

# **Know Your Government 2010: “Lobbying for Change” The Legislative Process**



**February 13-16, 2010**

**Red Lion Hotel Olympia**

# COORDINATOR PACKET

## Table of Contents

<b>Welcome .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Newcomer’s Glimpse .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>KYG CORE Planning Committee.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Youth Adult Partnerships .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Tentative Agenda .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Estimate of Expenses .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>How to Prepare .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Hotel Reservations	
Schedule Capitol Tour	
Dress Code	
<b>Important Dates .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>County Coordinator Job Description .....</b>	<b>13</b>
Coordinator’s Reply Form	
<b>Chaperone Job Description.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Chaperone Reply Form	
<b>Registration Procedures.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Registration Packet.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Registration- Form A	
Assumption of Risk- Form B	
Emergency Medical Release- Form C	
Health Form-Form D	
Code of Conduct- Form E	
School Request for Absence	
School Letter from 4-H Director	
<b>Directions to Hotel and Thurston County Information.....</b>	<b>31</b>

# WELCOME TO KNOW YOUR GOVERNMENT

**Dear Volunteer KYG Conference Coordinator:**

Thank you for becoming part of the Washington State 4-H Know Your Government Conference. This exciting annual event gives 4-H teens an opportunity to go to Olympia and learn first hand how our government operates. Participants will tour our State Capitol, meet with their legislators, and participate in the legislative process.

This year's theme is "**Lobbying for Change!**" It's going to be an exciting topic as youth assume the role as lobbyists in order to get a bill through the KYG legislature. All

☺ **Important change this year: delegates are lobbyists, NOT legislators.**

bills, passed through both the KYG House and Senate, will be printed in the 4-H KYG Bill Book and given to our Legislators at the 4-H KYG Legislative Breakfast. Much effort has been put into planning the actual 4-H KYG Conference in Olympia in February. **I cannot overemphasize the value of your county's pre-conference orientations to prepare youth for a successful KYG experience.** We have created a Curriculum Packet, which offers ideas and suggestions to help you with this job. It includes plans for **four orientation meetings**. Use the lessons and activities in their entirety or break them into segments that will work best for your group.

Selection of your county delegates is important, since the 4-H Know Your Government Conference is an intense, four-day experience. Your county may bring as many delegates as you like, but it is important that the **youth are prepared for and able to handle the responsibilities involved** in being at a conference. **Delegates must be in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade or above.** Younger youth are NOT eligible to attend the conference, but may participate in county orientation/learning sessions and anticipate attending 4-H KYG in the future. In conjunction with the County Extension 4-H Youth Educator, County Coordinators will determine the eligibility requirements (i.e., attendance at all orientation meetings, participation in meetings, etc.).

☺ **The orientation activities are essential to prepare delegates for 4-H KYG Conference!**

Thank you for choosing to be an integral part of this learning experience. It is our hope that all delegates enjoy and grow from this year's conference. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have.

See you in Olympia!!



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## A GLIMPSE OF KYG...

*Know Your Government (KYG) is a hands-on learning conference focusing on a specific aspect of government. The conference topic and curriculum change yearly in order to keep it relevant to current events and issues. A Planning Committee, made up of volunteers, takes charge of revising the curriculum and organizing the conference. If you **have any questions** about registration, accommodations, or curriculum, contact one of the committee members.*

***In order for a young person to register** for KYG, he/she must contact their county Extension office and complete the required paperwork. There is a cost for registration and an additional cost for the hotel room, which is paid for by each delegate. Chaperones also pay the registration and hotel room costs. The conference and all related activities take place in and around the Red Lion Hotel Olympia.*

*In preparation for KYG, youth participate in **county-run orientation sessions**. The Curriculum Packet outlines the learning objectives for each of these orientation sessions. All hand-outs may be photocopied. A Volunteer Coordinator typically manages those orientations, reviewing the activities outlined in the 4-H KYG Curriculum Packet. The county determines participation criteria for The Know Your Government Conference. If youth delegates are absent from orientations or do not complete the given tasks and activities, consult your county Extension office for direction regarding whether or not that youth should be included in the county delegation to KYG.*

***While at KYG, youth participants are engaged in a series of hands-on activities that generally lead to a large-group, culminating product on the final morning. Often, the conference agenda expects youth to assume roles/jobs in order to be fully engaged in their project. You are the key to their success through preparing, practicing, and helping them carefully select their responsibilities.***

