

# impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

## Parliamentary procedures training proves to positively impact 4-H meetings

### AT A GLANCE

Trainings were developed and conducted to meet the needs of 4-H professionals and volunteers struggling to maintain order during meetings.

### The Situation

Surveys were conducted among 4-H volunteers to learn about how their programs were functioning and about their thoughts on needs for the 4-H program statewide. Survey results indicated that over 62% of the volunteers felt that training in communication skills and club organization skills would be of value to them. One issue that was common among the respondents were problems with their volunteer meetings. Examples of these problems included animosity during meetings, meeting inefficiencies and a low level of satisfaction among volunteers. These issues affected club management, causing frustration for both Extension professionals and volunteers.

### Our Response

In the spring of 2016 the Volunteer Training Task Force, made up of UI Extension educators and coordinators, worked together to develop a needs assessment of the 4-H volunteers in Idaho and of the professionals in county offices. The task force found that volunteers were having issues voicing their opinions in different committees. We determined through follow-up interviews that many (if not most) of the meetings were poorly structured, hence unproductive. Parliamentary procedure is a widely accepted method of giving



Giving volunteers tools to hold successful meetings is a priority for 4-H professionals across the state.

meetings structure and organization. The task force determined that offering a class or workshop on parliamentary procedure may improve meetings and developed a Parliamentary Procedure pilot program and a subcommittee to lead the development of this program.

The task force subcommittee utilized a video program, "Roberts Rules Made Simple," during the 2018-2019 year as well as in-person activities. A lesson plan was developed for use at each site. This lesson plan detailed the procedure for running the workshop without having a task force member present. The subcommittee also provided sites with meeting organizational protocols, such as setting an agenda. Volunteers also had a Parliamentary Procedure training booklet, which

they could keep and use as a reference for future meetings.

In partnership with UI Extension professionals from six counties across the state, the task force implemented the training from February 2019 to January 2020. Volunteers were recruited through flyers in their county, on social media, council meetings or through mass email on 4-H Online. Initial findings show these trainings have been well-received and had a positive influence in the pilot counties.

## Program Outcomes

Eighty-one adult and youth participants from six counties attended the trainings, including volunteers from: Ada, Bannock, Canyon, Lincoln, Payette and Twin Falls. Figure 1 shows the distribution of training attendees by the number of years they have volunteered. Volunteers with less than 10 years of experience comprised 78% of total participants.

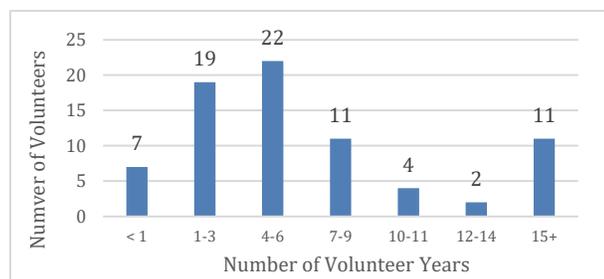


Figure 1: Attendees by years of 4-H volunteer experience.

Pre-post survey data (Figure 2) showed significant changes in knowledge gained in parliamentary procedure topics. We conducted paired samples *t*-tests to compare pre- and post-training levels of understanding of each parliamentary procedure. For each procedure, the post-levels of understandings were significantly higher than the pre-levels of understandings indicating the training helped to improve participant understanding from moderate to a high level of understanding of parliamentary procedures.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Overall, we found 4-H volunteers were 52.6% confident (quite and very confident) in their ability to use parliamentary procedure in meetings. Participants found this training very and completely useful (79.2%), not only utilizing what they learned for their 4-H meetings, but 42% also stated they would find this useful outside 4-H in government meetings, office settings, church meetings, FFA and other clubs and boards.

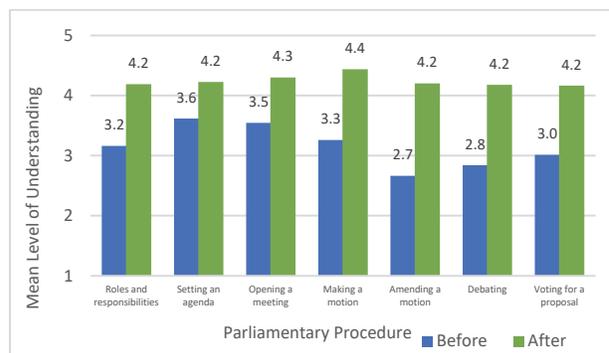


Figure 2: Pre and post assessment of parliamentary procedures understanding.

The implications of this for the University of Idaho Extension 4-H Youth Development program would include, more efficient meetings, more equality during meetings, a general overall better flow of the meetings and greater involvement in the program. Although this training was meant for volunteers, youth would benefit from this as well for running their club meetings. Further, volunteers who attend the training are more prepared to teach and mentor their club members on running efficient meetings.

## The Future

Considering the positive feedback, the subcommittee has received from this initial pilot study, trainings both online and face-to-face are warranted. Also, as a follow-up to these initial trainings, the subcommittee will send out a survey to determine medium term retention of knowledge and impact on meetings.