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# University of Illinois

## 4-H Shooting Sports State Plan

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Approved September, 2009  
(Revised January, 2012)

### Situation Statement

Youth development and safety are the major goals of the 4-H shooting sports program. The program will be utilized as a vehicle for human growth and development. 4-H Shooting Sports are an excellent way to provide life-skill development and to establish a caring relationship with an adult mentor. Approximately two thirds of the homes in the United States have firearms, so teaching safe responsible use of firearms and archery equipment is vital to preventing accidents in the home or in the field. The University of Illinois Extension 4-H Shooting Sports Program provides the instruction in the safe handling of firearms and archery equipment. The program teaches a variety of life skills that include: self-responsibility, decision-making, self-discipline, goal setting, teamwork, safety and others. The Shooting Sports program will attract new audiences and enhance the traditional 4-H club program

The Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports Program will utilize the National 4-H Shooting Sports Program and Curriculum. All 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors will need to obtain 4-H Shooting Sports Program Instructor Certification prior to conducting 4-H shooting sports with youth and be screened as a 4-H volunteer through the U. of I. Extension 4-H youth Development Program.

Statewide, multi-state and/or regional training programs and instructor updates utilizing National 4-H Shooting Sports Program and Curriculum will be offered annually. The 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 Bowhunter Education instructors, National Rifle Association instructors, National Archery Association instructors, and Extension Specialists. The curriculum and training programs emphasize young people and their life skills as the product of the program while using tested techniques and positive reinforcement.

The Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports program is a youth development education program that uses a prevention education model that strongly emphasizes positive youth-adult interaction and peer leadership. The program enhances family communications and

quality time together. It creates an environment for a caring relationship between a young person and a significant adult, whether this is a family member, other adult or teen volunteer.

## **Program Objectives**

All objectives of the Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports Program must be consistent with the objectives, goals and guidelines of the Illinois 4-H Youth Development Program. Specific objectives include but are not limited to:

1. To develop life skills in youth that includes but is not limited to self-discipline, decision-making, self-discipline, goal setting, teamwork, problem solving, safety, and critical thinking.
2. To promote the highest standards of safety, sportsmanship and ethical behavior.
3. To encourage an appreciation and understanding of natural resources.
4. To develop leadership abilities in both youth and adults.
5. To build character and willingness to assume citizenship responsibility.
6. To furnish enjoyable, positive relationships with peers and adult instructors.
7. To strengthen families through participation in lifelong recreational activities.
8. To provide a safe, controlled environment for the learning of safe and responsible use of firearms and archery equipment.
9. To expose participants to the broad array of career opportunities and life long avocational activities.

## **Philosophy**

- All instructors in the program will be certified by the Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports Committee and State Coordinator to teach specific disciplines. Instructors shall participate in an instructor update if new material, new instructional methods, or significant program changes are developed.
- A county shall not sponsor or schedule any shooting sports activity conducted by anyone other than a 4-H trained, screened, and certified Shooting Sports instructor of the appropriate discipline.
- Instructor training and certification sessions will be scheduled and conducted by the Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports Committee as a group. No certifications will be given by individual state instructors.
- The Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports Program is not an individual 4-H project, but should be taught as a group project. Trained Certified Instructors must be present when any planned 4-H Shooting Sport activity is undertaken.
- The enrollment in the project has the potential of reaching new youth audiences and new volunteer adult leaders.

- Competitive shooting events are optional and individual, and not the main thrust of the program.
- All persons, regardless of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, ancestry, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, or disability may participate in 4-H programs. Youth who are eight years of age or in the third grade and have not yet reached their nineteenth birthday on or before September 1, of the current year may enroll in 4-H clubs. Some Shooting Sports disciplines may have minimum age requirements to participate. 4-H Cloverbuds (age 5-7) are not eligible for any aspect of the 4-H Shooting Sports Program.
- 4-H Adult Volunteers will receive training in positive youth development. Training resources will include material from 'The Essential Elements of PYD', 'Ages and Stages of Youth Development', Big 'M', and other approved sources.
- An Illinois 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.
- Inter-agency cooperation/collaboration and participation through use of facilities and equipment as well as cooperative programming is encouraged.
- Games using paintball guns where participants shoot paintballs at other participants IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE WITHIN THE 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS ACTIVITY. The purpose of the Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports Program is to promote positive youth development through the safe and responsible use of archery equipment and firearms. Pointing any type of firearm including air guns, laser guns or laser sighting devices at any person or any humanoid or tombstone target is inappropriate and not acceptable. Therefore, the National 4-H Shooting Sports Committee and the Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports Program is unequivocally opposed to such use in the 4-H program.
- Any participant while on the shooting line or shooting course in any 4-H shooting sports event, including club programs, training programs and competitions, will be required to wear shoes that completely cover their feet. Examples of footwear that are not acceptable includes, but is not limited to sandals, clogs, crocks, flip flops and bare feet. Shoes that have holes, perforations, or open tops, open backs, or open sides are not acceptable footwear while participating on the shooting line or shooting course with any firearm or archery equipment.
- Appropriate safety equipment for each discipline must be adhered to. *(Each discipline will have their specific safety equipment lists.)*
- All shooting sports volunteers wishing to become Certified Instructors must complete the Illinois 4-H Volunteer Application process and additional screening processes.

### **Administration**

The Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports Program is administered by the Illinois 4-H Assistant Dean and Director (or his/her designee). Assistance is provided by the Illinois 4-H

Shooting Sports Advisory Committee, and the State 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator. The Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Committee membership shall include: Extension Professionals, a representative from the State 4-H Office, volunteers, industry representatives, discipline instructors and youth. Committee meetings will be held as deemed necessary by the State Shooting Sports Coordinator.

