



CASE STUDY

4-H

Organization Background

4-H prepares young people all across the nation to step up to challenges in their local community and throughout the world. Using research-based programming built around positive youth development, 4-H youth get the hands-on, real world experience they need to become strong, effective leaders.

Idaho 4-H started in 1912, and has served tens of thousands of Idaho youth aged 5-18 throughout the state through traditional community clubs, afterschool programs, day camps, summer camps, conferences and international exchange programs.

Background

In 2014, the University of Idaho mandated that specific groups of volunteers in the 4-H program complete both a background screening and the University of Idaho's Protecting Minors Training. The goal was to complete this process within a short three-month window. This presented a number of challenges. First, getting volunteers screened was time-consuming because individual counties needed to manually input information for each volunteer. There was also the difficult task of encouraging some volunteers who may have been hesitant to move forward with the new screening and training processes. In addition, the 4-H program needed to have an easy renewal process to make annual screening easier. The management team at Idaho 4-H Youth Development needed a solution that would provide important screening information, as well as one that would streamline the process for everyone, reduce administrative burden and help encourage volunteers to be screened and trained – all within three months.

Solution

Idaho 4-H decided on Sterling Volunteers because it allows for a streamlined screening process and is very easy to use. The process entails just a few simple steps, and is now the accepted screening process practiced by Idaho 4-H. Each county sends out a communication to prospective volunteers inviting them to be screened. Individual volunteers walk through a simple, four-step online process on their own. Once completed, the check is processed in a just a day or two, and the results of the screen automatically appear on the Volunteer Management dashboard. The process is not only simpler and faster, but also more informative and easier to manage. Sterling Volunteers now works with the program to ensure that the renewal process for current volunteers is also as streamlined as possible.

Results

To encourage as many volunteers as possible to complete the screening and training, Idaho 4-H set up their Sterling Volunteers account so that volunteers could choose to pay for all, some or none of the screening fee. Depending on the option chosen by the volunteer, the organization pays any remaining portion of the costs. The 4-H organization can adjust these payment options at any time. The Sterling Volunteers platform took the work out of gathering volunteer information. Because the process was simple and easy, many volunteers participated in the process, and 4-H remained compliant with the directive of the University of Idaho. The Volunteer Management dashboard made tracking and following up with the volunteers much easier and more efficient.

Key Highlight

By providing a simple, streamlined screening process, Sterling Volunteers was able to provide Idaho 4-H Youth Development with a way to administer and monitor their entire volunteer screening process and meet their appointed deadlines. The payment options enabled them to incentivize participation and overcome occasional resistance. The responsive, collaborative client care team at Sterling Volunteers was instrumental in the success of the rollout of the new screening and training program at Idaho 4-H.



Prior to working with Sterling Volunteers, the customer service for our screening solution was non-existent. The size and needs of our operation meant that if there was a hitch in delivery of the screenings or the process itself, our hands were tied. The Sterling Volunteers team is responsive, knowledgeable and is working with us on our plans for the future of the 4-H Idaho Youth Development program."

**- Nancy Melville,
Idaho 4-H Volunteer
Development Specialist**