

MODULE 2 – INTRODUCTION TO 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS

PRIMER FOR 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS INSTRUCTORS



**Promoting Positive Youth Development through
Comprehensive Education,
Life-Long Recreation, and
Healthy Competition**



National 4-H Shooting Sports



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National 4-H Shooting Sports Program, 3762 Seymour Drive, Trappe, MD 21673

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Introduction

The 4-H Shooting Sports Program reaches thousands of youth annually. They are drawn to the program through interest or curiosity in the safe and responsible use of archery equipment, firearms, and participatory living history. The 4-H Shooting Sports Program promotes and enhances life competencies that make a community's youngest citizens open to challenge and discovery, feel they have a sense of purpose, affirm the importance of something greater than themselves, accept personal responsibility, feel positive and optimistic, and be able to set and achieve realistic goals.

Overview of what will be covered in this module:

1. National 4-H Shooting Sports Goal & Objectives
2. What is 4-H Shooting Sports
3. National Structure & Guidance
4. State Program & Workshops Fundamentals
5. What Makes 4-H Shooting Sports Unique



Goal of 4-H Shooting Sports¹

4-H Shooting Sports provides the high-quality programming necessary for Positive Youth Development by engaging youth in the safe, responsible use of firearms and archery equipment, in a variety of settings, through comprehensive education, life-long recreation, and healthy competition.

National 4-H Shooting Sports Objectives¹

To enable youth to:

1. Find and explore passions and interests
2. Engage in an effective 4-H program setting
3. Develop positive relationships with adults, youth, and peers
4. Explore a vast array of 4-H educational, recreational and competitive activities
5. Thrive in multiple settings
6. Enhance developmental and long-term outcomes
7. Practice safe and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment, enhancing existing shooting, conservation and hunter education programs
8. Explore the three National 4-H Mission Mandates (STEM, Healthy Living, Civic Engagement)
9. Model safety, sportsmanship and ethical behavior
10. Strengthen knowledge and life skills

History of 4-H Shooting Sports²

Initially founded by Texas State 4-H Director, Tom Davidson, in 1980, shooting sports is among the fastest growing 4-H projects throughout the United States. Each year, nearly 500,000 youth engage in dynamic hands-on learning experiences, under the guidance of 20,000+ authorized adult 4-H volunteer instructors.

As safety is our foremost concern, each locally certified instructor must successfully complete 12 to 15 hours of in-depth instruction for each discipline they will be teaching. Youth must typically be ages 8 to 18 to participate; 4-H Clover/Cloverbud members are not eligible for shooting sports (consult the local Extension office regarding your state's age specifications).

All 4-H programs (including shooting sports) are administered by the respective State 4-H Program director, with county/parish Extension 4-H Educators responsible for program leadership and management at the local level. While 4-H strives to be inclusive of all, the opportunity to participate is a privilege – not a right; actions or behaviors that could jeopardize the safety of others are grounds for removal.

National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee³

This nationally chartered organization provides continuity in addressing the diverse array of potential audiences and opportunities. Committee members represent the north central, northeast, southern, and western regions. Members serve staggered three-year terms, with current representation from State 4-H Program Leaders plus 1862 and 1890 land-grant universities.

It provides nationwide leadership for curriculum development, instructor training & certification, image enhancement, program oversight, and overall continuity within 4-H Shooting Sports. Two documents that everyone (youth, parents, instructors, Extension personnel, etc.) need to know are:

Minimum Standards⁴

Provides critical information/requirements regarding instructor and youth specifications, curriculum, training expectations, equipment, targets and risk management.

Best Management Practices⁴

Provide reasonable and prudent program management and safety guidelines regarding appropriate attire, inventory control, ammunition, plus the storage and transport of equipment.

You will learn more about these two important documents during the Risk Management section.

4-H Shooting Sports Disciplines

There are currently eight approved discipline (or project) areas available:

1. Archery
2. Coordinator
3. Hunting/Outdoor Skills
4. Muzzleloading
5. Pistol
6. Rifle
7. Shotgun
8. Western Heritage



Instructor Certification Levels⁵

Within the 4-H Shooting Sports program, there are three levels of available certification. Besides completing the specific discipline certification requirements for each discipline they will be teaching, all instructors must meet all their respective state's requirements to serve as a certified 4-H volunteer.

Level 1

Upon annual acceptance as a certified 4-H volunteer and successful completion of 12-15 hours of discipline-specific instruction, these individuals are able to teach youth at the local level within that discipline topic. If they wish to teach multiple disciplines, they must gain certification in each area. These individuals are not authorized to train or certify other adult instructors.

Level 2

Instructors who have demonstrated proficiency at Level 1, may contact their State 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator requesting permission to attend a national Level 2 training. If approved and upon successful completion of that 40-hour discipline specific workshop, they may return to teach prospective instructors at state Level 1 trainings. Those attending a Level 2 training are expected to provide at least one Level 1 training annually for the next three years.

Level 3

Outstanding Level 2 instructors may apply to serve as an apprentice instructor at a nationally-sanctioned Level 2 training. Those current Level 3 instructors present will closely evaluate the candidate's knowledge and teaching abilities to determine if they should be advanced to Level 3 status – and thus qualify to serve as a primary instructor at future national trainings.

