

# **New Jersey 4-H Shooting Sports**



## **State Plan and Policies**

## I. SITUATION STATEMENT

The 4-H Shooting Sports Program is a youth development education program which uses a prevention education model that strongly emphasizes positive youth-adult interaction and peer leadership. It uses skills and disciplines of safe shooting and wildlife management to assist young people and their leaders in attaining knowledge and developing essential life skills. The program can enhance family communication and quality time together. It creates an environment for a caring relationship between a young person and a positive role model, whether this is a parent, other adult, or teen volunteer. These activities provide the opportunity for immediate gratification to the youth and satisfaction and self-worth to the adult/teen volunteer who acts as teacher and role model for younger 4-H youth members.

The National 4-H Shooting Sports Program and Curriculum was developed, drafted and tested by the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee over a period of years and has been offered to states since the mid 1980's. The curriculum is scrutinized continually and revisions made as appropriate. Writers of the curriculum included National Rifle Association Instructors and training counselors, hunter education instructors, National Bowhunter Education Instructors, National Archery Association instructors, National Muzzleloading Rifle Association Instructor, and Extension Specialists.

The program relies on National and State 4-H trained and certified instructors to conduct classes/programs in the various disciplines (Air Rifle, Archery, Black Powder, Hunting & Wildlife, Living History, Rifle, Shotgun, and Program Coordinators) using the National 4-H Shooting Sports Curriculum. Shooting Sports has the potential of being a high liability activity. Therefore, the program requires 4H trained and certified instructors to adhere to the safety rules and regulations as dictated by the program to decrease the liability of such an educational experience.

The materials and training programs emphasize young people and their life skills while using tested technique and positive reinforcement to develop fundamentally sound shooters. Continuing recruitment of volunteers, intensive volunteer training and management, minimal commitment of professional staff and time and attractiveness to males and females, older teens, and families will continue to be key elements in successful 4-H Shooting Sports Program.

## **II. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

- A. Youth development is the primary goal of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program. 4-H shooting sports provide an outstanding way of providing human growth and development in the life skills identified by the National 4-H Program.
- B. To enhance development of participant's self-concept, character and personal growth through safe educational and socially acceptable involvement in shooting activities.
- C. To strengthen families through lifelong recreational activities.
- D. To develop leadership qualities in youth and adult participants.
- E. To expand 4-H membership and involve additional 4-H adult volunteers.
- F. To encourage understanding of natural resource concepts through participant's interest in shooting and hunting.
- G. To expose participants to the broad array of vocation and lifelong avocational activities related to shooting sports.
- H. To teach safe and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment at home, on the shooting range, or in the field, including sound decision making, self discipline, and concentration.
- I. To promote the highest standards of safety, sportsmanship, and ethical behavior.
- J. To complement and enhance the impact of existing safety and hunter education programs.
- K. To provide 4-H training and certification in the various shooting sports disciplines for adult volunteers.
- L. To maintain and expand a state level committee of Nationally Trained and Certified 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors.

### III PHILOSOPHY

- A. Ideal youth programs seem to share several elements. Such programs are attractive to youth, parents and other volunteers. The leaders are well prepared, positive and understand the objectives of the program. They guide program direction, involving the participating young people in determining the exact nature and content. All participants strive to expand their interests, skills and competencies. Youth development and the growth of their coping, competency and contributory skills is the foundation of the program. Those skills are integrated into a matrix with fun, pertinent, informative and positive activities valued by the young people. Parents and older youth are actively involved and given increasingly responsible duties. Relationships are more important than skills, achievement or awards; and those who lead and guide the program ensure that the priorities remain in order. The 4-H Shooting Sports Program is not an individual 4-H project but should be taught as a group project, 4-H club, 4-H special interest group or 4-H camp. The groups are kept small with a high ratio of leaders or coaches to young people to facilitate building relationships, mentoring and role modeling.
  