*The **Legislative Breakfast** is a unique aspect of the conference. All members of the Washington State Legislature are invited to attend and are seated with delegates from their district. This is a time for legislators to learn about 4-H and a time for delegates to ask legislators about issues important to them and their area. Please practice appropriate etiquette with your delegates and prepare topics to discuss with their legislators.*

*4-H Know Your Government is a time for the delegates to showcase what they have learned during their pre-conference meetings. The **roles of the coordinators and chaperones** are usually in the background. This year, however, we are asking several coordinators to assume the role of legislators at the conference. These roles will be assigned prior to the conference and all coordinators and chaperones will attend the “Legislator 101” Workshop at the conference. We encourage all coordinators and chaperones to sit in on the various*




😊 Who wants to be a legislator?

sessions and be there to support the delegates and the youth conference facilitators (CFs) who will run the meeting sessions and address participation/behavior issues.

**County Meetings** are scheduled to take place as the end of each day, just before delegates go to their own rooms for the night. The purpose of the County Meetings is to find out what the delegates did and learned, go over the agenda for the next day, and make sure they get into their own rooms by lights out. The nightly meeting is very laid back and is a way for the delegates to debrief and reflect about what happened that day and discuss things that they may need. You may lead these meetings by prompting questions or by having the delegates take turns facilitating. This will be an opportunity for members of the Planning Committee to visit your delegation and answer any questions you might have.

Because each year is different, it is **important to review the orientation curriculum** and take note of the specific learning objectives. These identify the skills that delegates will need in order to function effectively and confidently while at KYG. The curriculum includes suggested activities that you may incorporate to make the experience ‘experiential’ and to assist the youth in developing life skills as a result. The suggested activities designed are outlined in the curriculum packet.

This year we are also promoting a **community/county service learning project**, separate from the 4-H KYG curriculum but very important as an aspect of practicing citizenship. Working in partnership with National 4-H, we are encouraging all 4-H KYG county delegations to participate in the **Martin Luther King Day of Service**. Please consider adding this to your pre-conference work. We encourage your delegation to share their project and photos on the 4-H KYG blog. Information about this event is included in the 4-H KYG Curriculum for 2010.



☺ Service learning-WOW! Be sure to share what you do on the KYG blog.

Thank you for joining the Know Your Government project. This is a long-standing conference, rich in curriculum and learning opportunities. **Please do not hesitate to contact the Planning Committee** for support and/or direction throughout your county orientations. Enjoy this series of activities and we'll see you in Olympia!

Sincerely,

The Planning Committee

# KYG CORE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Each committee member is responsible for a specific aspect of Know Your Government. If you have any questions, please contact the appropriate committee member.

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## Youth/Adult Partnerships

The 4-H Know Your Government program and its success are dependent on the talent offered by our many coordinators and chaperones throughout the state. Because of this, it is natural that the fostering of youth-adult partnerships is another objective of KYG. The excerpt below is taken from the WSU 4-H Youth Development Volunteer Training Module II: Positive Youth Development (page 217).

**“Understanding youth/adult partnerships, youth empowerment, the benefits of planning with youth as partners, and adult leadership styles are beneficial for all adults that work with youth and who work on projects and events aimed at youth. The success of your 4-H programs will often hinge on the attitudes and beliefs you and your volunteers take towards young people. How you see them – as capable or incapable – will establish a precedent in all that you do in your program. There are many perceptions that adults have about the involvement of young people in programs designed for their benefit. These perceptions influence how we choose to involve them in decision-making processes . . .”**

There are three ways to perceive youth: as objects, as recipients, or as resources. When developing a youth/adult partnership, the most effective way is to view **youth as resources**. This perspective acknowledges that adults and young people can share any leadership and decision-making roles involved. This may mean that both young people and adults need to learn the skills necessary for shared leadership. One of the key ways we can encourage this in 4-H is by considering youth as full partners and resources in our work – **adults and youth working together in all kinds of ways, from decision-making to program planning**. We want to view youth as resources to our programs and consider participation as part of their responsibility.

### Adults are Key

Adults play a key role in supporting youth involvement. This is not an opportunity for us to stand by and watch. We must be involved in creating safe spaces and structures that help youth in the process of becoming full partners. <sup>1</sup>As we seek to build life skills through this 4-H program, please implement some of the following suggestions as you partner with your county delegates:

- Include the delegates in the implementation of this curriculum, allowing them to schedule and plan future meetings
- Ask for their assistance by having them lead discussions and/or facilitate the meetings
- Ask them to contact local speakers, plan a field trip, or develop a list of questions to ask experts
- Try not to simply tell the delegates the point of the activity or lesson; use the “reflect and apply” questions to lead the delegates to discover it for themselves