



Responses to Questions at the 4-H Military Partnership, Public Affairs Overview Session

Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal

Nominating military service members for the Military Outstanding Service Medal is one way to recognize military members who volunteer for our 4-H programming. Each service offers this medal using a different process, however the DOD criteria include:

- 1) The MOVSM may be awarded to Service members (including Reserve Components) who, subsequent to December 31, 1992, perform outstanding volunteer community service of a sustained, direct, and consequential nature.
- 2) To qualify for award, the Service member's service must:
 - a) Be voluntary.
 - b) Be to the civilian community, including the military family community.
 - c) Be significant in nature and produce tangible results.
 - d) Reflect favorably on the Service member's Military Department and the DoD.
 - e) Be of a sustained and direct nature.
- 3) Award is not authorized for:
 - a) A single act or achievement, as this does not constitute sustained community service.
 - b) Merely attending membership meetings or social events of a community service group or organization, as this does not constitute significant and direct community service.
 - c) Community service performed while deployed to a combat theater.
 - d) Service that is detailed or tasked, or performed as part of a military mission (e.g., unit project; command sponsored project) as this service is not voluntarily in nature or is part of the command's mission.
- 4) The overall level of volunteer participation and impact of an individual's community service is key to determining whether award of the MOVSM is justified. Although sustained community service is not defined by a specific time period or number of volunteer hours (e.g., 36 months encompassing 500 hours of direct volunteer service), approval authorities will ensure the service to be honored merits the special recognition afforded by this medal.
- 5) The MOVSM recognizes service provided to a community over time; therefore, multiple awards of the MOVSM during a single assignment or tour of duty are not authorized.

Federal Recognition of 4-H that the Military Can Support

Several federal policies and agreements exist which give the military the ability to support and encourage 4-H to occur. Brent Elrod authored a [great overview document](#) that includes the language of the Master Memorandum of Understanding between USDA and DOD originally signed in 1986 and lasts indefinitely. This MMOU outlines the responsibilities of both USDA and DOD to partner, but does not specifically require programming or support.

The Office of Secretary of Defense (Military Community & Family Policy) sets policy overall for military youth programs. They state DoD Components, "ensure partnerships and collaborative efforts in support of YS are established with ... national youth-serving organizations to enhance and expand affordable opportunities for military youth. Resources may include in-kind services, "pass-through" resources, awards, scholarships, and grants." ([DODI 6060.04](#)).

Military services may be more specific in terms of expectations. For example, the Air Force requires each installations with child and youth programs to "conduct four 4-H programs using official 4-H curriculum

(one must be in the Health, Nutrition and Fitness area and participate in the National 4-H Youth Science Day.” ([AFI 34-144](#)).

Additionally, there are other supports codified in public law. Specifically [Public Law 109-163](#) (2006) outlines support for youth organizations. This public law allows youth organizations (4-H Clubs are explicitly mentioned) to receive support including: A) authorizing a youth organization to hold meetings, camping events, or other activities on Federal property; B) hosting any official event of a youth organization; C) loaning equipment for the use of a youth organization; and D) providing personnel services and logistical support for a youth organization.

Some states have used military assets in a variety of ways. This public law provides explicit permission that they can support 4-H youth development. Some examples include hosting 4-H shooting sports meetings or competitions, providing military subject matter experts and other in-kind support.