- B. 4-H Shooting Sports Programs are open to all youth grade 4 through 13 (as of September of the current project year) without regard to race, sex, disability, color, age, or national origin. 4-H Prep members (grade 1-3) ARE NOT eligible for ANY aspect of 4-H Shooting Sports Program.
  
- C. A 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor has the right to refuse any participant from the shooting sports activity in the interest of safety for the participant and others in the program.
  
- D. Interagency cooperation/collaboration and participation through use of facilities and equipment as well as cooperative programming is strongly encouraged.
  
- E. Use of black powder will be limited to those 12 years of age or older.
  
- F. Competitive shooting sports events are optional and individual, not the main thrust of the program.

#### **IV. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

- A. This program is administered by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator, the State 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Council, and the Outdoor Education Camp Committee (Environmental Education Committee). The State 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator and State 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Council will:
1. Administer the program based on National 4-H Shooting Sport Curriculum and Guidelines.
  2. Conduct Instructor Training and Certification as a group. (see entry C below)
  3. Develop informational materials used in publicizing the program.
  4. Provide orientation of county faculty & staff to the Shooting Sports Program.
  5. Initiate resource development in partial support of programming.
  6. (State Coordinator will) maintain files of 4-H Instructor Certification Status.
  7. Cooperate with State and County Faculty & staff to assist in program operations and administration.
  8. Provide leadership for State and Invitational 4-H Shooting Sports Events, or program as established by the advisory council and supported by the 4-H Department.
- B. A county shall not sponsor or schedule any shooting sport activity conducted by anyone other than a 4-H trained and certified Shooting Sports Instructor of the appropriate discipline.
- C. Instructor training and certification sessions will be scheduled and conducted by the State Shooting Sports Advisory Council as a group. No certifications will be given by individual state instructors. The only exception may be in the training of 4-H summer camp staff, but this is to be done only under the supervision of the State Shooting Sports Coordinator.
- D. The county is responsible for implementing the RCRE 4-H Screening and Training Policy for volunteers and for verifying proper certification.

## V. INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

A. The program requires the use of National or State 4-H Trained & Certified Instructors to conduct classes/programs in the various disciplines (Air Rifle, Archery, Black Powder, Hunting & Wildlife, Shotgun, and County Coordinators). No person may be certified as instructor until the following requirements are met:

1. Age:       Instructor - 21 years of age  
              Assistant Instructor- 18 years of age (Assistant Instructor- can instruct youth under direct supervision of an instructor and ONLY if the instructor is present during the instruction)
2. Successfully complete instructor training sessions administered by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Council or National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee and demonstrate competency to instruct as determined through a written test, trainer observation and other screening used before and during training.
3. Have been screened, trained, and appointed as a current RCRE 4-H Volunteer through the local County Extension Office.
4. Volunteers who respond positively to the question on criminal offenses must be approved by the RCRE Personnel Director & Rutgers University Risks Management Department before being approved as instructors.
5. Be recommended by County Extension 4-H faculty & staff to work with 4-H Shooting Sports.
6. Only one (1) discipline certification may be achieved at a single state sponsored training and certification workshop. A participant must attend ALL of the training sessions at a State 4-H Sponsored Workshop which includes a minimum 14 hours of discipline instruction and additional training on topics of 4-H shooting sports philosophy, youth development, risk management, planning county programs and additional topics identified by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Council or 4-H Department. The State 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Council reserves the right to withhold certification.

## **VI. INSTRUCTOR RENEWALS AND RE-CERTIFICATION**

- A. To maintain certification as a 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor, one must teach or assist in teaching a class within the instructor's discipline every year. It is required that all classes be reported and documented as per Section X.
- B. Should instructor certification lapse, the individual must repeat the State 4-H Training Program.
- C. All instructors in the program will be certified by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Council to teach specific discipline(s). Certification shall remain valid as long as the instructor remains active in teaching 4-H Shooting Sports and adheres to all state 4-H and National Shooting Sports Policies and participates in instructor updates. Instructors shall participate in an instructor update if new material, new instructional methods or significant program changes are developed or as deemed necessary by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Council or State Coordinator.
- D. Much of the cost of shooting sports training is underwritten via grants and donations. As a result instructors pay a minimal portion of the cost of their training. In being certified, instructors are committing to serve as a 4-H volunteer shooting sports instructor for a minimum of four years.