State 4-H Shooting Sports Committees

Many state 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinators, draw upon the experience and expertise of local instructors and resources to guide their respective state program; frequently enlisting Level 2 or 3 volunteers. They often include representation from each of the discipline areas offered within their state.

Committee members can share valuable input, strengthen communication and often assist in conducting state-level activities and events. They also aid in recruiting new instructors, which ultimately helps to expand the 4-H Shooting Sports program to more youth.



Why Level 1 Workshops?⁶

For some, especially those with other experience/credentials, this is the most commonly asked question. While we value these skills, they often center around performance/tactical knowledge – not in how to effectively work with and teach youth. Therein, lies a significant difference.

Within 4-H, our focus is on safety and Positive Youth Development. We have vast experience in teaching adults how to teach youth, along with an extensive network of training and youth development resources that most organizations do not have. Through 4-H we also strive to integrate STEM and experiential/hands-on learning experiences to develop critical life skills.

In addition, Level 1 workshops help clarify the role, responsibilities and expectations of instructors; which are essential to achieve peak performance. Many land-grant universities also extend liability coverage to their 4-H volunteers, provided they operate within the scope of their assigned duties. Therefore, for their personal protection, it is vital that 4-H Shooting Sports instructors clearly understand what they can and cannot do.

Level 1 Workshop Fundamentals

While potential instructors will encounter a substantial amount of information regarding both youth and discipline subject matter, these are six fundamental topics that should be addressed:

1. Safety & Risk Management
2. First Shot Fundamentals
3. 4-H Volunteer Training
4. Teaching Adults to Teach Kids
5. Developing Life Skills
6. Positive Youth Development

Each of these topics will be addressed in greater detail as you progress through the youth development/ risk management portion of this training; whether it be in-person, or via modules 3 through 4 of the 4-H Shooting Sports eLearning series which is available online.

4-H Shooting Sports Priority Pyramid⁶

This pyramid illustrates our three program priorities and the degree of emphasis needed to ensure an effective 4-H Shooting Sports program. While competition appears at the top, it comprises a relatively small portion of the pyramid and is not our primary emphasis.

Recreation occupies a much larger portion of our pyramid. It provides the hook that keeps youth coming back – if it's not fun, youth will go somewhere else that is. This also supports the concept of strengthening families, by uniting parents and youth around a common interest.

Rightfully, education provides the foundation for 4-H Shooting Sports. While opportunities exist for Positive Youth Development and acquisition of Life Skills at all three level, our priorities must be anchored in education. Otherwise, we could easily lose the support of our land-grant universities, and thus our entire 4-H Shooting Sports program.



Words Have Meaning⁶

What do these items have in common?



Do you see tools? Do you see weapons? Do you see both? The reality is that these are all tools used within various 4-H projects. They can only change, based on the intent of the person using them. When used in a positive, productive manner, they're tools. If intentionally used to harm another, each item could become a weapon. So why does that matter?

Some people believe that 4-H should not be teaching youth about the use of firearms and archery equipment. They believe that with knowledge comes the potential these items could be misused. The manner in which we express ourselves to others when talking about the 4-H Shooting Sports program can have a profound effect.

If instructors, members or even parents refer to firearms as weapons, we only further reinforce a negative perception of 4-H Shooting Sports. We collectively need to eliminate the “W-word” from our vocabulary when working with or discussing the 4-H Shooting Sports program with others.

*For a more in-depth understanding of how “Words have Meaning” and implications for 4-H Shooting Sports programs, see **The 2nd Amendment, Common Sense and Words Have Meaning!** Narrated power point found on National 4-H Shooting Sports website.*

What Makes 4-H Shooting Sports Unique?

While many organizations offer extensive subject-matter or tactical training and certification, 4-H Shooting Sports focuses on the fundamentals of Positive Youth Development.

Our programs are designed to create a supportive environment and foster appropriate youth/adult partnerships where youth can develop critical life skills and thrive. Incorporating STEM activities enable youth to discover the “why” and “how” related to 4-H Shooting Sports mechanics – enhancing their educational experience. Youth recognize personal growth through active civic engagement – giving back to their communities.

Yes, we encourage youth to gain proficiency (To Make the Best Better); however there is one vital concept we trust that all 4-H Shooting Sports instructors understand and model.

We don't focus on making champion shooters, we focus on developing champion kids.

What Makes 4-H Shooting Sports Unique?

The following chart identifies the focus and outcomes of programs and services provided by Hunter Education, NRA Range Officer, Law Enforcement, Military (Army Marksmanship), and 4-H.

| Program | Focus/Outcome |
|-----------------------|---|
| Hunter Education | Hunter education strives to instill responsibility, improve skills and knowledge, and encourage the involvement of beginner and veteran hunters. |
| NRA Range Officer | NRA Range Safety Officers are people who possess the knowledge, skills, and attitude essential to organizing, conducting, and supervising safe shooting activities and range operations. |
| Law Enforcement | The law enforcement firearm instructor's job is to teach officers how to be safe, effective, and timely in the use of their firearms and tactics, and to win the lethal encounter. Our programs provide the hands-on training to help you teach your officers to win. |
| Military | To use a weapon in combat. |
| 4-H Youth Development | The National 4-H Shooting Sports Program helps youth transition into adulthood by helping them develop in areas of citizenship, leadership, and life skills, through experiential learning with a caring adult volunteer. The volunteers use firearms and archery equipment as the tools to reach these outcomes. |

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