Specific responsibilities of the Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports Advisory Committee include:

- Recommend administrative policies and procedures
- Develop program guidelines for counties to follow
- Develop and distribute informational materials to use in publicizing the program and assist in marketing the program
- Identify funding sources and develop resources to help sustain the program.
- Provide leadership with an annual state fund raising activity
- Recommend participants to attend the National Certification training/s.
- Assist and provide leadership with all levels of shooting events/competitions.
- Assist in the development of rules and regulations for a State Shooting Contest.

### **Instructor Certification Requirements and Instructor Training**

The Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports Program requires the use of National or State trained and certified instructors to conduct classes/programs in the various disciplines (Archery, Air Rifle, Small Bore Rifle, Shotgun, and Coordinator) currently offered. **Instructors and Assistant Instructors, above 4-H age, must have been screened in accordance with the Illinois 4-H Volunteer Application Process and appointed as a current 4-H volunteer through the local County Extension Office. Each County must have a Volunteer Certified 4-H Shooting Sports Coordinator in order to establish and maintain a 4-H Shooting Sports Program.** No person may be certified as an instructor until the following requirements are met:

1. Age: **Certified Instructor** – Minimum age of 21 as of September 1, of the current year. **Assistant Instructor** – Minimum age of 19 as of September 1, of the current year. Assistant Instructors may assist the Certified Instructor as long as they are under the direct supervision of that Certified Instructor. The Certified Instructor must be present while providing instruction on the firing line – assistants may work/assist with youth while the Certified Instructor is present providing instruction. Commands from the Certified Instructor take precedence over all those of the assistant in all cases except for a ‘ceasefire’ – anyone may call for a ceasefire if the situation deems necessary. If the Certified Instructor must leave the range for any reason, all shooting activities must stop and shooters must be taken off the firing line.
2. Successfully complete an instructor training session administered by the State 4-H Shooting Sports Committee and demonstrate competency to instruct as

determined through a written test, trainer observation and other screening used during the activity.

3. Have been approved as a current Illinois 4-H volunteer through the local County/Unit Extension Office.
4. Be recommended by County Extension personnel.
5. **Only one 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 of 12 hours of discipline instruction and an additional 4 to 6 hours on topics of 4-H youth development, risk management, and shooting sports philosophy. The Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports Committee reserves the right to withhold certification. (The County Instructor and/or Coordinator reserve the right not to certify a person if he/she feels the candidate will not be a competent instructor.)
6. To maintain certification, a 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor must teach or assist in teaching a class every two years. This requirement must be documented by reporting through the County/Unit Extension office to the SSSC. Instructors Certified through the Illinois 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 the curriculum must be returned to the County/Unit Extension office.
7. Methods of instruction of state workshops will include: Lesson outline and use of outline, Discipline Curriculum Manual, other manuals may include – hands on learning, Live Firing, Demonstrations, Lecture, Role Playing, Class Involvement, Visual Aids and Exhibits as well as reflection and evaluation.
8. Instructor training will include a segment where workshop participants will have an opportunity to demonstrate teaching skills.
9. Assistant instructors will be selected by the county/unit. Assistant instructors must be competent in the specific discipline in which they are assisting which will be determined by the certified discipline instructor and the coordinator.

### **Duties of Certified Instructors**

1. To provide basic instruction to youth and other duties as outlined in the individual Illinois 4-H Volunteer Role and/or Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports Adult Volunteer description.
2. To report all youth trained to the County/Unit Shooting Sports Coordinator or Extension contact person. Annual Training Report Forms are to be completed upon conclusion of a shooting sports program and should be sent to the respective County/Unit Extension Office by the end of the 4-H year. County Shooting Sports Coordinators and County/Unit contacts are to sign the form and return a copy to the instructor, retain a copy in the Extension office. This reporting of teaching activities will continue the certification of instructors who were teaching or assisting with the

teaching. Counties are to develop and maintain a database for all Certified Adult Shooting Sports volunteers.

3. To keep current as certified instructors by teaching classes and attending instructor updates or retaining sessions as available and as required by the Illinois Shooting Sports Committee.
4. Keep focus on the program by following the 4-H philosophy and goals.

## **Instructor Renewals, Recertification and Reporting**

### **Based on:**

1. The instructor's desire to continue as a volunteer in the 4-H program.
2. The County and/or State's interest in seeing the instructor continue as a 4-H Shooting Sports Volunteer.
3. Keeping up to date in the certified discipline through teaching the program in the County.
4. Attending instructor updates as deemed necessary by the certifying committee.
5. Annually reporting the teaching in 4-H Shooting Sports programs.
6. Should instructor certification lapse, the individual must repeat the State 4-H Certified Leader training program.
7. To maintain certification, a 4-H Shooting Sports Instructor must teach or assist in teaching a class every two years. This requirement must be documented by reporting through the County/Unit Extension Office.
8. All instructors in the program will be certified by the Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports Committee to teach specific discipline(s). Instructors shall participate in an instructor update/renewal if ne material, new instructional methods or significant program changes are developed.
9. Complete the re-screening process every 5 years to be a 4-H volunteer.

## **Hunter Safety Education Program**

The Illinois 4-H Shooting Sports program encourages those participants seeking additional instruction in the hunting aspect of shooting sports to attend and complete an Illinois Hunter Education program taught by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. <http://www.dnr.state.il.us/safety/hunt/htm>

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