## **VII. DUTIES OF CERTIFIED INSTRUCTORS**

- A. To provide basic instruction to students and other duties as outlined in the individual RCRE Volunteer Job Description as developed in cooperation with County Extension Faculty.
- B. To report all youth taught to the County 4-H Agent and to the State 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator or other designated representative via annual reports. Reports are to cover Project Year and be submitted by December 31 of that year.
- C. To keep current as Certified Instructors by teaching classes and attending instructors updates or retraining sessions as available and as required by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee.

## **VII. INSTRUCTOR TRAINING**

- A. Instructors Certified through the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee will receive a copy of the 4-H shooting sports curriculum for their individual discipline. If an instructor terminates their 4-H involvement then this material must be returned to the State Coordinator through County Extension 4-H Faculty, as it is property of the 4-H program.
- B. Methods of instruction at State Instructor Training will include:
  - 1. Lesson Outline and use of outline.
  - 2. Appropriate Discipline Section of the National 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor Training Curriculum
  - 3. Other Methods may include: hands on learning, live firing, demonstrations, lecture, role playing, class involvement, simulated experience, visual aids, and exhibits.
- C. Instructor training will include a segment where workshop participants will have an opportunity to demonstrate teaching skill.
- E. The State Coordinator will report results of training (volunteers certified) to County Extension Faculty.

## **IX. INSTRUCTORS CODE OF ETHICS**

- A. All Certified Instructors will adhere to the 4-H Philosophy and Goals and Code of Ethics/Behavior.
- B. Instructors of 4-H Shooting Sports Clubs and Special Interest Groups are to work with youth to learn the 4-H Pledge, and to encourage member participation in club meetings, county and state 4-H activities. 4-H members are expected to maintain membership in good standing including but not limited to the following:
  - 1. Complete member enrollment and code of conduct forms.
  - 2. Exhibit project skills
  - 3. Present a public presentation, or demonstration
  - 4. Maintain 4-H Member Records for project completion
- C. Instructors must demonstrate a positive role model for youth to follow.

## **X. INSTRUCTOR REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Instructors are to report ALL students trained to the County Extension faculty/ staff and to make annual reports to the State 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator or other designated representative. Reports are to cover the project year and be submitted by December 31. Forms for reporting shooting sports programs can be obtained through the State 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator or local extension office. Extension 4-H faculty/staff should sign the report form, return a copy to the instructor, retain a County Office Copy and forward a copy to the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee or designated representative. THIS REPORTING OF TEACHING ACTIVITIES IS A PREREQUISITE TO MAINTAINING THE CERTIFICATION OF INSTRUCTORS WHO CONDUCTED OR ASSISTED WITH THE PROGRAM AS PER OTHER REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION VI RELATED TO MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION.

## **XI STATE 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS ADVISORY COUNCIL STRUCTURE**

- A. Advisory council membership shall include all volunteers and faculty/staff who are nationally certified 4-H Shooting Sports instructors, coordinator or interested State certified instructors.
- B. Leadership will be provided by Extension faculty or staff Nationally Certified as 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator.
- C. The function of this committee will be as specified under Section IV. Program Administration .
- D. Council meetings will be held as needed.
- E. Voting membership shall consist of all state and nationally certified shooting sports instructors.
- F. A quorum of two thirds of the number of state trainers (nationally certified instructors) is necessary for a vote to be valid.

Adapted from the Maryland 4-H Shooting Sports Plan and Policy.  
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