club treasurer reports (rechartering application) in to at the end of the year?

State 4-H Office

I have questions about UAVitae - who do I contact?

Here is the website: <https://uavitae.arizona.edu/>

Is your question regarding the accessing the system? Contact Dominic

Is your question regarding the content for your UAVitae? Contact CED/Mentor

Does Arizona have a military 4-H program? Who can I ask about it?

Contact State 4-H Office

Where can I find the per diem chart for travel?

Contact your business officer and go here: <https://www.fso.arizona.edu/travel>

I need to make a youth incident report.

Office of Youth Safety, report here: <https://risk.arizona.edu/>

I need to develop a risk management plan for my event.

Office of Risk Management <https://risk.arizona.edu/>

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A volunteer didn't pass their background check.

After coordinating with the 4-H administrative support person in your county contact the UACE Volunteer Systems Manager.

A volunteer is creating challenges.

Seek guidance from your CED and State 4-H Program Leader



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Cooperative Extension



Delivered by University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, Arizona 4-H empowers young people across the state with the skills they need to lead for a lifetime. Youth collaborate with caring adult mentors to lead hands-on projects in areas like science, health, agriculture and citizenship. Mentors provide a positive environment where youth learn by doing.

Arizona 4-H serves more than 100,000 youth and is delivered in every county—through in-school and after-school programs, school and community clubs and 4-H camps.

Learn more at extension.arizona.edu/4H

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